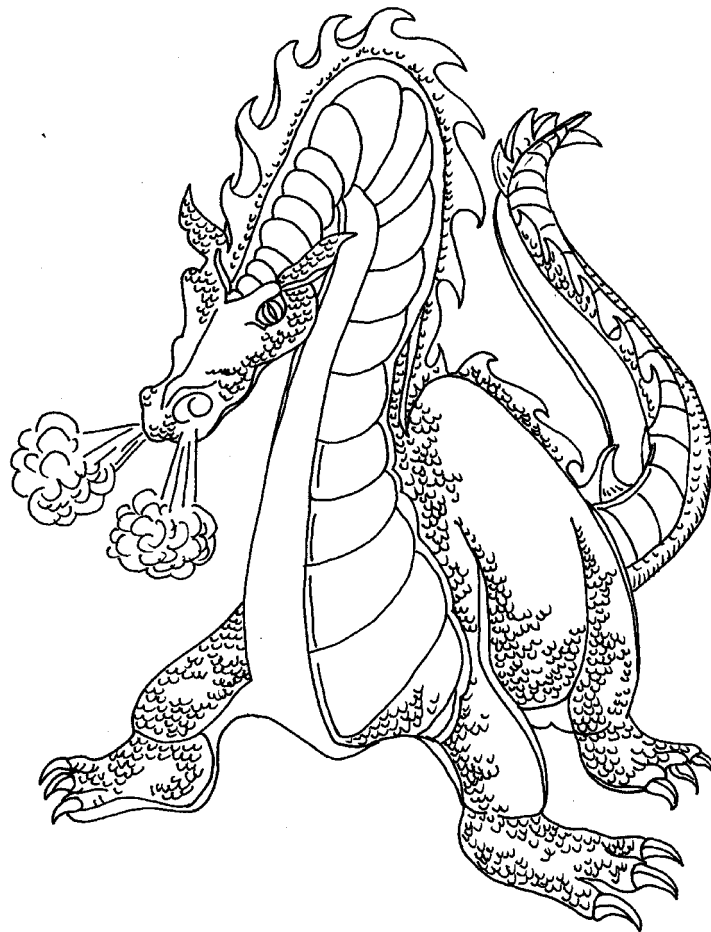


Driscoll
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
2007-2008
STUDENT HANDBOOK



REVIEWED BY THE DRISCOLL ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JULY 24, 2007

Purpose and Organization

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to give Driscoll ISD students and their parents an understanding of the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education in our schools.

The Handbook is organized in the following sections:

- Required Legal Notices and Information
- General Information about admission, attendance, and conduct
- Curriculum and Program Information
- Of Special Interest to Students
- Of Special Interest to Parents

When the Handbook uses “we” or “our,” it means the school district and/or school administrators. When the Handbook uses “you” or “your,” it means the parent, legal guardian, or person who has accepted responsibility for a student, at least in regard to school matters. From time to time, the Handbook will use more general terms, such as “parents” and “school officials.” Regardless of the particular terminology, our intention is to speak directly to you as the adults who are responsible for working with us, the school officials, to make your children’s experience with the Driscoll public schools a positive educational experience.

The Student Handbook has been developed by school district administrators with assistance of teachers, students, and parents. The content is reviewed by the Board of Trustees and is intended to be consistent with formally adopted school board policies. If there is an apparent contradiction between information in the Handbook and a formally adopted board policy, the school administration will interpret the Handbook in a way that is consistent with policy and may request guidance from the Board of Trustees.

The Student Handbook is not a contract between the school and parents or students. It can be amended at any time at the discretion of the school district. If the district makes changes to the Handbook during a school year, the administration of the district and the campus will communicate those changes in ways that are designed to inform parents and students of the new or revised information.

REQUIRED LEGAL NOTICES

Nondiscrimination: Driscoll ISD does not discriminate in its educational programs and services, including its career and technology education programs, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or disability. The District complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any questions or concerns about the district’s compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the person shown below as Title IX or Section 504 Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator for the school district is Cynthia Garcia, whose office is located at 410 W. Avenue D, Driscoll, Texas 78351 and who can be reached by telephone by calling 361-387-7349.

The Section 504 Coordinator for the school district is Michelle Dupont, whose office is located at 410 W. Avenue D, Driscoll, Texas 78351 and who can be reached by telephone by calling 361-387-7349.

Homeless Liaison and Title I Participants

Becky Booth is our liaison for services to students who are determined to be homeless, as defined by federal law. If you believe your child may be eligible for services or assistance, contact Becky Booth at 361-387-7349.

Monica Morin is our Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with families and children participating in Title I programs. If you have questions about the program or need assistance related to the program, contact Monica Morin at 361-387-7349.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: The school district creates and keeps general education records for all students enrolled in district schools. Those records are confidential and generally are available only to parents and school personnel or people who are acting on behalf of the school district. When we say “parents” have a right of access to and copies of all education records pertaining to their children, we mean all biological or legal parents—whether married, divorced, or separated—and any other person with whom the child resides and who is acting as a parent in the absence of the child’s parent or legal guardian.

Parents control the access to their children’s education records until the child becomes an adult at age 18. When the child reaches age 18, she or he controls the access to his or her records and is the one who can consent to the release of the records to other persons. However, parents continue to have a right to see and to copy their children’s education records so long as the child is a dependent for federal income tax purposes, even if the child does not want them to.

If a parent wants to see or copy his or her child’s education records, she or he should contact the principal of the child’s school if the child is currently enrolled. If the child has withdrawn or graduated, parents should contact the school superintendent for access to records. Records can be reviewed in administrative offices during regular office hours, from 7:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and someone will be available to answer questions about the records.

Originals cannot be removed from the principal’s or superintendent’s office. Copies will be provided to parents within a reasonable time, usually not more than two or three

days, after parents have made a written request for copies. Parents will be charged the district's usual copying fees for copies; however, if the student is eligible for free or reduced price lunches and the parents cannot come to school to review the records, the school will provide one copy of the requested records at no charge.

If you disagree with information in your child's records or believe some information is inaccurate, you can ask for a correction. If the principal does not make the correction, you can ask for a hearing with the superintendent to explain why you believe the record is wrong or misleading. If the superintendent does not direct an amendment to be made, you have 30 days to place a comment in the student's record about the information. **Under no circumstances can students or parents use this process to challenge a grade recorded for a student.**

Because parents generally control access to their children's education records, the district ordinarily will not permit access to or copies of education records without at least one parent's written authorization to release the records. **However, under some circumstances, the district can and will provide access to or copies of education records without parent authorization. The most common circumstances are these:**

- The district will forward education records on request to a public or private school or institution of higher education in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The district will comply with a lawful subpoena for student education records, but will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents before complying, unless the subpoena indicates that parents should not be notified.
- The district will release directory information about students to any person who submits a written request for the information, as provided in the DIRECTORY INFORMATION notice included in this Student Handbook.
- The district will release educational records to a juvenile justice agency in accordance with an agreement with between the district and the agency. The information will be released before the student is adjudicated and will be provided so that the juvenile agency can appropriately serve the student.

