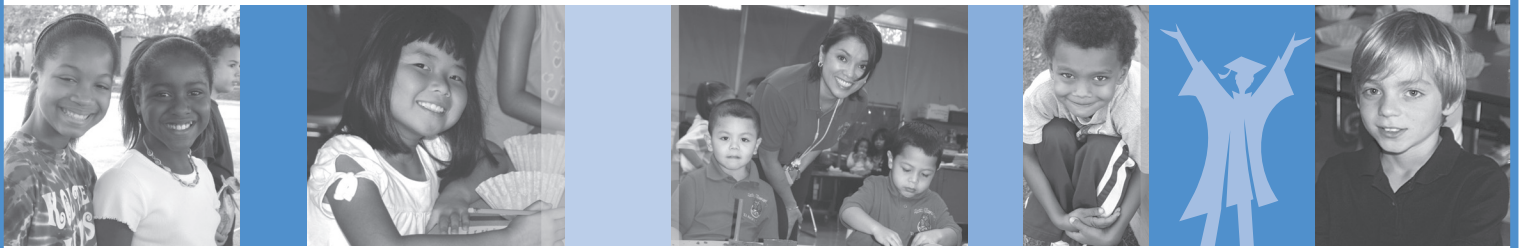


2009–2010 HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Code of Student Conduct



Your Rights and Responsibilities

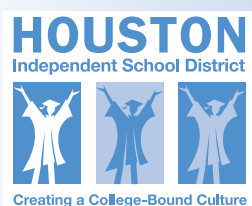


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This publication, approved by the Board of Education, carries the full impact of approved Board Policy and Administrative Regulations. Any revisions must be approved by the board before becoming effective.

See Board Policy at www.houstonisd.org/BoardPolicy.

It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, or political affiliation in its educational or employment programs and activities.



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Code of Student Conduct

2009–2010 HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Foreword

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) has established as one of its primary goals the provision of a high-quality educational program for each student in a safe school environment free of disruptions that interfere with the educational process. The purpose of this *Code of Student Conduct* is to inform all students and parents of HISD's expectations regarding behavior and conduct. The *Code*, reviewed and approved by the HISD Board of Education, is based on the policies of the Board of Education and Administrative Regulations. Administrative Regulations communicate district administrative procedures and practices.

This *Code* was developed to protect the rights of all students by:

- providing a districtwide discipline management plan.
- specifying the behavior that is expected of all students.
- describing the broad range of student misconduct and providing appropriate disciplinary consequences or options for the various kinds of misconduct.
- outlining student rights relating to school.

Students and parents are expected to become familiar with the provisions of the districtwide *Code of Student Conduct* and the rules and regulations adopted and implemented by their individual schools based upon their School-Based Discipline Management System. Students are also expected to abide by the policies set forth in the *Code* so that they can truly get the most out of their years in school.

Major changes to the *Code* this year include the following:

- Clarifying the factors that must be considered in determining appropriate punishments under this *Code*.
- Including provisions regarding “gang-free school zones” and enhanced criminal penalties for engaging in gang activity on or within 1,000 feet of property owned or leased by HISD.
- Adding a provision regarding cyberbullying, including activities taking place off-campus that have a direct and substantial impact on the educational environment or the rights of students or teachers.
- Adding a provision prohibiting “sexting” or using a cell phone or other personal communication device to send text or e-mail messages or possessing text or e-mail messages containing images reasonably interpreted as indecent or sexually suggestive while at school or at a school-related function.

Students and parents should be aware that the Houston Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, marital status, religion, veteran status, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. This policy includes a prohibition on racial harassment and a hostile environment, as this type of harassment denies students the right to an education free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Students may utilize the district's complaint procedures (see p. 19) to address any issues related to these areas without fear of retaliation. In addition, HISD will not tolerate sexual harassment at any level. Any complaint of discrimination of any type will be fully investigated, and the district will take appropriate action.

Overview of Responsibilities

The effective enforcement of the *Code of Student Conduct* and the School-Based Discipline Management System is essential in keeping a school and/or school-related activities free of disruption and is dependent on the exercise of the responsibilities by the following:

STUDENTS

- Adhere to school, district, and classroom rules and regulations for behavior and good conduct.

PARENTS

- Support school, district, and classroom rules for student behavior and ensure that their children conduct themselves according to district standards.
- Provide the school with their current address and, when available, current telephone numbers.
- Ensure student attendance at school. By state law, student attendance is the responsibility of parents and guardians.
- Provide the appropriate school personnel with any student information that will affect the student's ability to learn and the student's behavior.
- Read, acknowledge, and understand these rules and the rules applicable to their children's conduct while they are at school.

TEACHERS

- Establish classroom-management procedures that concentrate on good student conduct and support school and district policies and procedures.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Develop with all members of the school community an effective School-Based Discipline Management System that promotes and maintains the support of good student behavior.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Approve a behavior code that identifies standards of conduct for students and enact policies and procedures necessary for implementing and enforcing a structured and disciplined learning environment.

Student Responsibilities

The student's responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment at school and/or school-related activities include the following:

- Attending all classes each day and being on time in conformity with the compulsory attendance laws of the State of Texas.
- Preparing for each class with appropriate materials and completed assignments.
- Dressing according to the dress code adopted by each individual school.
- Showing respect toward others.
- Conducting oneself in a responsible manner.
- Paying required fees and fines.
- Knowing and obeying all school rules in the *Code of Student Conduct* and the School-Based Discipline Management System.
- Cooperating with staff members in the investigation of disciplinary matters.
- Seeking changes in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
- Reporting threats to the safety of students and staff members as well as misconduct on the part of any other students or staff members to the building principal, a teacher, or another adult.
- Using HISD technology systems for school business purposes only and using school computers and related equipment appropriately.
- Abiding by the technology security procedures developed by HISD, such as never leaving a terminal or workstation unattended or unsecured while logged on to a host computer or network.
- Reporting all observed or suspected technology security problems immediately to a teacher.
- Knowing that the use, possession, and/or sale of illegal or unauthorized drugs, alcohol, and weapons are unlawful and prohibited and that students may be subject to random searches in accordance with Board Policy and state and federal law in order to assure a safe school environment.

In general, all students are entitled to enjoy the basic rights of citizenship recognized and protected by law for persons of their age and maturity. The Houston Independent School District shall foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, district personnel, and parents while at school or while attending school activities.

Students shall exercise their rights and responsibilities in compliance with rules established for the orderly conduct of the district's educational mission. The district's rules of conduct and discipline and the School-Based Discipline Management System are established to achieve and maintain order in the school. Students who violate the rights of others or district or school rules shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with established district policies and procedures.

All students are expected to maintain the highest level of discipline and decorum at all school functions. Failure to comply with administrative directives promoting order and respect will result in the student's being removed from participation in school activities, including commencement exercises.

Student Rights and Responsibilities, Board Policies, and Administrative Regulations

The Board Policies and Administrative Regulations of the Houston Independent School District contain the rights and responsibilities of students that are embodied in this *Code of Student Conduct*. A brief description of student rights and responsibilities is included in this section. The proper balance of student rights and privileges (•) with student responsibilities and obligations (+) is essential to the orderly conduct of the district's educational mission.

Instructional Programs

- The Houston Independent School District shall be responsible for providing a well-balanced curriculum and for delivering effective instruction to all students enrolled.
- + Students have the responsibility to strive for academic growth by participating in the appropriate educational program to their utmost ability.

Attendance of Students

- Regular attendance and punctuality shall be required of every student.
- + Students have the responsibility to take advantage of their educational opportunity by attending all classes daily and on time unless circumstances prevent them from doing so.

Evaluation, Grading, and Promotion/Retention of Students

- Students shall be evaluated on a continuous basis in the most effective manner to determine the extent of their progress.
- + Students have the responsibility to maintain reasonable standards of academic performance commensurate with their ability.

Complaints

- Students may present any complaint to the district, either personally or through a representative, through the appropriate complaint procedures.
- + Students have the responsibility to follow the established complaint procedures and to accept the decision that results from the complaint process.

Student Dress Code and Personal Grooming

- Each individual school shall adopt specific standards concerning dress and personal grooming.
- + All students have the responsibility to become familiar with the school's standards and the responsibility to adhere to them.

Student Publications

- Students are entitled to express, in writing, their opinions and may distribute handwritten, duplicated, or printed materials on school premises or at school-sponsored activities at other locations in accordance with certain conditions and procedures established in Board Policy.

- + Students have the responsibility to become familiar with and follow the conditions and procedures in Board Policy. (See Student Publications, p. 22.)

Students and School Property

- Students are expected to show proper respect for both persons and property.
- + Students are responsible for their own actions directed toward school property and for damages to property.

Search of Property and Students

- Students are entitled to the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and they are subject to reasonable searches and seizures.
- + Students have the responsibility not to carry on their person or to have on school property or at school-sponsored events such items as drugs, weapons, alcohol, or other contraband materials in violation of school policy or state law.
- School officials are empowered to conduct reasonable searches of students and school property when there is reasonable cause to believe that students may be in possession of drugs, weapons, alcohol, or other materials ("contraband") in violation of school policy or state law. Students who bring contraband onto school grounds may be searched in order to secure the school environment so learning can take place and to protect other students from any potentially harmful effects stemming from the contraband. School property such as lockers and desks shall remain under the control of school officials and shall be subject to search.
- Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of school lockers or school desks.
- The administration may utilize dogs and metal detectors as provided by HISD policies and applicable laws. Metal detectors and trained dogs may be used at random locations and times by HISD personnel as determined by HISD administrative and law-enforcement personnel.

Education During Suspension

- Student absences while suspended shall be considered as excused absences.
- + Students have the responsibility to make up all work missed while suspended within five school days after their return to school from suspension in order to receive credit for the work.

The 18-Year-Old Student

- The 18-year-old student who has adult status may enroll in and attend public school.
- + The 18-year-old student who is enrolled in public school has the responsibility to follow the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the school district.

The 18-year-old student who has more than five unexcused absences may be withdrawn due to nonattendance for the remainder of the semester after appropriate interventions have been documented. An Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee shall be convened prior to the withdrawal of an 18-year-old student with disabilities for nonattendance.

Student Government

- Students shall be afforded the right through appropriately established guidelines to formulate procedures for student government.
- + Student government officers and representatives have the responsibility to participate in student government and to be aware of needs of the school and concerns of the student body and to work within the established process in addressing their needs and concerns.

Right to Information and Privacy of Records

- Students are assured the right to information and privacy of their records in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.
- + Parents or eligible students have the responsibility to release information to those individuals or agencies that are working actively and constructively for the benefit of the student, including, for example, teachers, administrators, school nurses, etc.

Gang-Free School Zone

- HISD is a “gang-free school zone.” HB 2086 of the 81st Legislature established gang-free school zones and provides for enhanced punishment for gang-related criminal activity occurring in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property that is owned, rented, or leased by a school or school board. Under the statute, the punishment for certain offenses is increased to the punishment prescribed for the next-highest category of offense if the actor is 17 years of age or older and it is shown beyond a reasonable doubt in the trial of the offense that the actor committed the offense at a location that was owned, rented, or leased by a school or school board.

Student Misconduct

The *Code of Student Conduct* provides a description of a broad range of behavior considered to be student misconduct. The behavior described should be viewed as representative of the misconduct that most frequently causes a disruption to the orderly educational process. The acts of misconduct listed in Levels I, II, III, IV, and V are not inclusive. The student who commits an act of misconduct that may be classified into any of the five levels will be subject to disciplinary action by the classroom teacher, assistant principal, and/or principal.

When and Where These Rules Apply

The policies and administrative procedures concerning student conduct apply to actions of students on school property and school buses and, in some cases, for conduct occurring off of school property or within 300 feet of school property. Additionally, these rules are applicable to students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Under state law, a student may be expelled by HISD for Level V misconduct that occurs on the property of another school district within Texas. Additionally, the rules apply to actions of students at all school-sponsored or school-related activities or events, such as field trips, sporting events, stadium assemblies, fairs, or evening school-related activities. Students should be aware that the commission of any felony offense, whether at school or away from school, may result in placement of the student in an HISD DAEP or in expulsion. (See Procedures for Referral to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, pp. 15 and 16, and Procedures for Expulsion, pp. 17 and 18.) Finally, students should be aware that administrators who are made aware of criminal activity whether on or off of campus will make a report to appropriate law enforcement agencies and that, in addition to these administrative rules, students may be subject to criminal charges for violations of the law.