If you want to review the school's entire policy regarding student records, please contact the campus principal, who will be glad to provide a copy for you and to answer any questions you may have about the policy or this notice. If you believe the district is not following the law regarding student records, you have the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment: We do not require students to participate in any surveys that are funded with any U.S. Department of Education funds that concern the following topics unless you (or your child if he or she is an adult) give us your prior consent. You will also have the opportunity to inspect the survey in advance. If we administer surveys that concern any of these topics that are funded from other sources, we will give you advance notice of the survey, allow you an opportunity to inspect the survey, and give you an opportunity to opt-out of the survey. The topics that are covered by this notice are:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or his or her parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or his or her family;
3. sex behavior or attitudes;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of others with whom the responding students have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or his or her parent;
8. income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Invasive Examinations or Screenings: We do not perform any invasive physical examinations or screenings as a condition of attendance. We do perform vision, hearing, acanthosis nigricans, and scoliosis screenings, as required by state law. Please contact the principal if you have questions regarding those screenings.

Teacher Qualifications: You may request the following information, which we will provide to you in a timely manner:

1. Whether your child's teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
2. Whether your child's teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.
3. The bachelor's degree major of your child's teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
4. Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

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 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 if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date of 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 their rights if they disagree 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:

Contact Person: Lynn Landenberger

Phone Number: 361-387-7349

General Information

Student's Legal Name

While we recognize that there are circumstances when a parent may wish his or her child to be enrolled under a name other than the child's legal name, we are required to maintain all school records for your child under the child's legal surname as shown on the birth certificate or other recognized document to prove the child's identity or as shown in a court order changing the child's name.

Admission, Release, Withdrawal

These are the basic requirements for admission to district schools:

1. The student must live in the district with a parent or legal guardian or one of the student's parents must live in the district, even if the student does not live with that parent.
 - To be eligible for admission based on just the parent's residence in the district, the court that issued a final order in a divorce proceeding must have designated that parent as a managing or possessory conservator for the child.
 - The parent enrolling a student based on only the parent's residence in the district must provide a copy of a current final order, signed by the judge and showing a file stamp from the court, designating the parent as a managing or possessory conservator.
2. The student is under age 18 and lives in the district with an adult resident of the district who has accepted a Power of Attorney from the child's parent or legal guardian. The school district has Power of Attorney forms to be completed by both the parent and the person the student lives with.
3. The student is under age 18 and does not reside in the district, but a grandparent who provides a substantial amount of after-school care for the

person resides in the district. “Substantial amount of after-school care” means the grandparent provides after-school care for the student at least four days each school week.

4. Students under the age of 18 must be enrolled by a parent, legal guardian, or adult resident who has a valid Power of Attorney for the student. Students who are 18 or older, who are legally married, or who have ever been legally married, and who have not graduated from high school can enroll themselves.
5. The adult enrolling the student must present current immunization records or show proof that the required immunizations have been begun.
6. No later than 30 days after a student has been enrolled, the adult enrolling the student must provide a copy of a birth certificate or other acceptable identification for the child and copies of the education records from the school the child last attended.
7. We do not admit underage students to school. Your child must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year to be admitted to kindergarten. To be admitted to first grade, your child must be 6 years old on or before September 1 of the current year or must have completed kindergarten, or been enrolled in first grade, in the public schools of another state.
8. We do not ordinarily admit overage students to school. However, a student who is 21 or younger and who has completed a GED program, but has not graduated from any high school, will be admitted.

As part of our dropout recovery programs, we may admit someone between the ages of 21 and 26 for the purpose of completing the requirements for a high school diploma. A student admitted for this purpose and who has not attended school in the preceding three years will not be placed in a classroom setting, cafeteria, or other school-sanctioned activity with a student who is 18 or younger; however, those students remain free to attend all school-sponsored events that are open to the public.

The application for admission and enrollment forms are official government records, and it is a crime to provide false information of any kind or false records for identification. School officials can ask parents or another adult enrolling a student to provide some evidence that they are bona fide residents of the school district. As required by law, we will record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling a student.

If school officials have reason to question the legitimacy of a child’s residency information, they can investigate to determine the student’s actual place of residence. If the district finds that a student is not really a district resident, the student will be withdrawn, and school officials will take the necessary legal steps to recover the maximum tuition fee the school district can charge or the amount the board of trustees budgets as an expense per student.

Release During the School Day

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

Students will be allowed to leave school during the school day only with the permission of the principal or someone in the principal's office who has been given the authority to release students. Parents cannot go directly to their children's classrooms and take the child away from school during the day. Teachers do not have the authority to let children leave their classroom with anyone. If you need to take your child from school before the end of the school day, such as for a medical appointment or a family emergency, you should go to the principal's office and sign the child out. The teacher will send the child to the principal's office and she or he will be released to you at that time.

A student who will need to leave school during the school day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parents.

At the time children are enrolled, the parent or other adult completing the enrollment forms should list those people who are authorized to pick up children during the school day. **Unless the principal has a current court order signed by a judge, showing an official file stamp with the court and indication that a parent's right of access to and possession of his or her children has been limited in some way, the principal will release children to either parent.**

Students will not ordinarily be released during the school day to participate in private lessons or other instruction. If you believe you have a special situation that would warrant an exception to this rule, please contact the campus principal to schedule a conference about your situation.

Withdrawing from School

Children who are under age 18 will not be permitted to withdraw from school unless a parent, legal guardian or other adult who is responsible for the child comes to the school to complete the necessary forms. Students must return all textbooks issued to them and clear any library fines and other outstanding fees in order for the school to release an official copy of the student's records to the parents or to another school district.

The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. A withdrawal form may be obtained by the parent from the principal's office.

Late Arrival to School

A student who is tardy to class by more than 5 minutes will be subject to disciplinary action.

Attendance Requirements

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education to benefit from teacher led activities, to build each day's learning on that previous day and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional material; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences.

State compulsory attendance laws generally require all children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school each day that school is in session. A student who is younger than six and has ever been enrolled in the first grade is required to attend school. Once a parent enrolls a child in kindergarten or pre-kindergarten, the child is required to attend school that school year.

Regular attendance is critical to your child's success in school. It is also critical to the school district's success because it is a factor in the district and campus rating under the state accountability system and is a determining factor in the amount of state financial aid the district is entitled to receive.

School officials aggressively enforce the state compulsory attendance laws. If your child is absent from school on 10 or more days or partial days within a six month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four week period, you will be prosecuted for contributing to truancy and your child will be prosecuted for failure to attend school. You will be notified when your child has three unexcused absences within a four week period or less to advise you that you must monitor your child's attendance and to inform you that you may be prosecuted and to request a conference to discuss the absences. Every day that a child is out of school in violation of compulsory attendance laws is a separate offense. You may be assessed a fine for each offense and may also be ordered to participate in a class designed to help you make sure your child attends school as required.

Of course, there are times that children are sick or have other legitimate reasons for being absent from school. Regardless of the age of your child, if she or he is sick and will not be at school that day, you should call the school office to let them know of the absence. Whenever a child is absent from school for any reason, she or he should bring a note signed by you explaining the reason for the child's absence when she or he returns to school. The principal or someone acting for the principal will make the final decision whether an absence is classified as excused or unexcused.

If the child does not bring a signed note, the absence will be classified as unexcused. Students ordinarily will not be permitted to make up missed work for credit if the absence is unexcused.

Doctor and Dental Appointments: Absences for a appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, physical therapists and other health care professionals will be classified as excused absences if the student returns to school on the same day as the appointment and presents a note from the health care doctor's office. If the appointment is at the end of the school day and student has been at school all day up to that time, the absence will be excused if the student brings a note from the health care provider the following day.

Religious Holidays: Absences for religious holy days, including up to two days of travel time if necessary, will be classified as excused absences.

Court Appearances: Absences for required court appearances will be classified as excused absences upon presentation to the campus attendance official of a copy of the document requiring the student's appearance in court.

Sounding "Taps" at a Veteran's Funeral: Absences by students in grades 6-12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a veteran's funeral with military honors may be excused upon verification that the student provided the service noted.

Attendance and Credit Separate and apart from the compulsory attendance requirements, students must attend school a certain amount of time in order to get credit for their academic work. State law generally requires students to be "in attendance" for at least 90 percent of the days a class is taught during a semester or year. All absences from class, excused or unexcused, are counted in determining whether a student has met attendance for credit requirements.

Students who are in attendance in a class at least 75% of the days but less than 90% are eligible to receive credit if they complete a plan approved by the principal providing for the student to meet the instructional requirements for the class. Students who are under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding must also obtain the court's consent before credit may be granted.

In the 2007-2008 school year, we require students to be in class for 81 days in the Fall Semester and 81 days in the Spring Semester to meet minimum attendance for credit requirements. Each campus has an attendance committee that will review student attendance records. If the committee decides that extenuating circumstances prevented a student from meeting the minimum attendance for credit standard or fulfilling the principal's plan for meeting instructional requirements, the committee can award credit or tell the student what additional work or time needs to be completed in order for the student to get credit for the grade level or course. You will be notified when your child is in danger of losing credit because of absences and will have the chance to meet with the attendance committee to discuss your child's situation.

- All absences shall be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If make-up work is completed, absences for religious holy days and health care appointments shall be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer of migrant student incurs absences only after his or her enrollment in the District. For a student transferring into the District after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a consensus about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parents could exercise any control.

- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

Certain Transfers—Victims of Bullying and Sexual Assault

If you believe that your child is the victim of bullying (see the definition in the Student Code of Conduct), you may request a transfer to another classroom at the same campus or to another campus within the school district. If we verify that your child is the victim of bullying, the transfer will be made. If the transfer is to another campus, we will not provide transportation to that campus. Our decision on this kind of transfer is final and cannot be appealed to the board or any other authority.

If another student in the district is convicted of committing a sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against your child (see definitions in the Student Code of Conduct), you may request that your child be transferred to another campus within the district or to a neighboring school district and the request will be granted. We will not provide transportation to the new campus. If you do not want to transfer your child, we will take appropriate steps regarding the other student to ensure that both students are not assigned to the same campus. Our decision on this kind of transfer is final and cannot be appealed to the board or any other authority.

Make-up Work

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of excused absences. Teachers may assign a penalty to any project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students. For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student make-up work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher.

Conduct and Discipline

Along with this Student Handbook, your child has also received a copy of the Driscoll ISD Student Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct contains the school district's requirements for student conduct and behavior while at school or under the school's jurisdiction. The Code of Conduct also explains the kinds of disciplinary action school officials can take in response to violations of the rules for student conduct and the steps involved in taking disciplinary action. If you have any questions about conduct or discipline rules, please refer to the Code of Conduct or call your child's principal.

Dress and Grooming Code

We expect students to come to school in clothes that are clean and neat, and we expect students to exhibit basic cleanliness and grooming that will not be a health or safety threat to themselves or to other students or staff. While we understand students' desire to express themselves in their clothing and grooming styles, we do not permit students to wear clothing with pictures, emblems, or writing that is lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene or that advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance that students are prohibited from having or using at school. The principal makes decisions about dress and grooming violations.

If your child comes to school wearing clothes that violate the dress code or in any other way violates our dress and grooming standards, she or he will be placed in in-school suspension until she or he is in compliance. We will make efforts to notify you as soon as possible, and if the student changes clothes or otherwise comes into compliance with the dress and grooming standards, she or he will return to regular classes immediately.

MALE STUDENT STANDARDIZED DRESS

PANTS:

Uniform, logo free, khaki slacks. Slacks **MUST** be sized appropriately and **fit at the waist** and the crotch. Pants must be hemmed (not frayed, slit at seams, have holes, or tears).

NOT PERMITTED:

Oversized or "sagging" pants.

SHORTS:

Uniform, logo free, khaki shorts. Short length must be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill + 1 inch (3 1/2 inches) from the top of the kneecap.

BELTS:

Belts may be worn with pants or shorts that have belt loops. Belts may have school appropriate design but wording will **NOT** be permitted. For example, "Hottie Princess, Tommy Hilfiger", etc. will **NOT** be allowed. Belts must be **appropriate length** for students' waist size and the belt must be kept in the belt loops. Over sized belts will **NOT** be permitted.

SHIRTS:

Short or long sleeve knit, button down (limit 3), polo style shirts with a **collar and logo free**. No snaps or zippers. Must be solid red (Elementary) or navy blue (Jr. High). Shirt tails **must be longer than the waistline but not below the hips**. Shirts too long must be tucked in at all times.

****White t-shirts may only be worn underneath the uniform shirt.**

SPIRIT SHIRTS:

STRETCH material or tight fitting (that is revealing or which allows underclothing to show), bell bottoms (enlarged legs), hip hugger or low waisted pants/capris/shorts, and over sized or “sagging”.

SHORTS:

Uniform, logo free, khaki shorts. Short length for Jr. High students (6-8) must be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill + 1 inch (3 1/2 inches) from the top of the kneecap. Elementary students must be longer than their finger tips when they are standing up straight with their hands by their sides. Shorts which are too tight or which allow underclothing to show are not permitted.

BELTS:

Belts may be worn with pants, shorts, capris or skirts that have belt loops. Belts may have a design but wording will not be permitted. For example, “Hottie Princess, Tommy Hilfiger”, etc. will not be allowed. Belts must be appropriate length for students’ waist size and the belt must be kept in the belt loops. Oversized belts will NOT be permitted.

SPIRIT SHIRTS:

Dragon shirts that promote Driscoll pride may be worn on FRIDAYS only. Shirttails must be longer than the waistline but not below the hips. Shirts too long must be tucked in at all times.

SKIRTS/JUMPERS:

Must be logo free and khaki. Skirt/Jumper length for Jr. High students (6-8) must be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill + 1 inch (3 1/2 inches) from the top of the kneecap. Elementary students must be longer than their finger tips when they are standing up straight with their hands by their sides.