General Discipline Guidelines for Assessing Penalties

When administering discipline, district personnel shall adhere to the following general guidelines:

1. Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain essential order and discipline.
2. Students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Administrators should use caution and should ordinarily consider developmentally appropriate interventions for very young children who engage in misconduct. Factors that must be considered in each decision concerning suspension, removal to a disciplinary alternative education program, expulsion, or placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program, regardless of whether the decision concerns a mandatory or discretionary action, include such factors as:
 - a. seriousness of the offense
 - b. student’s age and intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct
 - c. student’s disciplinary history
 - d. student’s attitude
 - e. potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment
 - f. state law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences
 - g. whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment
 - h. whether the student has a disability that substantially impairs the student’s capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student’s conduct
3. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, HISD transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II or higher misconduct. An administrator may find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense. Finally, a finding that a student has engaged in any offense listed as an offense under Level IV or Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

Levels of Offenses/Overview

Acts of misconduct are categorized into the following five levels of offenses:

Level I—Violation of Classroom Rules:

- Offenses that generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher.

Level II—Administrative Intervention:

- Offenses that are more serious in nature or a continuance of Level I misconduct.

Level III—Suspension and/or Optional Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program:

- Offenses that seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or at school-related activities, or a continuance of repeated Level I, II, or III misconduct. A finding that a student has engaged in a Level III offense may constitute a serious offense.

Level IV—Required Placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program:

- Criminal offenses as defined in Level IV. This may include any felony, whether school-related or not, unless it is one for which expulsion is required. A finding that a student has engaged in an offense listed under Level IV constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

Level V—Expulsion for Serious Offenses:

- Offenses that include those for which a student may or shall be expelled under state law. They include continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the district's *Code of Student Conduct* by a student while placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. A finding that a student engaged in an offense listed under Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

Staff members will use their professional judgment to determine the most effective way to correct student misconduct. Disciplinary actions apply equally to all students, except as provided under Board Policy and Administrative Regulations related to disabled students. (See pp. 24–28.)

General Procedures for Resolving School Problems

School problems can best be resolved at the campus level, where problems start.

In order to resolve problems, parents, guardians, and/or students can meet with a teacher at appropriate times to discuss existing problems. If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with the teacher's decision or explanation, they can meet with the building administrator to review the area of concern. If further assistance is needed, then parents, guardians, or students can meet with the regional superintendent.

Parents, guardians, and students who wish to appeal placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program that extends beyond the next grading period, or who wish to appeal an expulsion, should refer to the section of the *Code* relating to procedures for appropriate guidance.

Levels of Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Options

Level I: Violation of Classroom or Transportation Rules

Each teacher or staff member establishes the rules for the classroom and for school-related activities. Much behavior can be managed by the classroom teacher. The teacher may use any of the disciplinary options listed below in maintaining classroom discipline.

Level I Acts of Misconduct May Include Such Behavior as:

- Violations of rules or procedures established by the teacher
- Refusal to participate in classroom activities
- Unexcused tardiness to class
- Failure to bring required classroom materials or assigned work to class
- General misbehavior, such as eating in class, horseplay, making excessive noise, or violating campus dress codes
- Any other act that disrupts the classroom or interrupts the operation of the class
- Failure to deliver or return written communications between home and school

- Disruptive or noncompliant behavior on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Failure to protect individual computer-account passwords from disclosure

Disciplinary Options/Responses:

- Oral correction
- Teacher-student conference
- Parent contact: note or telephone call to parent
- Student-counselor conference
- Detention (maintained by teacher) before or after school
- Other appropriate in-class disciplinary actions
- Restriction of school-bus privileges by the bus operator

Procedures:

1. Any staff member who observes a student violating class rules may correct the student.
2. A record of the offenses and disciplinary actions should be maintained by the teacher or staff member on the appropriate form.
3. The teacher should discuss the misbehavior with the parent, an administrator, or support personnel.
4. Level I behavior violations and discipline options/responses are not limited to those provided. Serious or repeated violations may result in a more severe response or referral to Level II.

Level II: Administrator Intervention

Some infractions will result in a referral to an administrator. The disciplinary response depends on the offense, previous actions, and the seriousness of the misbehavior. Level II acts of misconduct include those student acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or in the school. A teacher who observes a student engaged in Level II or higher misconduct will fill out a discipline/referral form for the principal or other appropriate administrator. The principal will forward an oral or written report to the parents.

Level II Acts of Misconduct Include Such Behavior as:

- Repeated violation of classroom or transportation rules under Level I
- Cheating, plagiarism, or copying the work of other students
- Leaving the classroom or school grounds without the permission of school personnel
- Cutting class or skipping school
- Possession of matches or other flammable materials
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Posting or distributing unauthorized materials on school grounds
- Failure to abide by rules and regulations at extracurricular activities or at cocurricular activities such as field trips
- Loitering in unauthorized areas
- Use or operation of paging devices, including beepers, cell phones, electronic pagers, or any other type of electronic communication system on school campuses or at functions during school hours. Such devices may be used at a time and place as determined by the individual campus in coordination with the campus Shared-Decision-Making Committee (SDMC).

In addition to disciplinary action, the unauthorized use or operation of paging devices will result in confiscation. The principal or other

administrator will notify the parent and pager company of the serial number and of intent to dispose of the device after 30 days. A \$15 administrative fee payable to HISD will be charged if the device is claimed within the 30 days. Paging devices not claimed will be sent to Property Management for disposal.

- Possession of iPods, Mp3 players, personal radios, or personal music devices at school, with final determination of the limits made at the individual campus level
- Cafeteria disturbance
- Violation of a school's mandatory school-uniform policy
- Disruptive behavior on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Any other acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or the school
- Accessing materials and sites on the Internet that are deemed to be inappropriate by HISD
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate e-mail, including e-mail containing offensive language, untruthful statements, junk e-mail, chain letters, or jokes

Disciplinary Options/Responses:

- Parental contact by phone and written or oral notification to parent or guardian
- Required administrator/student/parental conference
- Detention or placement in in-school suspension
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, such as field trips, and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Removal of school transportation privileges
- "Behavior," "behavioral," and/or "conduct" contracts
- Teacher removal of the student from the classroom (following procedures as outlined on pp. 18 and 19)
- Suspension of transportation privileges
- Any other appropriate disciplinary actions determined by the administration

Procedures:

1. Referral to administrator by way of written report not to exceed one page in length
2. Administrator confers with student and/or teacher to establish appropriate action.
3. Written or oral notification of action is sent to parent. Notification is sent to the teacher indicating action taken.
4. Discipline Referral Form is retained by the administrator.
5. Level II behavior violations and Discipline Options/Responses are not limited to those provided.
6. Repeated violations shall result in a more severe response and/or referral to Level III.

Certain physical acts against a student by school personnel (such as choking, kicking, punching, pinching, hitting with an inappropriate object, etc.) are not authorized and will be considered as a violation of the corporal-punishment policies.

Level III: Suspension or Optional Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

Level III acts include misconduct for which an administrator may suspend the student, place the student into in-school suspension, or, if the administrator finds the Level III misconduct to be serious or persistent as defined in this *Code*, refer the student to a district-level Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). The principal or other appropriate administrator makes the disciplinary determination on the basis of the severity of the misconduct. The period of the suspension is limited to three days per occurrence.

Suspension/Optional Removal to a DAEP

Suspension is limited to three days per occurrence and is authorized for conduct listed below. Additionally, the principal or other appropriate administrator may suspend a student for up to three days pending placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. A decision to suspend a student is final and may not be appealed. A student may be suspended, placed into in-school suspension, or, if serious or persistent behavior occurs, removed from the regular classroom and placed in a DAEP for engaging in the following conduct at school or at a school-related event:

- Chronic or repeated disciplinary infractions of Level I and/or Level II offenses
- Fighting
- Gambling
- Misdemeanor stealing/theft of property, including computers and related equipment, in an amount under \$750
- Chronic cutting class or skipping school. Students who are determined to be truant shall be promptly referred to the attendance officer for referral to the courts for enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws.
- Possession of a knife
- Persistent disruptive behavior on a school bus
- Smoking, using, or possessing tobacco or tobacco products
- Interfering with school authorities
- Aggressive, disruptive action or group demonstration that substantially disrupts or materially interferes with school activities. This includes such acts as boycotts, sit-ins, trespassing, and walkouts.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests of school personnel and/or defiance of the authority of school personnel
- Changing school records or documents or signing a parent's name on school documents
- Failure to adhere to terms of behavior contracts
- Indecent/unsolicited sexual proposal/sexual harassment
- Harassment/dating violence, including threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another student, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health
- Selling or soliciting for sale any merchandise on school campus without the authorization of the building principal
- Display of disrespect toward school personnel or campus visitors
- Participation in activities by groups such as gangs and cults
- Visual display of gang-related signs or symbols on the body, clothing, accessories, or personal property of the student (e.g., notebooks, book covers, journals). Gang-related associations may be referred to the HISD Police Department for appropriate documentation.
- Failure or refusal to cover up while on campus or at a school-related activity any tattoo that is inappropriate, obscene, offensive, vulgar, or gang-related.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures
- Possession or use of fireworks, "poppers," smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device that may be used to disrupt the educational process
- Possession of laser pens or laser pointers
- Possession of live ammunition or bullets

- Engaging in threats or other acts of intimidation that interfere with another student's desire or willingness to participate in the educational process
- Any verbal abuse or bullying of others, including but not limited to slurs, name-calling, or derogatory statements to another person because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, physical/personal appearance, or sexual orientation. Bullying is defined as any act or speech that subjects persons to indignity, humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse or threat of physical abuse, social or other isolation, shame, or disgrace.
- Cyberbullying, defined as the use of the Internet, cell phones, or other devices to send, post, or text-message images and material intended to hurt or embarrass another person. This may include, but is not limited to, continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said he or she wants no further contact with the sender; sending or posting threats, sexual remarks, or pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech); ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums and posting false statements as fact intended to humiliate the victim; disclosure of personal data such as the victim's real name, address, or school on Web sites or forums; posing as the victim for the purpose of publishing material in his or her name that defames or ridicules him or her; sending threatening and harassing text, instant messages, or e-mails to the victim; and posting or sending rumors or gossip to instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target, which is determined to have a material and substantial interference with school activities or with the rights of students and teachers.
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury (Section 22.01(a)(2), Penal Code)
- Misdemeanor criminal mischief (i.e., vandalism) resulting in the destruction or defacing of any property, including computers and related equipment, in an amount greater than \$20 but less than \$1,500. This includes rendering computers or related equipment inoperable or damaging them by erasing data with magnets; intentionally introducing viruses, worms, or trojans; or tampering with programs or data without authority.
- "Hacking" or other use of computers to gain unauthorized access to district or other databases, including student, faculty, or district data files, without permission. In addition to any criminal penalties, students may have their computer privileges suspended.
- Use of school computers, facsimile equipment, or other electronic devices, including cell phones or digital cameras, to transmit, receive, view, or display obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, or racist media or to display information that advocates unlawful activities or provides guidance on the construction or production of weapons, illegal devices, or controlled substances
- Use of the school computer network with the intent to incite violence or aggressive and/or disruptive action on the part of the student body, use of slanderous language, or use of language that promotes racial disorder or sexual harassment and is disruptive to the school environment
- Use of the school computer network for soliciting or purchasing commercial materials and/or services of any kind
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate e-mails containing offensive language
- "Sexting" or using a cell phone or other personal communication device to send text or e-mail messages or possessing

text or e-mail messages containing images reasonably interpreted as indecent or sexually suggestive while at school or at a school-related function. In addition to any disciplinary action, phones will be confiscated and students should be aware that any images suspected to violate criminal laws will be referred to law-enforcement authorities.

- Logging on to a computer, sending e-mail, or accessing the Internet or the district's intranet using a name or password other than the student's own
- Posting unauthorized Web pages, graphic images, or offensive language or comments on a school/district server, Web page, or guest book
- Use of the school computer network to engage in participation in hate groups
- Misdemeanor extortion, which is defined as obtaining money or information from another by coercion or intimidation of a value less than \$1,500
- Bribery or attempted bribery as defined by Section 36.02 of the Texas Penal Code
- Possession or use of any prescription or nonprescription drug, medicine, vitamins, or other chemical in violation of the Guidelines for Dispensing Medications at School
- Refusal to cooperate in, or interference with, a random metal-detector safety search
- Any other acts of serious misconduct that disrupt the school environment in the classroom and/or school
- Hazing, which means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student by one person alone or acting with others that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization or general classification of students whose members are or include other students
- Assisting (directly or indirectly) with the promotion of any behavior prohibited by this *Code of Student Conduct*

Disciplinary Options/Responses:

- Required administrator/student/parent conference
- Restitution or restoration, as applicable, for vandalism to property
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, such as field trips, and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Placement of the student into in-school suspension
- Suspension for up to three school days per occurrence
- Removal of transportation services for up to one year
- Restriction or removal of computer-use privileges for up to one year
- Teacher removal of the student from the classroom (following procedures as outlined on pp. 18 and 19)
- Referral to a district Disciplinary Alternative Education Program
- Any other appropriate disciplinary actions determined by the administration

Procedures:

1. Referral to administrator by way of discipline card, with report sent to the parent

2. Administrator confers with student and parent about the misconduct. The student is given an opportunity to explain the incident. The administrator determines misconduct.
3. Administrator decides whether to suspend student or refer him or her to a DAEP. Written notice of the offenses and the action taken are given to the parent and teacher. If the student is referred to a DAEP, the parent shall be given a letter stating the reasons for the removal and setting the term. The letter placing the student should state the term of placement in a specific number of days of successful attendance in the DAEP. The final day of placement shall extend to a natural transition point such as the end of a grading cycle, a semester, or the end of the school year. Students under the age of 6 may not be placed in a DAEP.
4. If the referral to a DAEP extends beyond the end of the next grading period or the end of the school year, the rules contained in the procedures section of this *Code* on page 15 for a long-term removal to a DAEP will be followed.
5. Repeated violations shall result in a more severe response and/or referral to Level IV.

Level IV: Required Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

A student shall be removed from the classroom and placed in or referred to a DAEP by the campus administrator when the student engages in any conduct listed under Level IV of the *Code of Student Conduct*. Placements may not generally exceed one year, unless after review it is determined that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or a threat to district employees and it is determined that placement is in the best interest of the student. Additionally, there is no limitation on the length of placement of a student in a DAEP if it is determined that the student engaged in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student.

Level IV Acts of Misconduct Include Such Behavior as:

- Felony conduct. There are three instances of felony conduct for which a student must be referred to a DAEP. The placement made in accordance with this section shall be for any period considered necessary on the basis of the circumstances and facts known; however, the student shall still receive a review of the placement at intervals not to exceed 120 days. The circumstances include:
 - Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony on campus, at a school-related function or activity, or within 300 feet of the school property line
 - While enrolled in HISD and regardless of the location of the offense, receiving deferred prosecution or a finding by a court or jury of delinquent conduct under the Family Code, or the reasonable belief of the principal that the student has committed a felony under Title 5 of the Penal Code, which includes criminal homicide; murder; capital murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; false imprisonment; kidnapping; aggravated kidnapping; indecency with a child; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding suicide; or tampering with a consumer product, regardless of where the offense occurs.
 - Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony other than one defined in Title 5 of the Penal Code that occurs more than 300 feet from the campus and is not related to a school-based activity or function if the principal reasonably believes

that the student has engaged in such felony and the principal also determines that the continued presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process

Level IV misconduct also includes a finding that the student has engaged in the following conduct on a school campus, at a school-related activity, or within 300 feet of school property:

- Engaging in assault, which is defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another and which may include causing bodily injury by recklessly or intentionally pointing a laser pointer or laser pen at another student or a staff member (Section 22.01(a)(1) and Section 1.07(a)(8), Penal Code)
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled drug, or other controlled substances (Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.), unless punishable as a felony
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a dangerous drug (Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code), unless punishable as a felony
- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol
- Selling, giving, or delivering an alcoholic beverage to another person
- Committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to an abusable volatile chemical or possession, delivery to a minor, or possession of paraphernalia used with volatile chemicals (Sections 485.031 through 485.034, Health and Safety Code)
- Engaging in conduct that contains elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure, defined to include offenses against chastity, common decency, morals, and the like (Sections 21.07 and 21.08, Penal Code)
- Felony stealing/theft of computer equipment or any other property in an amount greater than \$750
- Burglary of an HISD facility
- Defacing of school property with graffiti or other means that results in a loss or destruction to property in an amount less than \$20,000 (Section 28.08, Penal Code)

Level IV misconduct also includes a finding that the student engaged in the following conduct on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity:

- Knowingly making a false report against a staff member that is later determined to be unsubstantiated at the conclusion of any investigation initiated as a result of the report
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another when the person knows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative (Section 22.01 (a)(3), Penal Code)
- Participation in an illegal organization such as a fraternity, sorority, secret society, gang, cult, or other criminal combination prohibited by law that is defined as an organization composed at least in part of students and that seeks to perpetuate itself by recruiting members from the students enrolled in school on the basis of the decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a student in the school who is qualified by the rules of the school to fill the special aims of the organization (Section 37.121, Texas Education Code). Participation includes indirect participation such as recruiting and indirect guidance or leadership of the activities of gangs, cults, secret societies, and fraternities and sororities.

- Repeated possession of ammunition or bullets
- Possession of BB guns, pellet guns, or air rifles
- Possession of electric stun guns or other protective devices designed to administer an electric shock
- Possession of replicas of guns that are sufficiently similar in appearance to a real gun such that, if pointed or shown to another person, a reasonable person may believe the student to be in possession of a firearm
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Use of computers or any other means to access and to tamper with HISD records, to include grade books or any other public school records or any other records of a school-related activity maintained by HISD (Sec. 37.10, Penal Code)
- “Hacking” or breach of computer security or unauthorized access to HISD computer systems that results in loss or damage in an amount greater than \$1,500. A finding that the student accessed an HISD computer system constitutes a finding that the conduct occurred on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity (Sections 33.02 and 33.03, Penal Code).

Level IV additionally includes the following, regardless of whether the offense occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity:

- Conduct involving a public school that contains the elements of the offense of false alarm or report (Section 42.06, Penal Code) or terroristic threat (Section 22.07, Penal Code).

Terroristic threat is defined as threatening to commit violence or harm to any person or property with intent to cause an emergency response or that places any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or interrupting the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access by threats of violence or other means, or causing impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, the public water, gas, or power supply, or other public service (Section 22.07, Penal Code)

- Making a “hit list,” in which a student makes a list of people to be harmed by means of a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with the intent to cause bodily harm
- Engaging in the offense of retaliation under Section 36.06, Penal Code, against any school employee by engaging in conduct such as intentionally or knowingly threatening to harm another by an unlawful act in retaliation for that person’s performance of his or her official duties, unless the student engages in conduct punishable as a felony in retaliation against a person, in which case the student may be expelled under Level V

The terms of a placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) under this required placement section, as well as under Level III, prohibit the student from attending or participating in any school activities. Special Education students may be placed in a DAEP strictly in accordance with the procedures for discipline of Special Education students beginning on page 24. Special Education students may not be placed in a DAEP unless the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee determines that it is educationally appropriate and that the student has engaged in conduct for which referral to a DAEP is authorized.

Procedures:

1. Referral to administrator by way of written report not to exceed one page in length, with report sent to the parent. If appropriate, there will be an investigation by the HISD Police Department. A police report is required if the student’s conduct

is a criminal offense. If the student is transported by the police, the parent should ordinarily be notified within one hour.

2. Administrator confers with student and parent about the student’s misconduct. The student is given an opportunity to explain his or her version of the incident. The administrator determines the resulting disciplinary action. If the student withdraws from the district prior the imposition of placement in a DAEP, the administrator may proceed with determining an appropriate punishment for the offense. If the student enrolls in the district during the same year or subsequent school years, the district may order the enforcement of the order at that time except for any period of the placement that has been served by the student in HISD or in another school district. A principal may, but is not required to, remove a student to a DAEP for off-campus conduct for which removal is required if the administrator does not learn of the conduct before the first anniversary of the date the conduct occurred.
3. Administrator determines whether the student engaged in Level IV misconduct. If the administrator determines the student engaged in a Level IV offense, the administrator must determine the length of placement in the DAEP. When the student is placed in a DAEP, the parent shall be given a letter stating the reasons for the placement and setting the term. In determining the length of the placement, the administrator shall consider such factors as seriousness of the offense; student’s age; frequency of misconduct; student’s attitude; potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment; state law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences; and whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment. The letter placing the student should state the term of placement in a specific number of days of successful attendance in the DAEP. The final day of placement shall extend to a natural transition point such as the end of a grading cycle, a semester, or the end of the school year. Students under the age of 6 may not be removed from class and placed in a DAEP.
4. If the student’s placement in a DAEP is greater than 60 days or extends beyond the end of the next grading period, whichever is earlier, the student’s parent or guardian is entitled to notice and opportunity to participate in a proceeding before the regional superintendent or his or her designee, who shall be the designee of the school board (see p. 15).
5. Before a student may be placed in a DAEP for a period that extends beyond the end of the school year, the principal must determine that:
 - the student’s presence in the regular classroom program or at the home school presents a danger of physical harm to the student or other individuals; or
 - the student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the district’s *Code of Student Conduct*.

A finding that a student has engaged in any conduct listed under Level IV or Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior. An administrator may also find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense.
6. The curriculum of the DAEP shall consist of English/language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline and shall provide for the student’s behavioral needs through supervision and counseling. The student shall be allowed to complete any course in which the student was enrolled at the time the student was removed to the DAEP or a course needed to meet a high-school graduation requirement prior to the beginning of the next school year.
7. The board’s designee will review each student’s progress, including conduct, at the DAEP at intervals not to exceed 120 days or at the end of the term of placement in the DAEP, whichever occurs first.

Ongoing progress monitoring shall be conducted by way of grade reporting, parent/student conferences, grade-book reviews, reviews of graduation plans, and input from the parent regarding why the student should be returned to the regular campus. A review will be conducted prior to 120 calendar days of enrollment. At this review, the student or the student's parent or guardian will be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular campus. This review will be conducted by the board's designee and may include representatives from HISD and the DAEP, parents, and representation from the sending school. The board's designee shall make reasonable efforts to invite the parent or guardian to the 120-day review. If, after reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in the meeting have been made, he or she is unable to attend, the board's designee may proceed with the meeting in their absence. After assessing the student's progress, those in attendance may decide that the student:

- (1) remain in the DAEP; (2) be removed from the DAEP and placed in a nondisciplinary alternative educational program to more appropriately address the student's needs; or (3) may return to the sending campus or the campus to which the student is presently zoned. Within three business days from the date of the determination, the committee's decision will be provided in writing to the parent or guardian. In the case of students with disabilities, an ARD Committee will make this determination.
8. Within two business days after the date a hearing is held in which a student is placed in a DAEP under this section, the principal shall send a copy of the order placing the student in a DAEP to the parent and shall forward a copy to School Administration, which shall forward the required information to the authorized officer of the juvenile court.
9. Any student assigned to the DAEP for a period of 90 school days or longer shall be administered an assessment instrument designed to assess at least a student's basic skills in reading and mathematics. The instrument shall be administered initially on placement of the student in the DAEP, and again on the date of the student's departure from the DAEP, or as near that date as possible.

Level V: Expulsion for Serious Offenses

Level V acts of misconduct include serious misbehavior and/or illegal acts that threaten to impair the educational efficiency of the school and/or that most seriously disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom and/or the school. Under state law, students may be expelled for any violation listed under this section. Expulsion may occur if the Level V act of misbehavior occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property. Expulsion means removal of a student from school for more than three consecutive school days but not longer than one calendar year.

Level V Acts of Misconduct Include the Following Acts That May Result in Optional or Required Expulsion:

OPTIONAL EXPULSION

A student may be expelled from the Houston Independent School District and placed in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or, if not expelled, shall be referred to a DAEP under Level IV for engaging in the following misconduct while on school property, within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

- (1) Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a con-

trolled drug, or other controlled substances (Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.)