SHOES:

Shoes must be worn at all times. Steel-toed shoes are not allowed. No heelys (shoes with wheels) will be allowed. Platforms are strongly discouraged. Elementary students must wear tennis shoes to PE. Middle school students who have P.E. will be required to have an extra pair of tennis shoes on campus for gym.

EARRINGS/MAKEUP/HAIR/JEWELRY:

A maximum of 2 earrings may be worn only on the lower lobe. No facial piercing is allowed. No black lipstick, body or face glitter, nor any distracting stickers on the face and no tattoos on the face or body are allowed. Elementary students may not wear any makeup. Hair must be neat, clean and well groomed at all times.

Distracting hairstyles such as extremely dyed hair, painted hair, spikes, shaved or partially shaved heads are not allowed. Dreadlocks and distracting braids are NOT permitted. Jewelry and accessories shall not cause a distraction or be dangerous to the individual or others (i.e. chains on billfolds, oversized necklaces, etc.) Tongue rings are STRICKLY PROHIBITED.

UNDERGARMENTS:

Appropriate undergarments will be worn.

ACCESSORIES:

Hats/caps/bandannas/sunglasses will NOT be permitted unless it is a reward for a special day.

WINTER STUDENT STANDARDIZED DRESS

LONG SLEEVE UNIFORM SHIRTS:

- Long sleeve polo style in red for Elementary students or navy blue for Jr. High students.
- Logos are not permitted.

TURTLE-NECK AND LONG SLEEVED UNDERSHIRTS:

- Turtle-neck long sleeve solid shirts may be worn in red for Elementary students or navy blue for Jr. High students.
- A white long sleeve turtle-neck may be worn **ONLY** if under the appropriate colored short sleeve uniform shirt.
- Logos are not permitted.

SWEATSHIRTS:

- The uniform shirt, with the collar, may be worn underneath the sweatshirt.
- Must be appropriately sized and not excessively baggy. School colors are preferred.

SWEATERS/COATS/WINDBREAKERS/JACKETS:

- Must be appropriately sized and not oversized or baggy.

Harassment of Students

We prohibit students from sexually harassing other students and from sexually harassing employees; we also prohibit harassment based on anyone's race, color, gender, national origin, or disability. Engaging in harassment is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. We, of course, prohibit employees from having any kind of sexual contact or romantic relationship with students enrolled in our schools, even if the student is willing and the parents do not object. See the Student Code of Conduct for a complete description of the offense of "harassment" and possible disciplinary consequences.

If you or your child have a complaint about sexual comments, conduct, contact or any other inappropriate conduct by a school employee or about any other kind of harassment, do not hesitate to contact the Title IX coordinator whose name appears at the beginning of this Handbook regarding sexual harassment or the superintendent regarding any other harassment. We will listen to your concern and conduct a prompt investigation. We also will look into reports that other students have been making sexual or other harassing comments to or engaging in sexual or other inappropriate conduct or contact with your child at school or school activities and take appropriate disciplinary action according to the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

Although we will provide you a general report of the results of our investigation of harassment complaints, the same federal law that protects the confidentiality of information about your child (see Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, p. 2) protects the confidentiality of information about the student you reported for investigation. In other words, we will not disclose to you the specific discipline imposed on another student, unless that student's parents give us permission to disclose that information. If the complaint is about an employee's conduct, we will inform you of the results of the investigation and of the general action taken in response if there is a finding of wrong-doing on the employee's part.

A copy of the entire policy on harassment is included in the appendix of this handbook.

Searches of Students, Lockers, and Vehicles on School Property

The principal or other school administrator can search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property if she or he has a reasonable basis to suspect that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated a school rule. The scope of the search will be related to the suspected violation.

Lockers are school property and remain under the school's control at all times. Lockers can be searched at any time. **Because students are responsible for any contraband that is found in their lockers and will be disciplined accordingly,** they should not give any other student the combination to their locker or otherwise let anyone else have access to their lockers.

Vehicles parked on school property are also subject to search by the principal or other school administrators if the administrator has a reasonable basis to suspect that there may be contraband of any kind, such as weapons, alcohol, drugs, or any other prohibited substance, in the car.

We periodically bring in trained dogs to sniff around school property and vehicles parked on school property or within 300 feet of school property. If the trained dog alerts to a vehicle, locker, etc., that alert provides a reasonable basis to search the car, locker, etc.

Questioning Students at School

As school officials, we have the right to question your child about his or her own conduct at school and, in the investigation of alleged misconduct by other students, to question him or her about the conduct of others. We expect students to cooperate in this process, and the refusal to cooperate will be treated as insubordination and

disciplined accordingly. We will not ordinarily contact you before questioning your child about his or her own conduct or about the conduct of other students, but certainly will contact you as provided in the Student Code of Conduct if our investigation shows that your child has violated school conduct rules. The Code of Conduct provides a complete explanation of the discipline processes and when you will be contacted. Our investigation of possible violations of the Code of Conduct is not a criminal proceeding, and there is no such thing as “taking the Fifth” or a student’s right not to incriminate himself or herself in a school discipline investigation.

Sometimes law enforcement officials or investigators from Child Protective Services (CPS) ask to interview students at school. In the case of an investigator from Child Protective Services conducting a child abuse or neglect investigation, we are required by state law to permit the investigator to talk to the child at school. We will also make every effort to cooperate with law enforcement officials conducting an investigation that requires talking to students.

Ordinarily, we will attempt to contact you before the interview by an outside person takes place. However, if the CPS investigator or the law enforcement official asks or tells us not to contact you, we will comply.

Pledges, Moment of Silence, Prayer, and Meditation

Each day teachers will lead students in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and to the Texas flag. If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, please make a written request to the principal for your child to be excused. Following the recitation of the pledges, the school will observe a moment of silence. During this time, students may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract other students.

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school or any school activity in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the delivery of instruction or other activities in the school. No school employee can or will require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS

General Curriculum Information

Driscoll ISD operates a Pre-K—8 program that meets all state curriculum requirements. Schools are organized by grade level, with separate campuses for elementary (Pre-K—grade 5), middle school (grades 6-8).

A free full day pre-kindergarten program is available for children who are at least four years old on September 1. If pre-kindergarten classes reach capacity, students will be enrolled first that are eligible because:

1. they cannot speak or understand English;
2. they are homeless;

3. they are educationally disadvantaged; they are the child of an active duty member of the armed forces, including a National Guard member ordered to active duty;
4. they are the child of a member of the armed forces, including a National Guard member, who was injured or killed while on active duty; or
5. they are or ever have been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services, after an adversary proceeding.

If you think your child or children are eligible, please contact the principal.

Structured Physical Activity

In accordance with state law, we have the following policies in place to ensure that all students in elementary school and middle school engage in the amount and level of physical activity required by the State Board of Education which is structured physical activity for at least 30 minutes each day or 135 minutes each school week.

Special Programs

To meet the requirements of state and federal law, we also offer several programs designed to meet specific needs of some of our students. We identify students as eligible for one or more of these programs based on assessments made after referrals and recommendations from teachers and counselors and will always inform you about the program beforehand. We also can identify students based on an assessment after a request or referral from you. If you have any questions about the referral and identification process for any of the following programs, please contact your child's teacher(s), counselor, or the campus principal.