- (2) Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a dangerous drug (Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code)
- (3) Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, as defined by Section 1.04, Alcoholic Beverage Code
- (4) Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to an abusable volatile chemical or possession of inhalant paraphernalia (Sections 485.031 through 485.034, Health and Safety Code)
- (5) Possessing a knife, which includes razor blades, utility knives, X-ACTO knives, or other objects that are designed to cut and that are reasonably determined under the circumstances to have been possessed by the student for use as a weapon
- (6) Engaging in assault, which is defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to a staff member or volunteer (Section 22.01(a)(1), Penal Code)
- (7) Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of deadly conduct (Section 22.05, Penal Code)
- (8) Possession of a firearm as defined by 18 U.S.C. §921 off of school property and not at a school activity but within 300 feet of the school property line
- (9) Engaging in any conduct listed under Required Expulsion off of school property and not at a school activity but within 300 feet of the school property line

Regardless of whether the offense takes place at a school-related activity, on school property, or more than 300 feet from the school property line, the student may be expelled if:

- (1) The student engages in assault (Section 22.01(a)(1), Penal Code) against a school-district employee or a volunteer as a result of or in retaliation for the person's employment or association with the district
- (2) The student engages in conduct that contains the elements of criminal mischief (i.e., vandalism) and the destruction of property of an amount greater than \$1,500 or is punishable as a felony (Section 28.03, Penal Code)
- (3) The student engages in conduct against another student that contains the elements of aggravated assault (Section 22.02, Penal Code), sexual assault (Section 22.011, Penal Code), aggravated sexual assault (Section 22.021, Penal Code), murder (Section 19.02, Penal Code), capital murder (Section 19.03 Penal Code), or criminal attempt to commit capital murder (Section 15.01, Penal Code)
- (4) The student engages in conduct involving a public school that contains the elements of the offense of false alarm or report (Section 42.06, Penal Code) or terroristic threat (Section 22.07, Penal Code)

A student may also be expelled from the Houston Independent School District and placed in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or, if not expelled, may be referred to a DAEP under Level IV for engaging in the following misconduct while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

- Continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates this *Code of Student Conduct* on campus while placed in a Chapter

37 DAEP. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, HISD transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II and higher misconduct. An administrator may find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense. Finally, a finding that a student has engaged in any offense listed as an offense under Level IV or Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

TITLE 5 EXPULSIONS

After an opportunity for a hearing, a student may also be expelled from the Houston Independent School District and placed in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program if, regardless of when the offense occurred, the location of the offense, or whether the student was enrolled in HISD at the time of the offense, a student:

- has received deferred prosecution under the Family Code for conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5 of the Penal Code;
- has been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct under the Family Code for conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5 of the Penal Code;
- is charged with engaging in conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5 of the Penal Code;
- has been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct under the Family Code for conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5 of the Penal Code;
- has received probation or deferred adjudication for a felony offense under Title 5 of the Penal Code;
- has been convicted of a felony offense under Title 5 of the Penal Code; or
- has been arrested for or charged with a felony offense under Title 5 of the Penal Code.

Before the expulsion, the principal must also determine the student's presence in the classroom threatens the safety of the other students or teachers; will be detrimental to the educational process; or is not in the best interests of the district's students. Title 5 felonies include criminal homicide; murder; capital murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; false imprisonment; kidnapping; aggravated kidnapping; indecency with a child; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding suicide; or tampering with a consumer product. The expulsion shall last until:

- the student graduates from high school;
- the Title V felony charges that resulted in the expulsion are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense; or
- the student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

A decision under this section is final and may not be appealed; however, the placement shall be reviewed at intervals not to exceed 120 days.

REQUIRED EXPULSION

A student shall be expelled from school if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property, whether in HISD or on the property of another school district in Texas:

- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a firearm, which is defined as any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use (Section 46.01(3), Penal Code)
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** an illegal knife, which is defined under state law (Section 46.01(6), Penal Code) as a knife with a blade over five and a half inches and also includes hand instruments designed to cut or stab by being thrown (martial-arts stars), a dagger, a bowie knife, a sword, or a spear
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a club, which is an instrument that is specially designed to inflict serious bodily injury or death when a person is struck with the instrument and includes a blackjack, nightstick, mace, or tomahawk (Section 46.01 (1), Penal Code)
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a weapon listed as a prohibited weapon under Section 46.05, Penal Code. Prohibited weapons are an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a short-barrel firearm, a firearm silencer, a switchblade knife, brass knuckles, armor-piercing ammunition, a chemical-dispensing device, or a zip gun.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of:
 - (A) aggravated assault, which includes causing serious bodily injury to another during the commission of an assault or using or exhibiting a deadly weapon during the commission of an assault (Section 22.02, Penal Code) and which may include damage to a person's eye caused by pointing a laser pen or laser device at another
 - (B) sexual assault (Section 22.011, Penal Code)
 - (C) aggravated sexual assault, which includes causing or threatening to cause serious bodily injury to another during the commission of a sexual assault or using or exhibiting a deadly weapon during the commission of a sexual assault (Section 22.021, Penal Code)
 - (D) arson (Section 28.02, Penal Code)
 - (E) murder (Section 19.02, Penal Code)
 - (F) capital murder (Section 19.03, Penal Code) or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder (Section 15.01, Penal Code)
 - (G) indecency with a child (Section 21.11, Penal Code)
 - (H) aggravated kidnapping (Section 20.04, Penal Code)
 - (I) aggravated robbery (Section 29.03, Penal Code)
 - (J) manslaughter (Section 19.04, Penal Code)
 - (K) criminally negligent homicide (Section 19.05, Penal Code)
 - (L) continued sexual abuse of a child or children (Section 21.02, Penal Code)
 - (M) if punishable as a felony, possessing**, using, selling, giving, delivering, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug or committing a serious act or offense while being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, but only if the conduct is punishable as a felony
- Brings to school a firearm, as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 921, that includes any weapon, including a starter pistol, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device. Students violating this section shall be expelled for at least one year except that:

- (1) The superintendent of schools may modify the length of the expulsion in the case of an individual student.
 - (2) The district must expel the student for one year but may modify the expulsion in order to provide educational services to the expelled student in an HISD DAEP.
 - (3) Federal law requires the expulsion of any student who brings a firearm to school for a minimum term of one year. State law does not allow students under the age of 10 to be expelled, but it requires that HISD educate in a DAEP students between the ages of 6 and 10 who commit expellable offenses. State law does not allow students under the age of 6 to be placed in a DAEP. Students under the age of 10 who bring firearms to school shall be expelled for a term of one year, and the term of the expulsion shall be modified in order to allow for their education in an HISD DAEP for a period of one year. Students under the age of 6 shall be expelled, and the term of the expulsion shall be modified by the superintendent/designee in order to comply with state and federal laws.
- Additionally, a student shall be expelled for engaging in any conduct containing the elements of an offense for which expulsion is required while retaliating against a district employee as a result of the employee's employment with the district, whether it occurs on or off of school property or at a school-related function.
- ** Possession means actual care, custody, control, or management. A student shall be considered to be in possession of any substance or object prohibited or regulated by this *Code of Student Conduct* if the substance or object is: (1) on the student's person or in the student's personal property, such as the student's clothing, purse, book bag, or briefcase; (2) in any private vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, such as an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or (3) in any school property used by the student, such as a locker or desk.

Disciplinary Options/Responses Under Optional Expulsion:

- Notification and investigation by HISD Police Department is required. If a decision is made by the Police Department to transport the student, the administrator should normally contact the parents within one hour.
- Required administrator/parent/student conferences
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, including field trips, and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Restitution or restoration as applicable
- Referral to district Drug-Free Schools and Communities counselors and/or appropriate agencies
- Referral to juvenile court for legal action
- Suspension for up to three consecutive days per occurrence
- Referral to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program
- Expulsion (more than three consecutive school days per occurrence, but not longer than one year). In cases of a student who engages in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student, there is no limitation on the length of the expulsion or the length of the placement in a DAEP.
- Except in the case of firearms, students younger than 10 years may not be expelled for conduct described in this section and must be provided educational services in a DAEP.

Procedures:***

1. The administrator contacts the HISD police to investigate the school infraction and/or illegal act and confers with the student

after consulting with law enforcement. If the student is arrested, the parents should be notified within one hour. Any expulsion must include an official police or law-enforcement investigation. However, it is not necessary to await the results of the investigation before proceeding to an expulsion hearing.

2. The investigating building administrator notifies the student and parents or guardians in writing of the reasons for the proposed expulsion and of the disciplinary response to the conduct. If the student withdraws from the district prior to the imposition of an expulsion, the administrator may proceed with determining an appropriate punishment for the offense. If the student enrolls in the district during the same year or subsequent school years, the district may order the enforcement of the order expelling the student at that time except for any period of the placement that has been served by the student in HISD or in another school district.
3. A school administrator who is an impartial hearing officer will conduct a full hearing before a decision to expel a student is made, unless the parent or guardian waives the hearing.
4. A parent may appeal the expulsion decision as provided in this *Code* in the section on expulsion procedures. (See p. 17.)
5. The district shall inform the student's teacher(s) of the conduct of a student who has engaged in any violation listed in this section. The teacher shall keep this information confidential. Any teacher who intentionally violates this confidentiality is subject to having his or her certification suspended or revoked.
6. Within two business days after the date a hearing is held in which a student is expelled, the principal shall send a copy of the order placing the student in a DAEP or expelling the student along with any information required by Section 52.04, Family Code, including a copy of the police report, to the parent and to School Administration, which shall forward the information to the authorized officer of the juvenile court.
7. Students expelled from HISD are entitled to receive educational services but are not entitled to participate in any regular or extracurricular district programs during the period of the expulsion. HISD has the option of either referring the student to the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (HCJJAEP) or referring the student to an HISD DAEP for the period of the expulsion. A student shall continue to receive instruction and credit for course work through either the HCJJAEP or an HISD DAEP. If the juvenile court finds the student delinquent (guilty) of any conduct described by this section, the juvenile court may order the student to attend the HCJJAEP. Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between HISD and the HCJJAEP, students who are expelled after the first six weeks of school must be expelled for the remainder of the fall semester and the entire spring semester. If the student is expelled after the fourth six weeks, the student must be expelled and must attend the HCJJAEP for the remainder of the spring semester and the entire fall semester of the following school year. Principals shall have discretion to expel for a shorter period of time provided there is an HISD DAEP that is willing to accept the student for the period of expulsion and provided there is no requirement to expel for a longer period.
8. Expelled students who are charged but found not delinquent (not guilty) by a juvenile court shall be readmitted to the district. Students who are adjudicated of (who plead to) a lesser offense, or whom the Harris County District Attorney decides not to prosecute, may be readmitted at the discretion of the

district. If readmitted, the district may place the student in an HISD DAEP. Students who are not readmitted have the option to continue their educational services at the HCJJAEP.

***All parties shall consult the Procedures section of this *Code* or Board Policy for complete procedures for expulsion and appeal of expulsion. (See p. 17.) Students under the age of 10 years who commit Level V offenses must be referred to a DAEP and may not be expelled.

Zero Tolerance/Pursuit of Criminal Charges

The HISD Board of Education, in accordance with its major system priorities, believes the school environment should be safe for all students and free of disruptions that interfere with the educational process. In response to this belief, the board has developed a policy of zero tolerance. This policy shall apply to elementary-, middle-, and high-school students.

In cases where students in elementary, middle, or high school engage in conduct that contains the elements of an offense in violation of the Penal Code or the Education Code, the school district will pursue arrest, charges, and removal to a DAEP, juvenile detention facility, or county jail. Parents and students should be aware that HISD Police Officers are peace officers commissioned by the State of Texas and are authorized to enforce all laws or take any action to enforce the law whether on campus or away from campus.

Reports to Local Law Enforcement

The principal has an obligation under the law to notify the HISD Police Department and the local police department if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has engaged in any criminal offense in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.

The principal or other administrator who notifies local law enforcement of these offenses shall notify each instructional or support-staff member who has regular contact with the student who has committed an expellable offense.

Court Involvement

If a student is found to have committed an offense under Level IV or V of this *Code* and the student is placed in a DAEP, within two business days, the principal must send a copy of the order placing the student in a DAEP to the HISD administrator in charge of the DAEP, who shall notify the county juvenile authorities. The county may decide whether the student is in need of supervision, whether the student has engaged in delinquent conduct, or whether the student should be referred to an appropriate state agency. Additionally, students and parents should be aware that pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding between HISD and Harris County, students who commit felonies away from school may be ordered by the Juvenile Court to attend school at the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

Emergency Placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), Suspension, or Immediate Expulsion

A principal or a principal's designee may order the immediate placement of a student in a DAEP when it is determined the student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it:

- seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in a class; or

- seriously interferes with the ability of the student's classmates to learn; or
- seriously interferes with the operation of school or a school-sponsored activity.

A principal or a principal's designee may order the immediate expulsion of a student from the school for any reason for which expulsion would be authorized on a nonemergency basis. At the time of the emergency placement or emergency expulsion, the student shall be given oral notice of the reason for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion would be authorized. Within a reasonable time, but not later than the tenth school day after the date of the placement or expulsion, the student shall be accorded the appropriate due process. Students with disabilities must be treated in accordance with federal and state regulations applicable to students with disabilities, and the emergency placement or expulsion must be consistent with the consequences that would apply to a student without a disability.

Corporal Punishment

Board of Education policy prohibits corporal punishment as a disciplinary method within the Houston Independent School District.

Students Required to Register as Sex Offenders

Any student who is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and who is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, shall be removed to the DAEP for at least one semester.

If a student is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and is not under any form of court supervision, HISD may remove the student to the DAEP for one semester or elect to leave the student in the regular classroom. The district may not leave the student in the regular classroom if the board's designee determines that the student's presence in the regular classroom:

- (1) threatens the safety of other students or teachers;
- (2) will be detrimental to the educational process; or
- (3) is not in the best interests of the district's students.

A student or the student's parent or guardian may appeal the decision to place the student in the DAEP by requesting a conference among the board's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the student. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. If the board's designee determines at the conclusion of the conference that the student is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the student shall be placed in the DAEP. The decision of the board's designee is final and may not be appealed.

Review Procedure

1. At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in the DAEP, the board's designee shall convene a committee to review the student's continued placement in the DAEP. The committee must be composed of:
 - a classroom teacher from the campus to which the student would be assigned were the student not placed in the DAEP;
 - the student's parole or probation officer or, in the case of a student who does not have a parole or probation officer, a representative of the local juvenile probation department;

- an instructor from the DAEP to which the student is assigned;
 - a school-district designee; and
 - a counselor employed by the school district.
2. The committee by majority vote shall determine and recommend to the board's designee whether the student should be returned to the regular classroom or remain in the DAEP.
 3. If the committee recommends that the student be returned to the regular classroom, the board's designee shall return the student to the regular classroom unless the board's designee determines that the student's presence in the regular classroom:
 - (a) threatens the safety of other students or teachers;
 - (b) will be detrimental to the educational process; or
 - (c) is not in the best interests of the district's students.
 4. If the committee recommends that the student remain in the DAEP, the board's designee shall continue the student's placement in the DAEP unless the board's designee determines that the student's presence in the regular classroom:
 - (a) does not threaten the safety of other students or teachers;
 - (b) will not be detrimental to the educational process; and
 - (c) is not contrary to the best interests of the district's students.
 5. If, after receiving the committee's recommendation, the board's designee determines that the student should remain in the DAEP, the board's designee shall before the beginning of each school year convene the review committee described above to review the student's placement in the DAEP.
 6. The placement of any student who is a registered sex offender and is also a student with a disability who receives Special Education services must be made in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. The review of the student's placement as described above shall be conducted by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee, although the ARD Committee may request that the board's designee convene a regular review committee to assist the ARD Committee in conducting the review.
 7. If a student who has been placed in a DAEP or a JJAEP as a registered sex offender transfers to HISD during the student's mandatory placement, the board's designee will convene a review committee as described above to determine the student's appropriate placement. The committee may recommend:
 - (a) that the student be assigned to the DAEP for the remainder of the time unserved in the student's previous district, plus an additional semester, without conducting any additional review of the student's placement between semesters;
 - (b) that the student be assigned to the DAEP for the remainder of the time unserved in the student's previous district; or
 - (c) that the student be placed in the regular classroom.

The board's designee shall not allow the student to return to the regular classroom if the designee determines that the student's presence in the regular classroom:

- (a) threatens the safety of other students or teachers;
- (b) will be detrimental to the educational process; or
- (c) is not in the best interests of the district's students.

Procedures for Referral to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)

(for a period that extends more than 60 days, beyond the end of the next grading period, or beyond the end of the school year)

If the student is removed for more than 60 days or a period that extends beyond the end of the next grading period or beyond the end of the school year, whichever is earlier, the student and the student's parent or guardian are entitled to receive notice and an opportunity to request a meeting with the regional superintendent or his or her designee. If the student withdraws from the district prior to the imposition of placement in a DAEP, the administrator may proceed with determining an appropriate punishment for the offense. If the student enrolls in the district during the same year or subsequent school years, the district may order the enforcement of the order at that time except for any period of the placement that has been served by the student in HISD or in another school district. The decision of the regional superintendent/designee is final and may not be appealed. Before the principal can place the student in a DAEP that extends beyond the end of the school year, he/she must determine that:

- (1) the student's presence in the regular classroom program or at the student's regular campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or to another individual; or
- (2) the student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Ordinarily, a student may not be placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program for a period that exceeds one year unless the regional superintendent/designee also makes a determination after a review that:

- (1) the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees;
- (2) extended placement is in the best interest of the student; or
- (3) the student engaged in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student, in which case any limitation on the length of placement does not apply.

Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, HISD transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior of Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II and higher misconduct. An administrator may also find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense. Finally, a finding that a student has engaged in any offense listed as an offense under Level IV or Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

Under state law, students under the age of 6 may not be removed from class and placed in a DAEP. The principal shall set a term for the student's placement in the DAEP, consistent with the requirements of the law and of the DAEP, and shall deliver a written copy of the order placing the student in a DAEP to the parent or guardian. The letter placing the student should state the term of placement in a specific number of days of successful attendance in the DAEP.

The progress of each student at the DAEP will be reviewed at the DAEP at intervals not to exceed 120 days or at the end of the term

of placement in the DAEP, whichever occurs first. Each student's progress shall be monitored by way of grade reporting, parent/student conferences, grade book reviews, a review of conduct, reviews of graduation plans, and input from the parent regarding why the student should be returned to the regular campus. At this review, the student or the student's parent or guardian will be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular campus. This review will be conducted by a review committee including representatives from HISD and the DAEP, parents, and a representative from the student's referring or home campus. If, after reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in the meeting, he or she is unable to attend, the review committee may proceed with the meeting in his or her absence. After assessing the student's progress, the review committee may decide that the student will continue his or her placement at the DAEP or that the student will be returned to the student's referring campus or home campus. The decision of the committee shall be made by a majority of the committee members. Within three business days from the date of the determination, the review committee's decision will be provided in writing to the parent or guardian. The review committee's decision is final and may not be appealed. Where the review committee decides to return a student to a regular campus, parental permission is not required. In the case of students with disabilities, an ARD Committee will make this determination. A student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student under the teacher removal provisions, unless the teacher agrees or the campus placement review committee has agreed that the teacher's classroom is the best or only placement available. If the teacher removed the student from class for engaging in assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, or assault against the teacher, the student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent. The teacher may not be coerced to consent. In accordance with federal law, the placement of a student with disabilities may be changed only by a duly constituted ARD Committee.

Upon voluntary, written request (or documentation of such request) by the student's parent(s), the review committee may consider placement in the DAEP beyond the original term of the placement in the DAEP. The review committee has the discretion to grant or deny the parental request. If the request is granted, the review committee shall determine the term of the voluntary placement. The voluntary placement shall extend to a natural transition point such as the end of a grading cycle, a semester, or the end of the school year in which the original term ends. The parent shall provide a signed acknowledgement that the student will not be allowed to return to a regular campus during the term of the voluntary placement. Students attending a DAEP as a voluntary placement will be subject to the 120-day review described above.

Any student assigned to the DAEP for a period of 90 school days or longer shall be administered an assessment instrument designed to assess at least a student's basic skills in reading and mathematics. The instrument shall be administered initially on placement of the student in the DAEP, and again on the date of the student's departure from the DAEP, or as near that date as possible.

The HISD *Code of Student Conduct* governs student conduct at the DAEP. Continued misconduct may result in placement for an additional period of time in the DAEP and may further result in expulsion from HISD and placement in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

Review by Principal

If a principal's designee and/or the assistant principal places a student in a DAEP that extends beyond the end of the next grading period, the principal or his or her impartial designee shall hold a review of this decision at the request of the student, the parent, or the guardian. This request for a principal's review must be made to the principal within three school days of the time the punishment was imposed. If the principal initially makes the decision to place the student in a DAEP that extends beyond the end of the next grading period, the review may be taken directly to the regional superintendent.

If a student is new to HISD, HISD receives a copy of the placement order, the act is one for which placement in a DAEP is permitted under the HISD *Code of Student Conduct*, and the student was placed in a DAEP by the district from which the student is transferring to HISD, whether in this state or another state, the principal/designee may continue the placement in a DAEP under the terms and conditions set by the other school district prior to the student's arrival in HISD. The term of the placement continued shall not exceed one year in the aggregate, unless after a review the district determines that:

- (1) the student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees;
- (2) extended placement is in the best interest of the student; or
- (3) the student engaged in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student, in which case any limitation on the length of placement does not apply.

Appeal to Regional Superintendent/Designee

Within five days of receipt of notice of the decision to place the student in a DAEP, the student/parent must request a meeting, in writing, with the appropriate regional superintendent/designee or the decision shall be final. The regional superintendent or designee will review any placement in a DAEP that extends beyond the next grading period at the request of the student, the parent, or the guardian. The regional superintendent/designee will allow the school administration and the parent, guardian, or student to make a 10-minute presentation. The length of the presentation may be increased by the regional superintendent/designee. Whether witnesses or documentary evidence will be considered by the regional superintendent is left to his or her discretion. When the regional superintendent/designee completes the hearing, he/she will render a decision in writing to the parent within seven school days from the hearing date. A student may be placed in a DAEP pending this appeal. The decision of the regional superintendent/designee is final and may not be appealed.

At the hearing, the regional superintendent/designee will:

- advise the student orally or in writing of the alleged misconduct
- explain the evidence of the misconduct and give the student the opportunity to present his or her side if the student denies the allegation of misconduct
- render a final decision on the placement and the duration of the placement, including, if necessary, continuing placement of a new student in a DAEP under the terms and conditions set by another school district prior to the student's arrival in HISD

Procedures for Continuation of DAEP Placement After Receipt of Notice Under Article 15.27(g)

The principal shall review the placement of a student in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) upon receipt of notice under Article 15.27(g), Code of Criminal Procedure:

- (1) that the prosecution of the case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication, or deferred prosecution will be initiated; or
- (2) that the court or jury found the student not guilty or made a finding that the child did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

On receipt of a notice under this article, the principal or his or her designee shall review the student's placement in the DAEP. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review. The principal or his or her designee shall schedule a review of the student's placement with the student's parent or guardian not later than the third class day after the principal receives notice from the office or official designated by the court. After reviewing the notice and receiving information from the student's parent or guardian, the principal or his or her designee may continue the student's placement in the DAEP if there is reason to believe that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers.

The student or the student's parent or guardian may appeal the principal's decision to the regional superintendent, who shall rule on the record made before the principal and may consider additional matters. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal. The student, parent, or guardian may appeal the decision of the regional superintendent to the Board of Education.

The board shall, at the next scheduled meeting, review the notice provided under Article 15.27(g), Code of Criminal Procedure, and receive information from the student, the student's parent or guardian, and the principal or principal's designee contained in the record made at the lower-level appeals and confirm or reverse the decision under Subsection (h). The board shall make a record of the proceedings. If the board confirms the decision of the regional superintendent or his or her designee, the board shall inform the student and the student's parent or guardian of the right to appeal to the Texas Commissioner of Education.

Procedures for Expulsion and the Appeal of Expulsion

Decisions to expel a student shall not be made until there has been a full hearing, unless such hearing is specifically waived by the student and his or her parents or guardian in writing. An accurate record of any hearing will be maintained. Records of expulsions shall be filed in the principal's office of the school where the misconduct occurred, with evidence attached. Pending the expulsion hearing, the student may be suspended for up to three days and must then be placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program or in in-school suspension pending

the hearing. The hearing must be scheduled within three days. Additionally, the hearing should be held within seven school days from the date of the offense. The date for the hearing may be deferred beyond seven school days with the mutual agreement of the parties; however, the student may not be placed in an unsupervised setting beyond suspension for three days while awaiting the hearing. The school official conducting the hearing shall make a decision concerning the case within seven school days from the hearing date and inform the student and his or her parents or guardians of their right and of the process to appeal the decision to the next-higher administrative level. No student may enroll in any other school within the district until eligible for readmission to his or her school of record. A student may be expelled for up to a full academic year.

If an expulsion is proposed by the principal or his or her designee or assistant principal, the following procedures shall apply:

- (a) The student and his or her parent or guardian must be notified in writing of the reason(s) for the proposed expulsion, and a prompt hearing at the school must be arranged unless waived by the student and his or her parents in writing. The reasons for the proposed expulsion that clearly detail the nature of the offense must be furnished so they may prepare a defense. The student and his or her parent or guardian must also be furnished a copy of the expulsion procedures. They shall be advised that they may present witnesses and documentary evidence to defend against the allegations. The administration may be represented by any person involved in discipline at the school level or by the school attorney, whoever is deemed appropriate.
- (b) The student is entitled to a fair and impartial hearing. The principal may conduct the hearing if he/she is impartial and disinterested and his or her acts, judgment, or decisions are not an issue in the hearing. If not, the principal shall select an impartial designee to conduct the hearing.
- (c) A student is entitled to be represented by the student's parent or guardian or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the school district. The student's representative may be an attorney. If a parent or guardian is unable to attend, he/she may designate an adult to represent the student. The district may require evidence of the appointment by the parent or guardian of any such representative. The hearing will be recorded either by tape recording or court reporter. If the school makes a good-faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place of the hearing, the district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent or guardian, or another adult representing the student attends. The school may proceed with expulsion, even though the student withdraws from the district.
- (d) If the evidence presented at the hearing warrants an expulsion in the judgment of the school official conducting the hearing, the hearing official may issue the appropriate expulsion order. A copy of the order should be sent to the student and his or her parents or guardians and to the HISD administrator in charge of the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (HCJJAEP), who shall forward a copy to the county. If the decision is to expel the student, the administration shall inform the student and the parents or guardians in writing of the decision within seven school days of the hearing date and apprise the student and the parents or guardians of the right to appeal the decision to the regional superintendent. Factors that will be considered in determining the length of expulsion may include such factors

as seriousness of the offense; student's age; frequency of misconduct; student's attitude; potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment; state law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences; and whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment. The decision of the school official conducting the hearing must be supported by the evidence and based exclusively on evidence presented at the hearing. Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between HISD and the HCJJAEP, students who are expelled after the first six weeks of school must be expelled for the remainder of the fall semester and the entire spring semester. If the student is expelled after the fourth six weeks, the student must be expelled and must attend the HCJJAEP for the remainder of the spring semester and the entire fall semester of the following school year.