Special Education: Driscoll ISD provides special education and related services for students with disabilities according to individualized plans developed by teachers, parents, counselors, and other professionals. You may request an evaluation of your child to determine eligibility for special education at any time. We decide whether a student needs special education after we complete a comprehensive assessment. Please contact Mary Beth Lozano, Special Education Director at Driscoll ISD, or your principal to receive full information about our special education programs. See also the required Notice at the beginning of this Handbook.

Section 504: Some students who are not eligible for special education and related services may also have disabilities that interfere with their ability to benefit from the regular school program. A committee of educators who have knowledge of the student and his or her needs and limitations will determine what accommodations to the regular method and requirements of instruction are necessary in order for the student to participate. Please contact your principal to receive full information about the school's Section 504 program.

Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language: English is the basic language of instruction in our schools. Children who have limited English-speaking skills will have access to programs to help them learn to understand,

speak, read, and write the English language. At the time you enroll your children for the first time, you will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey so we know whether to take additional steps to be sure your child is properly served.

Gifted and Talented Students: Some children demonstrate or show a potential for demonstrating a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to other children of similar age, experience, or environment. These children may perform at a very high level in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, show an unusually high capacity for leadership, or excel in a particular academic field. We provide a variety of programs, activities, and learning opportunity for these students.

Accelerated or Intensive Instruction/Students At-Risk: Some students do not qualify for special education programs or Section 504 accommodations, but still need some additional assistance to be successful in school and complete the high school program. We provide tutorial programs and intensive or accelerated instruction in subjects where students are showing special difficulty and may provide specially focused instruction to improve students' language and math skills. Some of our specialized programs are designed to help students who are pregnant or are parents or who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Others are designed to provide additional assistance to students who have been retained at any grades or have had serious discipline problems.

Counseling Programs and Services

The district has a developmental counseling and guidance program. Each secondary campus has one or more counselors who are available to help students with questions about planning their course of instruction, applications to college or other post-secondary education and training programs, scholarships and financial assistance, and other academic issues. We also have trained counselors available to talk and listen to students about situations and experiences that may be affecting their ability to get all they can from their instructional program. We encourage students to seek the assistance of school counselors whenever they need to, and counselors can also refer students or parents to other sources of assistance.

Some aspects of the counseling program require prior written parent consent for the student's participation. As parents, you also have the right to preview all the written materials used in the school counseling program. For full information, please contact your school principal or counselor.

Testing and Assessment Programs

Once again, the statewide assessment program is in transition. Students and parents will be informed of changes in the program affecting them as those changes are implemented. The current transition will eventually eliminate TAKS for high school students and implement instead a state-developed end of course examination in core curriculum courses. Students in grades 3-8 will continue to be assessed using TAKS.

Results of the state examinations are used to assess individual student progress, as well as being a significant factor in the campus and district ratings under the statewide and federal accountability system. Please make every effort to have your children at school on state test administration days and to be sure that they have had plenty of rest the night before and a good breakfast that morning.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) will be administered in the Spring of each year for students in grades first and second. The results of the ITBS are used to assess individual student progress.

High school students can get registration and test preparation materials for the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT) from the high school counselor.

Beginning during the 2007-08 school year, we will annually assess the physical fitness of students in grades 3-12. You may request the results for your child in writing at the end of the school year.

Grading and Report Cards

Teachers establish their grading standards, including penalties for late work, but those standards must be consistent with guidelines approved by the campus principal. If you have a question about a grade your child receives on an assignment, you should talk first with the teacher. An exam or course grade issued by the teachers is final and will not be changed unless we determine that it was arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with the grading standards and policy.

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each grading period. If your child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance during a grading period, you will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that subject. We encourage you to attend those conferences. If your child's performance in language arts, math, science or social studies is consistently unsatisfactory, you will receive a progress report every four weeks.

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

Report card or unsatisfactory progress report must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 3 days.

With the report of grades for the first grading period of the school year, we will inform you of the most recent performance rating of your child's campus under the state's Academic Excellence Indicator System, along with a definition and explanation of each performance rating.

Grading Guidelines

In grades PK-K, achievement is reported to parents according to their development of skills. As the child progresses to the 1st grade, teachers begin to transition to number grades. In grades 2nd-8th grades, report cards appear by subject and a number grade is given to indicate progress in each class. Constant communication with parents is vital in each child's progress in school.

HOMEWORK

Homework is the independent practice of an objective that is assigned as reinforcement to be done outside of class time (home).

Amount and Frequency of HOMEWORK:

General Guidelines: 10 minutes per grade level

Example: 10 minutes X grade 3 = 30 minutes of homework

10 minutes X grade 7 = 70 minutes of homework

Student Expectations

- All assignments will be completed
- Students will do homework on their own to the best of their ability
- Students will turn in homework on time
- Students will turn in work that is neatly done

Students are responsible for making up homework assignments missed due to absence.

Parent Expectations

- Establish homework as a top priority for their children
- Make sure children do homework
- Provide a quiet environment for their children to do homework
- Establish a daily homework time
- Provide positive support when homework is completed
- Monitor student while she/he is doing their homework
- Contact the teacher if student is having problems with homework

Promotion, Retention, Award of Credit

Students are promoted from grade to grade, or awarded credit for a course, based on their mastery of the knowledge and skills that will let them be successful at the next grade level. In secondary grades, students receive credit for a course when they have met all the state and local requirements for that credit.

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least a 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards. In addition, students at certain grade levels will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) as a further requirement for promotion.

If your child entered kindergarten in the 2000-2001 school year or after, he or she will have to pass the TAKS examination in the third, fifth, and eighth grades—or pass an alternate test if he or she does not pass after three tries on the TAKS—in order to be

promoted to the fourth, sixth, and ninth grades. If your child does not pass the TAKS after the first administration at a grade level, we will provide intensive instruction in your child's area(s) of academic weakness. If the student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher and the student's parent will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the District, the decision of the committee must be unanimous. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. Contact your principal for more information.

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

CREDIT BY EXAM-If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has received prior instruction in a course or subject, but did not receive credit for it, may, in circumstances determined by the teacher and counselor or principal, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for the course or subject. To receive credit, a student must score at least 70 on the exam. In other instances, the District administration will determine whether any opportunity for credit by exam will be offered.

The attendance review committee may offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to receive credit for a course by passing an exam. A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. (For further information, see the counselor and policy EEJA.)

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

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has no prior instruction. The passing score required to earn credit on an exam is 90.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school will be offered for four weeks each summer for students who require remediation in reading, writing or math. Extended services are also offered during the first and third intersessions to students who are in need of additional assistance in reading, writing or math.

Every year, the district offers an ESL summer school program for students who will be entering Kindergarten and First grade the following school year. Since Driscoll ISD is a year-round district, this program is also offered during the first and last intersessions as well as during summer school. Based on the number of students desiring to participate, Driscoll ISD will provide a half-day program during the first and last intersessions for limited English proficient students. Classes will be held Monday – Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00p.m. Instruction will focus on English as a Second Language strategies,

language development and essential knowledge and skills appropriate to the level of the students.

To be eligible for intersession/summer ESL program, students must be limited English proficient and eligible for admission to kindergarten and/or first grade at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

Library Facilities, Hours and Access

Each school has a library available for student research and study, with resources appropriate for needs of the grades served by the campus. The library is supervised by a library aide. Students have access to the library during the school day and during posted hours before and after school.

If you have a concern about library materials available to your child, please contact the librarian, teacher, or the principal. We have a policy and process that will allow you to explain your concerns and reach an understanding about your child's access to the questioned materials.

Educational Technology and Acceptable Use

We are steadily acquiring computers for school use and access to other instructional and research resources through connections to the Internet and the World Wide Web. These electronic instructional resources are for use at school and for school-related purposes. Before your child is permitted to receive a User Identification and password to use school computers, you and your child must sign a User Agreement that explains acceptable and unacceptable use of school educational technology. You will have the choice to prevent your child from having access to the Internet on school computers.

The following kinds of use of the school's equipment or network are classified as unacceptable under our policy and the User Agreement:

1. Unauthorized use of copyrighted material, including violating District software licensing agreements or installing any personal software on district equipment without approval of the Technology Director. (See EFE)
2. Posting or distribution of messages that are obscene, vulgar, profane, sexually oriented, pornographic, highly offensive to others, highly threatening to others, or illegal, because a significant part of the District's educational mission is to inculcate or instill the habits and manners of civility and to teach students the boundaries of socially appropriate behavior.
3. Personal political use to advocate for or against a candidate, office-holder, political party, or political position. Research or electronic communications regarding political issues or candidates is not a violation when the activity is to fulfill an assignment for course credit.
4. Participating in chat rooms other than those sponsored and overseen by the District.
5. Tampering with anyone else's computer, files, or e-mail.

6. "Hacking," i.e., attempting unauthorized access to any computer whether within the district's network or outside it.
7. Attempting to change, disable or destroy District equipment, files or data or any other user's data or files, including introducing computer viruses into the District's system by any means.
8. Any use that would be unlawful under state or federal law.
9. Unauthorized disclosure, use, or distribution of personal identification information regarding students or employees.
10. Forgery of electronic mail messages or transmission of unsolicited junk e-mail chain messages.
11. Use that violates the student code of conduct.
12. Use related to commercial activities or for commercial gain.
13. Advertisement for purchase or sale of a product.

Students who violate the terms of the User Agreement may lose their computer privileges at school, as well as incur consequences under the school's Student Code of Conduct.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO STUDENTS

Extracurricular Activities

We offer a variety of school-related extracurricular activities and encourage students to participate in those that are of interest to them. Some activities, such as NJHS (National Junior Honor Society) and the 21st Century activities, are closely related to subjects taught in the curriculum; others, such as the Student Council, help students build leadership skills. All of the athletic and sports teams that participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) athletic competition are extracurricular, as is cheerleading. Although most extracurricular activities are designed for secondary students, those in grades 7 to 12, we encourage elementary age students to participate in UIL Academic activities and competitions.

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. By state law, students must make a passing grade in all their classes in each grading period in order to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular performance or competition in the next grading period, unless the failing grade was received in an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or in an honors course or dual credit course in English language arts, math, science, social studies or a language other than English. Students who are ineligible because of one or more grades below 70 will be allowed to practice or rehearse during a suspension, but cannot perform or compete. If the student raises the grade(s) to passing within three weeks, she or he will regain eligibility to perform or compete.

Many of our approved extracurricular activities have standards of conduct, dress, and grooming that are stricter than those that apply to all students. You and your child will

be informed of those rules at the beginning of the semester, school year, or activity and will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that you are aware of those standards and know that violation of those standards will result in suspension or removal from the activity. These additional rules are authorized by the school board, which has delegated to the superintendent the authority to approve them.

Students who participate in UIL athletic activities will be subject to random testing for the presence of illegal steroids as required by UIL rules and regulations.

Student Publications/Distribution of Materials

All materials prepared and published as part of a school's journalism or language arts programs are under the control and supervision of the administration and the Board of Trustees. The principal has final approval authority on all materials published or distributed in the name of the school.

Each campus has an area in the school where nonschool publications or materials that have been approved by the principal can be made available to students. Students are not permitted to distribute nonschool publications or materials in the classroom or hallways.

1. Before nonschool materials or publications are made available to students in the designated area, they must be submitted to the principal for review and approval. The principal will make a decision within two school days after the materials are submitted, and his or her failure to act within that time is interpreted as disapproval. If the materials are disapproved, students can appeal to the superintendent using the student complaint policy FNG (LOCAL).

Graduation Honors/Class Ranking

8th grade graduating students will be ranked according to an average of his or her 6th, 7th and 8th grade yearly grades in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

Under state law, students who are ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission to all Texas state colleges and universities, including The University of Texas system and the Texas A&M University system. The counselor will provide more detailed information about this opportunity during a student's first year of high school, including information about eligibility for financial aid. Please contact the counselor at any time for information.

Rank in class for purposes of determining which students are in the top 10% of their graduating class will be calculated at the end of the 11th grade, middle of the 12th grade, and at high school graduation. Students will use the latest ranking in relation to their college application deadlines. The number of students in the top 10% for automatic admission to a Texas college will not exceed the mathematical calculation of 10% of the number of students in the graduating class.

Graduation Exercises

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right, and students who do not comply with dress, grooming, and conduct standards for the rehearsal and ceremony

will be removed from the ceremony. Graduating students who are assigned to the district's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program through the end of school year and successfully complete their term of assignment in the DAEP without further disciplinary action may be allowed to take part in graduation ceremonies. That decision rests with the principal and cannot be appealed.

The graduation ceremony is a solemn event commemorating a milestone achievement in the lives of our graduates. The planning and execution of the ceremony is under the joint control of the graduating class, which will decide on the basic organization and components of the ceremony, and the administration, which will exercise editorial review and approval of the speeches and other comments to be delivered by the Valedictorian and Salutatorian and any other students.

Personal Graduation Plan: If your child is in junior high/middle school or high school and does not perform successfully on any TAKS test or if we determine that your child is not likely to receive a high school diploma within five years of beginning the 9th grade, you will be asked to participate in developing a personal graduation plan for your child. That plan will identify your child's education goals and will take into consideration your educational expectations for your child. Should a personal graduation plan be appropriate for your child, the counselor and principal will contact you with more specific information.

Students with Disabilities

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

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include:

- End of the year 8th grade trip
- Graduation Ceremony
- School sponsored graduation reception/dance

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation, such as the purchase of cap and gown and 8th grade pictures, both student and parents should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO PARENTS

Parent Rights

Academic Programs: You can ask the principal to change your child's teacher or class assignment; however, the principal is not required to make the reassignment

and will not do so ordinarily if that change would affect the assignment or reassignment of another student.

You can ask the school board to add a specific academic course to the schedule and offerings. If the administration and the board determine that the course is among those included in the State Board of Education-approved curriculum and that there is sufficient interest in the class to make it economically practical to offer the class, the request will not be unreasonably denied.