- (e) Any student or his or her parent or guardian who wishes to appeal an expulsion decision shall notify the appropriate regional superintendent within three school days of receipt of the decision of the principal or his or her designee. The regional superintendent will arrange a time for the appeal hearing. Such notification to the regional superintendent shall include or be followed immediately by a letter from the school official who conducted the hearing. The school official who conducted the hearing will provide a complete record of the hearing with a description of the student's conduct, including all offenses and dates. The tape recording or court reporting of the hearing shall accompany and become a part of the record. The regional superintendent shall notify the student and the parent, guardian, or representative of the time and place of the hearing. The hearing shall be held within seven calendar days of the date the student and parent or guardian notify the regional superintendent of his or her intention to appeal, unless an extension is given.
- (f) At the hearing on appeal, the regional superintendent shall conduct a hearing attended by school officials, the student, and the parent or guardian. The appeal is based on the record developed before the principal or his or her designee. Both the administration and the student will be allowed to make a short oral presentation based on the record. The time allowed for the oral presentation is left to the discretion of the hearing officer. The regional superintendent may affirm the action of the principal or his or her designee, overrule it, or issue any other appropriate order. A copy of the order shall be sent to the student and his or her parents or guardian and to the HISD administrator in charge of the HCJJAEP. The regional superintendent shall inform the student and parent or guardian in writing of the decision within seven school days of the hearing date and apprise the student and parent or guardian of the right of appeal to the Board of Education.
- (g) The student or parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the regional superintendent to the Board of Education by notifying the Board Services Office in writing of his or her intention to appeal. The notice must be filed within five school days of the receipt of the regional superintendent's decision. Appeals to the Board of Education are also appeals on the record; no new evidence may be introduced for any purpose. The appeal before the board will be limited to a 10-minute oral presentation by both the appropriate administrative representative and by the student or parent or guardian. The hearing will be in closed session, unless an open hearing is requested by the student or parent or

guardian. Decisions of the Board of Education may be appealed to state district court in Harris County.

- (h) Ordinarily, a student may not be expelled for a period that exceeds one year unless the regional superintendent/designee also makes a determination after a review that:
 - (1) the student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees;
 - (2) extended placement is in the best interest of the student; or
 - (3) the student engaged in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student, in which case any limitation on the length of placement does not apply.

At whatever appellate level in which an expulsion order becomes final, a copy of the final written order expelling the student shall be delivered to the student and the student's parent or guardian by the HISD administrator in charge of the HCJJAEP, who shall forward a copy to the chief juvenile probation officer of Harris County.

When necessary to ensure effective communication, any notice required to be sent to the parent or guardian of a student shall be written in the language spoken by the parent or guardian. If the language spoken by the parent or guardian is other than English or Spanish, such notice shall be written in such other language necessary for communication.

The Houston Independent School District will honor expulsion orders from other school districts and shall not admit a student expelled from another district until the student completes the period of expulsion.

Procedures for Teacher Removal of Students

The Texas Education Code provides teachers with three ways to maintain discipline by removing unruly or disruptive students from the classroom. Each alternative for removal of students carries different disciplinary and administrative consequences. This section sets forth the three different alternatives.

Reasons for Teacher Removal of Students

Alternative I

- A teacher may send a student to the principal's office to maintain effective discipline in the classroom as stated under Levels I and II. (See pp. 6 and 7.)

Disciplinary Options Under Alternative I

- If the student is removed to maintain effective discipline as stated under Alternative I, the principal is free to employ any disciplinary management technique or option authorized by the *Code* as determined by the level of the offense and the seriousness of the misconduct. The student removed under this provision may be returned to the teacher's class. This alternative corresponds to Levels I and II and to the Optional Removal to a DAEP under Level III.

Alternative II

- A teacher may remove a student from class who has been documented by the teacher to repeatedly interfere with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn. Documentation should ordinarily be through a written factual account of the behavior that is occurring in the classroom.
- A teacher may remove a student from class whose behavior the teacher determines is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive

that it seriously interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn.

Disciplinary Options Under Alternative II

- If the student is removed by the teacher under Alternative II and the teacher has appropriately documented the reasons for the removal, the student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent. Subject to the review procedures outlined in this section, the disciplinary options available to the principal include:
 - placement in another appropriate classroom
 - placement in in-school suspension
 - placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

Review for Students Removed Under Alternative II

- (a) Not later than the third class day after the day on which a student is removed under this section, the school principal shall schedule a conference with the principal or his or her designee, a parent or guardian of the student, the teacher removing the student from the class, and the student.
- (b) While waiting for the conference, the student may not be returned to the regular classroom without the teacher's consent. Pending the conference, the principal may place the student in in-school suspension, in another class, or in a DAEP.
- (c) At the conference, the student is entitled to written or oral notice of the reasons for the removal, an explanation of the basis for the removal, and an opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.
- (d) Following the conference and whether or not each requested person is in attendance after valid attempts to obtain the person's attendance, the principal may place the student in another class, in in-school suspension, or in a DAEP or may return the student to the class of the teacher who removed the student unless the teacher objects to the student's return. If the teacher objects, the principal may refer the student to the Campus Placement Review Committee for a determination as to placement.
- (e) The teacher may not be coerced to accept the student without a determination by the Campus Placement Review Committee.
- (f) The Campus Placement Review Committee will make a determination as to whether the student may be returned to the removing teacher's class. The student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent unless the committee determines that such placement is the best or only placement available. In the case of Special Education students, the decision on placement may be made only by a duly constituted Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee.

Placement Review Committee Under Alternative II

Each school shall have a placement review committee composed of three members. The committee will determine placement of a student when a teacher has removed the student under Alternative II and refuses to allow the return of the student to the teacher's class. The committee will make a final determination of the student's placement when a student is removed under this section.

- The campus faculty shall choose two teachers to serve as members and one teacher to serve as an alternate member.
- The principal shall choose one member from the professional staff of the campus.

- The teacher refusing to readmit the student may not serve on the committee.

If the teacher removed the student from class for engaging in assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, or assault against the teacher, the student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent. The teacher may not be coerced to consent. In accordance with federal law, the placement of a student with disabilities may be changed only by a duly constituted ARD Committee.

Alternative III

- A teacher is required to remove from class and send to the principal for placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program or for expulsion any student who engages in Level IV or Level V misconduct.

Disciplinary Options Under Alternative III

- If the student is removed under Alternative III for engaging in Level IV or Level V misconduct, then the student may or shall be removed to a DAEP or expelled as appropriate or as required by state law. Procedures for removal to a DAEP or for expulsion shall be followed. (See pp. 15–18.)

Student Complaints

Board Policy *FNG(LOCAL)*

INFORMAL PROCESS: The board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator.

FORMAL PROCESS: If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student or parent, the student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board Policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION

Neither the board nor any HISD employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.

OTHER SPECIFIC COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES IN BOARD POLICY

Except as addressed below, this policy applies to all complaints or grievances from students or parents. Board Policies may be accessed at www.houstonisd.org/BoardPolicy. Additionally, Board Policies are available through the school office.

Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment shall be processed in accordance with Board Policy *FFH*.

For more information on how to proceed with complaints regarding:

1. Alleged discrimination, see Board Policy *FB*.
2. Loss of credit on the basis of attendance, see Board Policy *FEC*.

3. Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, see Board Policy *FOC*.
4. Expulsion, see Board Policy *FOD* and this *Code of Student Conduct*.
5. Identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504, see Board Policy *FB*.
6. Identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, see Board Policies *EHBA* and *FOF* and the parents' rights handbook provided to parents of all students referred to Special Education.
7. Instructional materials, see Board Policy *EFA*.
8. On-campus distribution of non-school materials, see Board Policy *FNA A*.
9. A commissioned peace officer who is an employee of HISD, see Board Policy *CKE*.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, terms are defined as follows:

The terms “*complaint*” and “*grievance*” shall have the same meaning.

Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, fax, or U.S. mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be “*timely filed*” if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. mail on the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

At Levels One and Two, “*response*” shall mean a written communication to the student or parent from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. mail to the student’s or parent’s mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. mail on the deadline and received by the student or parent or designated representative no more than three days after the response deadline.

“*Representative*” shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the student or parent to represent the student or parent in the complaint process. A student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint. The student or parent may designate a representative through written notice to the district at any level of this process. If the student or parent designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the district before a scheduled conference or hearing, the district may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the district’s counsel.

“*Days*” shall mean district business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following day as “day one.”

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent.

If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the student or parent, at any point during the complaint process. The student or

parent may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within 10 days, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the district.

Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the student or parent does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted unless the student or parent did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference.

A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed, but it may be refiled with all the requested information if the refiled is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint. For purposes of this policy, “days” means calendar days. Announcement of a decision in the student’s or parent’s presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

Level One: Complaint forms must be filed:

1. Within 15 days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
2. With the lowest-level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the campus principal or designee. If the only administrator who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the superintendent of schools or a designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate administrator, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall hold a conference with the student or parent within 10 days after receipt of the written complaint.

The administrator shall have 10 days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

Level Two:

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the regional superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the district, within 10 days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the response deadline at Level One.

The regional superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within 10 days after the appeal notice is filed. At the conference, the regional superintendent or designee shall consider only the issues and documents presented at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. The regional superintendent or designee shall have 10 days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

Level Three:

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board of Education.

The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the district, within 10 days after receipt of a response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the response deadline at Level Two.

The regional superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the board.

The regional superintendent or designee shall provide the board with copies of the complaint form, all responses, all appeal notices, and all written documentation previously submitted by the student or parent or the administration. The board shall consider only those issues and documents presented at the preceding levels and identified in the appeal notice.

The district shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law (see Board Policy *BE*).

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation. The board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the board meeting required by law, the board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the student or parent or the student's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled board meeting. If for any reason the board fails to reach a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: Sexual Harassment/Sexual Abuse/Dating Violence

Sexual Harassment by Students

Students shall not engage in sexual harassment toward another student or a district employee. A substantiated charge of sexual harassment against a student shall result in disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment by a student includes unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors.

Sexual Harassment/Abuse by Employees

District employees are prohibited from sexually harassing or sexually abusing students. Romantic relationships between students and employees are prohibited.

Date/Relationship Violence

The district prohibits sexual harassment, dating violence, and harassment based on a person's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. Dating violence occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence

against a student may include, 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 against the targeted student. For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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

Reports to Lawful Authorities

Any district employee who receives information about sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student that may reasonably be characterized as known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall make the reports to appropriate authorities, as required by law.

HISD shall notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by a student or students when the allegations are not minor. The district shall notify parents of all incidents of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee. Notice shall include providing the parent a copy of Board Policy *FNCJ(EXHIBIT)*.

Investigations

All reports of sexual harassment that are not minor shall be referred to the Title IX coordinator. Oral complaints shall be reduced to writing to assist in the district's investigation. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

Protection From Retaliation

The district shall not retaliate against a student who in good faith reports perceived sexual harassment or sexual abuse.

PROCEDURE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT/DATING VIOLENCE COMPLAINTS

For purposes of the following complaint process, "days" shall mean calendar days.

Level One:

A student or parent who has a complaint alleging sexual harassment by another student or other students or sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee may request a conference with the principal, a designee, or the Title IX coordinator for students. The student may be accompanied by a parent or other advisor at the initial conference and throughout the complaint process. The initial conference with the student ordinarily shall be held with a person who is the same sex as the student. The conference shall be scheduled and held as soon as possible, but in any event within seven days of receipt of the complaint. At the conference, the persons bringing the complaint shall be informed of the right to file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights.

The principal or designee or the Title IX coordinator shall coordinate an appropriate investigation, which ordinarily shall be completed within seven days of receipt of the complaint. The student or parent shall be informed if extenuating circumstances delay the investigation.

Nothing in the complaint process shall have the effect of requiring a student alleging sexual harassment or sexual abuse to report the matter to the person who is the subject of the complaint.

Level Two:

If the resolution of the complaint at Level One is not to the student's or parent's satisfaction, the student or parent has seven days to request a conference with the regional superintendent or a designee, who shall schedule and hold a conference. Prior to or at the conference, the student or parent shall submit a written complaint that includes a statement of the complaint, any evidence in its support, the resolution sought, the student's and/or parent's signature, and the date of the conference with the principal, designee, or Title IX coordinator.

Level Three:

If the resolution of the complaint at Level Two is not to the student's or parent's satisfaction, the student may present the complaint to the Board of Education at its next regular meeting. The complaint shall be included as an item on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting. Announcing a decision in the student's or parent's presence constitutes communication of the decision.

Closed Meeting:

The board shall hear complaints alleging sexual harassment by students or sexual harassment or sexual abuse by employees in closed meeting, unless otherwise required by the Open Meetings Act.

Other Types of Harassment

The district encourages all students and staff members to foster a climate of mutual respect for others in order to enhance the district's educational purpose and the program designed to achieve that purpose. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and district staff members. Students shall not engage in harassment motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, or disability and directed toward another student. A substantiated charge of harassment against a student shall result in disciplinary action.

The term "harassment" includes repeated, unwelcome, and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, or disability that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Students who believe they have been harassed by fellow students or district employees are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal. If the campus principal is the subject of a complaint, the student shall report the complaint directly to the regional superintendent or designated administrator.

Any allegations of harassment of students shall be investigated and addressed promptly. Oral complaints shall be reduced to writing to assist in the district's investigation. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. However, limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. A parent or student may appeal the decision of the principal regarding the outcome of the investigation into the allegations. Information on the procedure for appealing the decision of the principal to the regional superintendent or the superintendent's designee and to the board is explained in Board Policy *FNG(LOCAL)*.

Allegations and investigation of claims of sexual harassment are addressed above in the section entitled "Sexual Harassment."

Student Publications and Prior Review

School-Sponsored Material

All publications edited, printed, or distributed in the name of or within HISD schools shall be under the control of the school administration and the Board of Education. All publications approved and issued by individual schools shall be part of the instructional program, under the supervision of a faculty sponsor, and all shall be carefully edited to reflect the high ideals and expectations of the citizens of the district for their schools. The exercise of appropriate economy in materials and production is expected without jeopardy to the content. The principal shall be responsible for all matters pertaining to the organization, issuance, and sale of such publications and any other publication procedure, subject to the superintendent of schools' approval.

Advertising

Advertising in individual school publications may be accepted from bona fide business firms, subject to the approval of professional employees exercising editorial supervision over the publications. Advertising deemed inappropriate for student readers or that advertises products presenting a health hazard, such as alcohol or tobacco products, shall not be accepted.

Complaints

Students who have a complaint regarding the procedures or a professional decision affecting the content or style of a school-sponsored publication shall present that complaint in accordance with Board Policy *FNG(LOCAL)*.

Nonschool Materials Distribution

The district's classrooms during the school day are provided for the limited purpose of delivering instruction to students in the courses and subjects in which they are enrolled. Classrooms shall not be used for distribution of any materials over which the school does not exercise control. Hallways in school buildings are provided for the limited purpose of facilitating the movement of students between classes and allowing access to assigned lockers. Hallways shall not be used for the distribution of any materials over which the school does not exercise control.

Each school campus shall designate an area where materials over which the school does not exercise control that have been approved for distribution to students, as provided below, may be made available to students or distributed to students in accordance with reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions developed and approved by the campus principal.

Prior Review

No written material consisting wholly or primarily of commercial advertising may be distributed on school property.

All other written material over which the school does not exercise editorial control that is intended for distribution to students shall be submitted for prior review according to the following procedures:

1. Material shall be submitted to the building principal or a designee for review.
2. Using the standards listed above, the principal or designee shall approve or disapprove submitted material within 24 hours of the time the material is received. Failure to act within the 24-hour period shall be interpreted as disapproval.

3. The student may appeal disapproval to the superintendent of schools, who shall decide the appeal within three days of its receipt. Failure of the superintendent to act within the three-day period shall be interpreted as disapproval.
4. If the request to distribute material was initiated by a student, disapproval may be appealed to the board using the complaint procedures specified in this *Code* and in Board Policy *FNG(LOCAL)*, beginning at Level Three. If the request to distribute material was initiated by someone other than a student, disapproval may be appealed to the board under Board Policy *GF(LOCAL)*, beginning at Level Three.

Students who fail to follow the procedures for submitting material for approval shall face disciplinary action. Appropriate law-enforcement officials shall be called when someone other than a student refuses to follow the procedures for submitting materials and fails to leave the premises when asked.

Transportation Service Safety Guidelines

Students should be aware that all of the rules contained in this *Code* are applicable to their conduct and actions while riding HISD-provided transportation. Aside from compliance with the rules contained in Levels I through V, students are expected to observe the following rules:

- Bus drivers are authorized to assign seats to students, and students shall remain in assigned seats until arriving at their designated stop.
- Students shall follow the directions of the school-bus driver the first time they are given.
- Students should be at the assigned bus stop five minutes before the scheduled departure time.
- Students shall wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and away from where the school bus stops.
- Students shall wait in an orderly line and avoid horseplay.
- Students shall cross the road or street in front of the bus only after the bus has come to a complete stop and upon the direction of the bus driver.
- A student must go directly to an available seat upon entering the bus, must remain seated, and must keep all aisles and exits clear.
- Students are expected to exhibit appropriate classroom conduct at all times when riding transportation.
- A student may carry on the bus only objects that can be held on his or her lap.
- Students shall refrain from throwing or passing objects on or from the bus.
- Food, drinks, animals, hazardous substances, and nuisance items are not permitted on the bus.
- Students are required to follow all safety instructions and to respect the rights of others.
- Students are not permitted to leave or board the bus at any location other than the assigned stops at home or school.
- Extending the head, arms, or other objects out of the windows of the bus as well as hitching a ride via the rear bumper or other parts of the bus are strictly prohibited.

Summary of Related Board Policies

This *Code of Student Conduct* is drawn from Board Policies and Administrative Regulations. Students are subject to the Board Policies and Administrative Regulations now in effect and those that may be adopted or amended after the publication of this *Code*. Those who desire more information concerning the policies and administrative procedures upon which this *Code* is based should refer to them. Copies are available in all schools and regional offices. The sections that relate to student conduct are as follows:

ATTENDANCE. Board Policy and Administrative Regulations state that regular attendance and punctuality shall be required of every student. Board Policies state the district's attendance policy for students for course credit. In addition, Texas Education Code Section 25.087 pertains to excused absences.

COMPLAINTS. Board Policy states that students may present any complaint to the district, either personally or through a representative, through appropriate complaint procedures.

STUDENT DRESS AND PERSONAL GROOMING. Board Policy describes the district's policy with regard to student dress and personal grooming; it calls for the establishment of standards in each school. Additionally, each school may establish a mandatory uniform policy in conformance with state law and district policy.

ILLEGAL DRUGS AND ALCOHOL. Board Policy and state law prohibit any student from selling or possessing an illegal drug or alcohol on school grounds.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS. Board Policy describes the district's policies regarding student participation in the publication of school newspapers, yearbooks, literary magazines, and other school-sponsored publications; it also covers the publication and distribution of publications that are not school-sponsored.

SMOKING. Board Policy states that students are prohibited from possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products on school property and at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off of school property.

SCHOOL PROPERTY. Board Policy notes that the student's responsibility for school property is the same as his or her responsibility for other public property; it holds the student accountable for malicious damage, the defacing of property, and vandalism.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT. Board Policy gives students the right to formulate procedures for student government.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY RECORDS. Board Policy spells out district policies with regard to the right to information and privacy of student records. In addition, the Texas Public Information Act, Article 6251.17a, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-480, describe the student's rights in this regard. Additionally, certain Special Education records will be destroyed after seven years upon proper notification.

DISCIPLINE. Board Policy states that the principal shall have full authority to maintain adequate discipline in the school and that teachers shall have the responsibility for the discipline of students. Further, it states that students shall be dealt with reasonably, fairly, and consistently, but serious or persistent misconduct shall not be tolerated. By board action, this *Code of Student Conduct* carries the force of policy in discipline matters.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION. Board Policy details policies regarding suspensions and expulsions.

OTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS. Board Policy details district policies with regard to other disciplinary actions.

HEARINGS. Administrative Regulations establish the guidelines for the format of hearings.

FRATERNITIES, SORORITIES, GANGS, AND OTHER SECRET ORGANIZATIONS. Board Policy and state laws disallow fraternities, sororities, and other secret organizations in district schools.

DISRUPTIVE ACTIONS AND INTERFERENCES. Board Policy calls for the removal from school, on disciplinary reassignment, any student who, while at school or at school-sponsored activities, incites, encourages, promotes, or participates in a riot, a sit-in, a walkout, a blockage of entrances, or a trespass violation or otherwise interferes with normal educational processes.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE. Board Policy details policies regarding search and seizure on campuses.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT. Board Policy details district prohibition of corporal punishment

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS. Board Policy notes that students shall be encouraged to participate in school-sponsored clubs, organizations, and activities that represent their particular interests.

Discipline of Students Receiving Special Education Services

(Under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act)

A student with disabilities is one who has been determined by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal/Individual Education Plan (ARD/IEP) Committee as having a noncategorical early-childhood condition, mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities, and who, because of those impairments, needs Special Education and related services.

Students with disabilities are expected to exhibit appropriate conduct and may be subject to the requirements of this *Code of Student Conduct*. Nothing in these rules prevents district personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability, and nothing prevents the police from arresting and prosecuting a student with disabilities for commission of a criminal

act. Upon request or subpoena, copies of Special Education and disciplinary records are required to be provided to appropriate law enforcement or judicial authorities investigating or prosecuting reported criminal conduct. The parent or guardian shall be notified of such transmittal, and in the absence of a subpoena, parents shall be asked to consent to the release of the records.

In some instances, the ARD/IEP Committee of a student with disabilities may have developed a behavior intervention plan that must be followed in administering discipline in situations addressed by the behavior intervention plan. If the ARD/IEP Committee developed a behavior intervention plan for a student with disabilities, that plan will be contained on the ARD/IEP Supplement: Behavior Intervention Plan form, which is placed in the Special Education folder.

Additionally, it may become necessary for the ARD/IEP Committee to determine whether the alleged conduct in question was related to the student's disability (manifestation determination). If the ARD/IEP Committee determines there is a connection, it must also determine what educational action is appropriate to minimize the misbehavior. In the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy previously discussed in this booklet, the ARD/IEP Committee must review the behavior intervention plan and/or determine whether there is a relationship between the conduct and the disability prior to changing the student's placement for disciplinary reasons.

Suspension or Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) for Under 10 Days

Students with disabilities may be suspended in the same manner as nondisabled students for a period not to exceed three school days per occurrence so long as the total number of days of cumulative suspensions does not constitute a change in placement. Additionally, students with disabilities may be referred to a DAEP for a period of up to 10 days. An ARD/IEP meeting is not required for suspensions or removals to a DAEP totaling less than 10 cumulative days during any school year.

Except as described in the next paragraphs, procedures regarding the suspension and the length of suspension shall be the same as those for nondisabled students so long as the suspensions do not constitute a change in placement and the discipline imposed would be applied to nondisabled students. A student's placement may be changed for more than 10 days for violating the *Code of Student Conduct* to the same extent the rules allow discipline of a nondisabled student, if an ARD/IEP Committee has determined that the misconduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability; however, the student must still be provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) during the period of any removal.

Expulsion or Removal to a DAEP for Disciplinary Action That Will Remove a Student With Disabilities From His or Her Educational Placement for More Than 10 Consecutive School Days or Change the Student's Educational Placement

Students with disabilities may be disciplined in the same manner as nondisabled students subject to the requirement to continue to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and subject to the requirement to conduct a manifestation determination review if the student will be removed for more than 10 school days during the year. When imposing discipline for a

violation of this *Code*, a student may not be placed in an interim alternative educational setting or DAEP beyond 10 days, unless an ARD/IEP Committee determines that it is appropriate and that it can provide a FAPE while the student is placed in the alternative setting. Additionally, HISD may not place a disabled student in a DAEP unless he or she has engaged in conduct for which placement in a DAEP is permitted or required as a consequence for violation of this *Code*.

Manifestation Determination Review

If personnel seek to discipline in a manner that will remove a student from his or her current placement for more than 10 days, the school shall convene an ARD/IEP Committee to conduct a manifestation determination. In conducting a manifestation determination, the ARD/IEP Committee, which shall include a licensed psychologist, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, or other professional who is qualified to interpret the instructional implications of any evaluations that may be presented, shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including his or her IEP, evaluations, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent(s), and may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis for a child with a disability who violates the *Code of Student Conduct* in determining whether a change in placement for discipline reasons is appropriate. The ARD/IEP Committee shall review all of the foregoing information to determine:

- (a) whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- (b) whether the conduct in question was the direct result of a failure to implement the IEP.