You can ask that your child be permitted to attend a class for credit above his or her grade level. If the counselor and child's current and prospective teacher expect that the child can perform satisfactorily in the class, the request will not be unreasonably denied.

Teaching Materials: You may review all teaching materials, textbooks and other teaching aids used in your child's classroom and may review all tests administered to your child, after the test is given. To review these materials, please contact the principal, who will make arrangements to provide you access to those materials at school during regular school hours.

Some textbooks are so expensive that we purchase classroom sets rather than a textbook for each student taking the course. You may request that your child be permitted to take home any textbook used by the student, and if a book is available, we will gladly honor that request. If the teacher requests it, the student must return the textbook to school the following school day.

Records and Other Information: As we stated in the "Required Notices" section of this Handbook, you have a right of access to all written educational records that we maintain concerning your child. You also can receive full information about any and all school activities in which your child is involved. However, as we explained in the section on "Questioning Students at School," we must comply with a request or directive from a Child Protective Services investigator regarding contact with or information to parents about an investigation.

Video and Audio Recording: We will seek and obtain your written consent before any school employee makes an audio or video recording of your child, except that your prior consent is not required before a recording that will be used only for:

- safety purposes, including maintaining order and discipline in common areas of the school or on school buses; or
- a purpose related to a cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
- a purpose related to regular classroom instruction; or
- media coverage of the school.

Psychological Examinations: We will seek and obtain your written consent before conducting any psychological examination, test, or treatment of your child, unless the examination is part of an investigation by Child Protective Services in response to a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. If the examination or test is part of the comprehensive assessment to see if your child needs special education or related services, before we obtain consent, on your request, we will provide you with

information about the name and type of examination and how the examination will be used to develop an appropriate individualized program for your child.

Exemption from Instruction: You may temporarily remove your child from a class or other school activity that conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs if you provide a written statement authorizing the removal to your child's teacher. However, you are not entitled to remove your child from class or an activity to avoid taking a test or to prevent your child from taking a subject for an entire semester. Your child will be required to satisfy grade level or graduation requirements, regardless of any periods of temporary removal based on your religious or moral beliefs.

Campus Performance and Accountability: We will keep you informed annually of your children's campus ratings and whether the campus has been identified under state and federal law as one that needs improvement. If the campus is so identified, we will inform you of your rights regarding public school choice and transportation at that time. You will receive information with your child's report card for the first reporting period of each year related to the campus performance rating under the state accountability system.

Classroom Celebrations: Parents may provide a birthday snack or treat for their child's class after lunch or for any other school-designated function, such as a class party, that would be designated as a Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) day.

Visiting School

You are encouraged to visit your children's schools from time to time; however, you must comply with our policy requiring **all** visitors to go first to the principal's office and sign in. We have this policy for the safety of your children and our staff. Parents and any other person on campus without the principal's knowledge will be considered as trespassers and may be subject to arrest.

We also expect parents to be polite and civil in their dealings with all school staff. We do not permit or tolerate abusive, disrespectful, threatening, lewd, profane, or offensive language from your children at school, and we will not tolerate it from parents. Parents who create a disruption at school or behave unacceptably may be prohibited from coming onto school property without specific authority and will be treated as criminal trespassers if they disregard the principal's or superintendent's directive.

While we encourage you to be involved in your children's education and knowledgeable about their classes, teachers, and curriculum, it has been our experience that frequent and lengthy visits to the classroom are disruptive both to teaching and learning. The principal can limit or restrict the frequency and duration of classroom visits to be sure that disruption of the instructional process does not occur.

We encourage you to come to school occasionally and eat lunch with your child; however, children can be removed from the campus during lunch period only by following the established process of signing the child out from the principal's office. Unless we have possession of a court document that limits a possessory conservator's, (that is the parent who does not ordinarily have custody of the student), access to their child while at school, we will permit either parent to eat lunch with their child at school.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten – 5th follow a class schedule developed by the grade level teachers. Teachers in grades 3rd – 5th will use a team teaching approach. Students will have one teacher for language arts and the other grade level teacher for math. Middle school students in grades 6th – 8th follow a departmentalized schedule allowing ninety minutes for Reading/Language Arts and Math, and forty five minutes for Science, Social Studies, Spanish, Computer Keyboarding, P.E./Athletics and electives.

Complaint Process

We realize that situations may arise when parents disagree with a decision that affects their child or believe that a policy has been improperly applied to their child. A number of these types of disputes or controversies have specific processes for pursuing those concerns. The principal can provide you with a copy of the relevant policies and procedures.

In general, all parent complaints should be brought initially to the teacher involved or the campus principal within 15 days of the events or situation that you are concerned about. Often the problem can be resolved through an informal conference with the teacher or principal. On those occasions when a conference does not take care of problem, you should request a copy of the complaint policy and complaint form from the principal's office. In order for your concern to be resolved at the earliest possible level, you should put your complaint in writing on the form provided before meeting formally with the principal.

The principal will schedule a conference with you and give you a written or oral response within seven days after the conference. You will also have an opportunity for a conference with the superintendent if the principal has not resolved the matter. If the superintendent is not able to take care of the problem, you can make a written request for the Board of Trustees to consider the matter at a future meeting.

Individual trustees cannot respond to parent complaints beyond referring the matter to the administration. Furthermore, the board of trustees will not permit complaints to be heard in the public comment or open forum portion of board meetings. In order for the board to take any action on a complaint, you must follow the complaint process established in policy.

Student Health Concerns

We have adopted and enforce policies to ensure that our campuses comply with Texas Department of Agriculture guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines.

As required by state law, we have and enforce prohibitions against student possession and use of tobacco and tobacco products on campuses or school-sponsored or –related activities. These prohibitions are addressed in the Student Code of Conduct and also in board policy and the employee handbook.

The district's student health advisory council met 2 times during the preceding school year.

We will develop an individualized health plan for children with diabetes who need care for diabetes while in school or participating in a school activity. This plan will be developed in collaboration with you and, if possible, your child's physician. If your child has diabetes and will need care at school or while participating in a school activity, you must submit the diabetes management and treatment plan prepared by you and your child's physician before or at the beginning of the school year, on enrollment after the beginning of the school year, or as soon as practicable following a diagnosis of diabetes.

Student Illness or Injury at School

We will promptly attempt to notify you or a person you have authorized us to notify if we have knowledge that your child has been injured at school or has become ill at school. We have a school nurse at the campus and a secluded area where your child can stay if she or he is injured or becomes ill.

One of the forms we ask you to complete at the beginning of each school year is a form authorizing designated school employees to consent to medical treatment in case your child is injured at school or a school-related activity and requires emergency treatment. We, of course, will call you in such a situation and will also call for emergency medical assistance, if needed. **It is important, however, that you understand that the school district is not responsible for any cost of medical treatment or services provided after an injury at school or a school-related activity. We cannot and will not use public funds to pay individual student medical expenses.**

Although we want your child to attend school every day, we do not want your child at school if she or he has a communicable disease or is running a fever of 100° or more. Under State and local Health Department regulations, if your child has certain medical conditions, she or he must be excluded from school for a period of time. The principal can provide you a complete list of those conditions and periods of exclusion.