If the ARD/IEP Committee determines that either (a) or (b) above is applicable for the student, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. In order to determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the parent and the relevant members of the ARD/IEP Committee must determine that the conduct in question is a direct result of the student's disability. In determining the conduct was a direct result, the ARD/IEP Committee, along with the parents, should find that the conduct was caused by, or has a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability and is not an attenuated association to the child's disability, such as low self-esteem.

Determination Behavior Was Not a Manifestation

If school personnel seek to change a disabled student's placement for more than 10 days and the conduct is determined not to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary procedures applicable to nondisabled students may be applied in the same manner and for the same duration that would be applicable to nondisabled students, subject to the requirement to provide a FAPE. Services necessary to provide a FAPE and the interim alternative setting are determined by the ARD/IEP Committee. The services provided must allow the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP. The student must receive, as appropriate, a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

Determination Behavior Was a Manifestation

If the ARD/IEP Committee determines the conduct was a manifestation of the disability, the ARD/IEP Committee shall:

- (1) conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan for the student, if one had not been conducted prior to the determination, provided that HISD had not conducted such an assessment prior to the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- (2) in the situation where a behavior intervention plan has been developed, review the behavior intervention plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- (3) except as specified below in cases involving special circumstances, return the student to the placement from which the student was removed, unless the parent and the local educational agency agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavior intervention plan. However, Chapter 37 precludes placing a student with disabilities in a DAEP solely for educational reasons, unless the student has engaged in conduct that would allow the student to be placed in a DAEP.

Special Circumstances Involving Weapons, Drugs, and Serious Bodily Injury

Consistent with this *Code*, school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, in cases where a student

- (1) carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a school district;
- (2) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a school district. Controlled substance means a drug or other substance identified under schedule I, II, III, IV, or V in Section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.; or
- (3) has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a state or local education agency. Serious bodily injury means bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 1365(h)(3).

On the same day the decision is made to take disciplinary action, the school shall notify the parents of that decision and of all procedural safeguards.

Definitions (As Used in This Subsection):

Controlled Substance: A drug or other substance identified under Schedule I, II, III, IV, or V in Section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)).

Illegal Drug: A controlled substance not including a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of federal law.

Weapon: A device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury. Term definition does not include a pocket knife with a blade less than 2-1/2 inches in length.

Serious Bodily Injury: An injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. The following constitutes bodily injury as defined by the law, but is not defined as serious bodily injury for purposes of this section: a cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement; physical pain; illness; impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary.

Limitation on Days of Removal of Students With Disabilities

When a student with disabilities has been suspended, removed to a DAEP, and/or removed for any reason for a combined total of 10 school days in any one school year, the members of the ARD/IEP Committee must review all relevant information in the student's file, including his or her IEP, evaluations, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents necessary to conduct the manifestation determination.

Appeal by the Parent or by HISD

Either the parent of a disabled student or an adult student who disagrees with any decision regarding placement or with the manifestation determination under this subsection, or HISD if it believes that maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others, may request a hearing regarding placement from the Texas Education Agency.

Authority of Hearing Officer: A hearing officer shall hear and make a determination regarding an appeal requested under this section.

Change of Placement Order: In making the determination, the hearing officer may order a change in placement of a child with a disability. In such situations, the hearing officer may:

- (1) return a disabled student to the placement from which the child was removed; or
- (2) order a change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

Placement During Appeals: When an appeal has been requested by either the parent or HISD:

- (a) the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of 45 school days in the case of a removal for weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the State of Texas or HISD agree otherwise; and
- (b) the State of Texas or HISD shall arrange for an expedited hearing, which shall occur within 20 school days of the date the hearing is requested and shall result in a determination within 10 school days after the hearing.

Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been determined to be eligible for Special Education and related services and who has engaged in behavior that violates the *Code of Student Conduct* may assert any of the protections provided for disabled students if HISD had knowledge (as determined in accordance with this section) that the student was a disabled student before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

Basis of Knowledge

HISD shall be deemed to have knowledge that a student is a disabled student if, before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:

- (1) the parent of the student expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of HISD or to a teacher of the student that the student is in need of Special Education and related services;
- (2) the parent of the student requested a Special Education evaluation of the student; or
- (3) the teacher of the student or other personnel of HISD directly expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student to the director of Special Education of HISD or to other supervisory personnel of HISD.

EXCEPTION: HISD shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student is a disabled student if the parent of the student has not allowed an evaluation of the student or has refused Special Education services or the student has been evaluated and it was determined that the student was not eligible for Special Education. Additionally, in cases where the student has previously been determined eligible and has been receiving Special Education, but the parent or adult student has withdrawn consent for the provision of Special Education services, HISD will be deemed to have no knowledge that the student is a disabled student.

Conditions That Apply If No Basis of Knowledge

IN GENERAL: If HISD does not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability (in accordance with the standards under "Basis of Knowledge") prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to students without disabilities who engaged in comparable behavior.

LIMITATIONS: If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures under this subsection, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. If the student is determined to be eligible for Special Education, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by HISD and information provided by the parents, HISD shall provide Special Education and related services in accordance with the IEP developed by the ARD/IEP Committee, except that, pending the results of the evaluation, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by HISD.

State Law and Rules on Confinement, Restraint, and Time-Out

HISD must protect the health and safety of all students. When dealing with discipline or behavior issues, HISD will not use any practice intended to injure or demean a student or deprive a child of basic human necessities. Ordinarily, if a student has been restrained on more than two occasions, the school should convene an ARD/IEP meeting,

conduct a functional behavior assessment if one has not been conducted, and, if necessary, revise the behavior intervention plan on the basis of the recommendation from the ARD/IEP Committee.

Confinement

State law prohibits schools from confining students with disabilities. This means HISD will not lock a child in a room, closet, or other specially designed space. There is an exception to this requirement. A school can confine a student if he or she has a weapon and confinement is necessary to prevent harm to the student or to others

Restraint

Restraint is the use of physical force or a mechanical device to significantly restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a student's body. Things such as holding a student's hand or using adaptive equipment to meet a student's educational needs are not restraint. The school can restrain a student only in an emergency that involves the threat of serious harm to a student or others or that involves the threat of serious property damage. If the school restrains a student, the school must try to reach the child's parent on the day restraint is used. The school must also notify a parent in writing of the restraint. Staff members utilizing restraint must receive training in accordance with state requirements.

Time-Out

There are also requirements that the school must meet if the school repeatedly uses time-out to address a student's behavior. The school cannot use force or threats of force to put a student in time-out. Time-out cannot take place in a locked setting, and no one is allowed to physically prevent a student from leaving time-out.

Discipline of Students Served Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Students served under IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act) include students who have one of 13 specific categories of disabilities and who because of their disabilities are in need of Special Education and related services in order to receive a free, appropriate public education. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 covers a broader range of individuals. A student with disabilities under Section 504 is defined as a student who (a) has, (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, or performing manual tasks.

Discipline of Section 504 students mirrors the procedural framework involved with Special Education students. However, it is a separate procedure established under separate laws. As with Special Education students, if there is a behavior plan that specifies disciplinary options or responses to student misconduct, then those options or responses should be implemented in accordance with the plan.

For more serious misconduct, which may require expulsion or other exclusion that constitutes a significant change in placement, the Section 504 Committee must conduct a manifestation determination to determine whether the student's conduct was caused by his or her disabling condition. The Section 504 Committee is composed of a group of persons knowledgeable about the student. Such a determination should be based on current data.

If it is determined by the Section 504 Committee that the misconduct is not caused by the student's disabling condition, the student may be excluded from school in the same manner as similarly situated nondisabled students are excluded, but educational services may not be terminated completely during the expul-

sion period. The Section 504 Committee will determine the extent of educational services to be provided during the expulsion period. Educational services should be provided to the extent necessary to prevent regression in the area of the student's disabling condition.

If it is determined by the Section 504 Committee that the misconduct is caused by the student's disabling condition, the student may not be expelled. The Section 504 Committee must then determine whether the student's current educational placement is appropriate.

Under federal law, students with disabilities who possess illegal drugs or alcohol may be held to the same standard of behavior to which nondisabled students are held.

Rules concerning use or possession of illegal drugs and alcohol will be enforced evenly with respect to all students, whether they have disabilities or not.

Students With Disabilities: Summary of Related Board Policies

This *Code of Student Conduct* regarding discipline of students with disabilities is drawn from Board Policies and Administrative Regulations. Students with disabilities are subject to the Board Policies and Administrative Regulations now in effect and those that may be adopted or amended after publication of this edition. Those who desire more information concerning the policies and administrative procedures regarding discipline of students with disabilities should refer to them. Copies are available in all schools and regional offices. In order to resolve problems, parents, guardians, and/or students can meet with a teacher at appropriate times to discuss existing problems. If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with the teacher's decision or explanation, they can meet with the building administrator to review the area of concern. The parents, guardians, or students can meet with the regional superintendent if they are dissatisfied with the administrator's decision. As a practical matter, school problems can best be resolved at the campus level, where problems start.

The procedures stated in this manual do not alter the rights and remedies available to students with disabilities as stated in the *Parent and Student Rights Booklet* or available to Section 504 students as stated on the Notification of Rights form. The sections that relate to discipline of students with disabilities are as follows:

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Board Policy defines who is considered as having disabilities, addresses the effect of a discipline management plan in a student with disabilities' IEP, and specifies the total number of days in a school year a disabled student may be suspended, removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program, or subjected to emergency removal before the ARD/IEP Committee must meet to review the student's program.

SUSPENSION. Board Policy explains the circumstances in which a student with disabilities can be suspended.

EXPULSION. Board Policy explains the circumstances in which students with disabilities can be expelled and the ARD/IEP Committee's role in this process.

APPEAL. Board Policy explains the routes of appeal open to students with disabilities who want to challenge a finding of guilt, the appropriateness of the disciplinary action, or decisions by the ARD/IEP Committee in the discipline process.

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 behavioral support services that are available to all 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 whether the evaluation is needed. If 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 he or she 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 the principal of your child's school. The principal is familiar with the resources available and is able to direct you to the appropriate personnel to address the learning issues your child is having.

Additional Rights of Students With Disabilities

The Houston Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of disability and complies with all provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The Section 504 Coordinator for HISD is:

Frances Goodbeer
1615 Rutland, Houston, Texas 77008
713-867-5220

Any questions or concerns regarding Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) should be addressed to the ADA coordinator. The coordinators for the Houston Independent School District are:

For employees:

Josephine Morgan
4400 West 18th Street, Houston, Texas 77092
713-556-7313

For students:

Carolyn Guess
4400 West 18th Street, Houston, Texas 77092
713-556-7025

Any questions or concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, should be addressed to:

Daryl W. Wade
4400 West 18th Street, Houston, Texas 77092
713-556-6913

Code of Student Conduct

2009–2010 HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Student and Parent Acknowledgment

The Houston Independent School District shall foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and district personnel. The student's responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment at school and/or school-related activities shall include the following:

- Attend all classes each day and be on time
- Prepare for each class with appropriate materials and completed assignments
- Dress according to the dress code adopted by each individual school
- Know that the possession, use, and/or sale of illegal or unauthorized drugs, alcohol, and weapons are unlawful and prohibited
- Show respect toward others
- Conduct yourself in a responsible manner
- Pay required fees and fines
- Know and obey all school rules in the *Code of Student Conduct* and the School-Based Discipline Management System
- Cooperate with staff members in investigations of disciplinary matters
- Seek changes in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels
- Report threats to the safety of students and staff members as well as misconduct on the part of any other students or staff members to the building principal, a teacher, or another adult
- Be familiar with and comply with the Acceptable Use Policy for Computers and Technology and understand that if access is not desired, the parent and student may opt out. Use HISD technology systems for school business purposes only and use school computers and related equipment appropriately
- Abide by the technology security procedures developed by HISD, such as never leaving a terminal or workstation unattended or unsecured while logged on to a host computer or network
- Report all observed or suspected technology security problems immediately to a teacher

The *Code of Student Conduct* has been written to help your son or daughter gain the greatest possible benefit from his or her school experience.

The school is in need of your help and cooperation. It is important that every student understand the *Code* and be expected by his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) to follow the rules and regulations set forth in the *Code*. Please read and discuss the *Code* with your child. When you have done so, you and your child must sign this form and return it to the school. Signatures of parents and the student acknowledge receipt of a copy of the *Code of Student Conduct* and certify that they have read and discussed the *Code*. It is expected that parents and students will accept their responsibilities as described in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Student Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Grade _____ Homeroom _____ School _____

Note: Place original form in student's cumulative folder.