Administering Medicine at School

Often, students have to take prescription medication for a certain period of time as treatment for a medical condition. If at all possible, we ask that you schedule the timing of the doses so that the child takes the medicine at home. If children have to take medicine at school, you must make a written request to the principal or nurse. The school nurse or other authorized school employee will administer medications only from a container that appears to be the properly labeled original prescription container or from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by the nurse from a properly labeled original prescription container. Only the nurse or other authorized school employees are permitted to administer prescription medicines at school. Other than prescription asthma medicine or anaphylaxis treatment for students with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis, we do not permit students to carry their own medications and self-administer.

Children with asthma or children with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis, will be allowed to carry and self-administer their prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medicine under certain conditions. The student must have demonstrated to his or her doctor and to the school nurse that the child has the skills necessary to self-administer

the asthma or anaphylaxis medicine. Additionally you must provide us a written authorization for self-administration and a written statement from child's doctor that the student has asthma or severe allergies and is capable of self-administration and that includes the name and purpose of the medicine, the prescribed dosage, the times and circumstances for administration, and the period for which the medicine is prescribed.

We keep commonly used over-the-counter treatments, such as antacids, aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antibiotic ointments, and the like in the nurse's office. Nurses or authorized personnel will administer these medications according to the labeled instructions if you make a written request to the nurse, providing the same basic information as is required for administering prescription drugs.

If your child has unique medical conditions or any other condition, such as a food allergy, that requires virtually immediate administration of medications under specified conditions, please contact the principal, who will schedule a meeting of appropriate personnel to ensure that your child's needs are met.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Texas Department of Health regarding these diseases.

Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law requires the District to provide the following information:

WHAT IS MENINGITIS?

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

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

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

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

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

HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

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

HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS SPREAD?

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

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

HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?

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

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND MIGHT HAVE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

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

SAFETY

Accident Prevention

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

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

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

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

Fire Drill Bells

1 continuous bell	leave the building
administration all clear	return to the room

Tornado Drill Bells

Intercom broadcast	move quietly but quickly to the designated locations
administration all clear	return to the classroom

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

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

Emergency School-Closing Information

The Superintendent of Schools will make the decision for an emergency school closing. This information will be disseminated through local news stations on KIII and KRIS. School employees will be notified by phone.

Lost, Damaged, or Stolen Personal Items

We ask that you discourage your child from wearing or bringing to school expensive or irreplaceable jewelry, watches, sunglasses, or personal clothing that may be removed during the day. Students are responsible for all their personal possessions while at school or any school-sponsored or school-related event. **It is important that you understand the school district is not responsible for any personal items that are lost, damaged, or stolen at school or a school-related activity.**

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use By Students Before and After School

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

The following areas are open to students before school beginning at 7:00 a.m.

- Driscoll Cafetorium (Students are expected to remain in the cafetorium until dismissed at 7:25)
- At 7:25, Students in grades Pre K – 1st are dismissed to the library. Students in grades 2nd – 5th will stay in the cafetorium. Students in grades 6th – 8th are dismissed to the main building.

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

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

Telephone Use

School telephones are for school business use. Students will be permitted to use school telephones only for emergencies and only with permission. If you call for your child during the school day, we will take a message and deliver it to the student at the end of the class period or other time that will least interfere with instruction. The Student Code of Conduct **does not** allow students to carry cellular phones or pagers during the school day. Students in violation will have the cellular phones and/or pagers confiscated.

Parent Organizations/Volunteer Opportunities

Every campus in the district has an active Parent-Teacher Organization, and we encourage you to actively participate in the group at your child's or children's campus(es).

We encourage parents to volunteer in our schools.

Pest Control Information

The District periodically applies pesticides inside buildings. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior

to pesticide application inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact Mark Gonzalez.

Transportation Program

We provide transportation on school buses to and from school for those children who live more than two miles away from the school they attend. Students are required to comply with rules for conduct on school buses and to comply with the Student Code of Conduct while at authorized school bus stops waiting for the bus. Students who misbehave or violate the Code of Conduct while on the bus will be disciplined according to the Code of Conduct and may be suspended from the bus for a period of time.

School Sponsored Trips

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

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The District makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by calling (361) 387-7349.

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. These standards are as followed:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times
- No fighting.
- No inappropriate language.
- Keep hands, feet, books and personal items out of the aisle at all times.
- Do not damage or vandalize any part of the bus.
- Do not throw objects within the bus.
- Do not throw objects out of the bus.
- Any action deemed inappropriate by the bus driver or monitor will result in disciplinary consequences.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

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

Authorized Fees

Although the basic cost of your child's public education is provided through local tax revenues, state funding, and some federal funds, we may assess fees for certain kinds of materials and services, as described in the following list:

- a fee to cover the cost of materials when the student makes, builds, or prepares some product that becomes the student's personal property.
- dues for voluntary student organizations and clubs and admission fees to voluntary extracurricular activities.
- security deposits for materials, supplies, or materials that must be returned to the district.
- fees for personal PE equipment and clothing, unless the student provides his or her own clothing and equipment that meets school health and safety standards.
- fees for items of personal use or products a student chooses to purchase, such as student publications, class rings, annuals, and graduation announcements.
- fees for personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the student's personal property, such as cheerleader, pep squad, or drill team uniforms.
- a fee for student identification cards.
- a fee for an elective course taken for credit if it requires using facilities not available on school premises or employment of an educator who is not part of the regular staff.

You may request a waiver of any required fee that you are unable to pay by contacting the principal who will determine ability to pay based on the criteria for identifying students who are eligible for participation in the free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch program.

Food Service/Free and Reduced-Price Food Program

We serve a variety of nutritious food for students and faculty members at a nominal cost. We do not allow foods of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the federal Child Nutrition program, to be served or available for purchase in food service and eating areas during the time students are being served meals.

Students must follow directions for entering the cafeteria and observe good table manners and courteous behavior at all times, i.e., no cutting in line. Wearing hats in the cafeteria, loud talking, and unnecessary noise are considered poor manners and may result in disciplinary action.

Students may prepay for meals. Students pay for their lunches either with cash or the prepay plan. The cost of a prepay plan will not be less than the established meal rate for the year, regardless of the quantity of meals purchased at one time. Since we use a computer managed system, student charges are limited to \$5.00. If that amount is exceeded, an alternate meal will be provided. All charges must be paid before students will be allowed to participate in any extra curricular activities.

Our schools participate in the federal Child Nutrition Programs, which provide free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs to students based on family income levels. We maintain strict confidentiality as to whether students participate in the program. If you would like more information about the program or an application, please contact the Director of Food Services, Becky Funke.

Currently the price for a school meal is as follows:

Student Meals	Elementary	Middle School	Reduced
Breakfast	\$0.75	\$0.75	\$0.30
Lunch	\$1.00	\$1.40	\$0.40

Adult Meals	Employees	Non-employees
Breakfast	\$1.25	\$1.65
Lunch	\$2.25	\$3.90