

RICHARD MILBURN ACADEMY TEXAS

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

2009/2010 SCHOOL YEAR

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STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND HANDBOOK PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2009–2010! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

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

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

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

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the ***RMA Student Code of Conduct***, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as an attachment to this handbook and is available in the principal’s office.

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

In case of conflict between board policy or the ***Student Code of Conduct*** and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the provisions of board policy or the ***Student Code of Conduct*** that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

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

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 16 and **Directory Information** on page 20 and **Appendix III** for more information.] Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district’s policy manual is available for review in the school office.

RICHARD MILBURN ACADEMY TEXAS

MISSION STATEMENT

Every Richard Milburn Academy student will meet Texas scholastic standards as measured by state approved tests, graduate with a high school diploma, and qualify for postsecondary education and employment.

PHILOSOPHY

RMA believes all students can achieve excellence in a positive, challenging educational environment that stimulates their interests, channels their energies, and develops their abilities. RMA is committed to providing a nontraditional learning environment for students with distinct needs for these educational services. Recognizing the individual strengths and intrinsic worth of all students, RMA modifies educational services to provide specific skill development opportunities for all students to achieve self-confidence, self-worth, self-discipline, and self-acceptance.

RMA is committed to ensuring opportunities for all students to increase skills in both academic and employment environments. RMA concentrates on increasing students' basic academic and career/life skills by offering opportunities for students to receive career counseling as they earn credits toward high school diplomas. RMA provides services to help students increase specific talents and self-worth, using instruction and weekly counseling and mentoring sessions focused on the individual student's needs.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RMA is committed to ensuring opportunities for all students who have experienced difficulty in the public high school to increase skills in both academic and employment environments.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the school's distinguishing characteristics include:

- Flexible scheduling to meet individual needs
- Small class size
- Life skills approach to education
- Focus on individual learning styles
- Variety of instructional approaches
- Emphasis on thinking and problem solving skills
- Dedicated staff who recognize CHSEP student's special circumstances
- High expectations for all students
- Support system to assist student achievement and success
- School to Work Program

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

The Student Code of Conduct is the district's response to the requirements of Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

The Code provides methods and options for managing students in the classroom and on school grounds, disciplining students, and preventing and intervening in student discipline problems.

The law requires the district to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences including removal from a regular classroom or campus, suspension, or expulsion from school.

This Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Richard Milburn Academy Board of Trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level committee. This Code provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Code will be posted at each school campus or will be available for review at the office of the campus principal. Parents will be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended or expelled.

Because the Student Code of Conduct is adopted by the district's board of trustees, it has the force of policy; therefore, in case of conflict between the Code and the student handbook, the Code will prevail.

Please Note: The discipline of students with disabilities who are eligible for services under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is subject to the provisions of those laws.

I. School District Authority and Jurisdiction

School rules and the authority of the district to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

The district has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school on district transportation;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
4. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
5. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
6. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
7. For certain offenses committed while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
8. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
9. When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

The district has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable cause to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

The district has the right to search a student's locker when there is reasonable cause to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

Reporting Crimes

School administrators will report crimes as required by law and will call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

Revoking Transfers

The district has the right to revoke the transfer of a nonresident student for violating the district's Code.

II. Standards for Student Conduct

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet district and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other district staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including district property and facilities.
- Cooperate with and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

III. General Conduct Violations

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school and all school-related activities, but the list does not include the most serious offenses. In the subsequent sections on Suspension, Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Serious Offenses, and Expulsion, severe offenses that require or permit specific consequences are listed. Any offense, however, may be serious enough to result in Removal from the Regular Educational Setting as detailed in that section.

Disregard for Authority

Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination).
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct on school buses.
- Refuse to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal.

Mistreatment of Others

Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault see Suspension and Expulsion)
- Threaten a district student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in bullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See glossary for all three terms)
- Engage in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct, directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence, including the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship.
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See glossary)
- Cause an individual to act through the use of or threat of force (coercion).
- Commit extortion or blackmail (obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person).
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.
- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individuals being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

Property Offenses

Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others – with graffiti or by other means. (For felony criminal mischief see Suspension or Expulsion)
- Deface or damage school property—including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code. (For felony robbery and theft see Suspension and Expulsion)

Possession of Prohibited Items

Students shall not possess or use:

- fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- a razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
- a “look-alike” weapon;
- an air gun or BB gun;
- ammunition;
- a stun gun;
- a pocketknife or any other small knife;
- mace or pepper spray;
- pornographic material;
- tobacco products;
- matches or a lighter;
- a laser pointer for other than an approved use; or
- any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists. (For weapons and firearms see Suspension and Expulsion)

Possession of Telecommunications Devices

Students are not permitted to possess such items as pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, electronic devices or games at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal’s office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess cell phones; however, cell phones must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of cell phones in locker rooms or restroom areas at any time while at school, at a school-related, or a school-sponsored event is strictly prohibited.

Illegal, Prescription, and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Students shall not:

- Possess or sell seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount. (For illegal drugs, alcohol, and inhalants see Suspension and Expulsion)
- Possess, use, give, or sell paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance. (See glossary for “paraphernalia”)
- Possess or sell look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
- Abuse the student’s own prescription drug, give a prescription drug to another student, or possess or be under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event. (See glossary for “abuse”)
- Abuse over-the-counter drugs. (See glossary for “abuse”)
- Be under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment of the physical or mental faculties. (See glossary for “under the influence”)
- Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by district policy.

Misuse of Computers and the Internet

Students shall not:

- Violate computer use policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student's parent.
- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the district, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district computer equipment, district data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the district's system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten district students, employees, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Send or post electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.

Safety Transgressions

Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

Miscellaneous Offenses

Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the student handbook.
- Cheat or copy the work of another.
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

The district may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

IV. Discipline Management Techniques

Discipline will be designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements. Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense (unless otherwise specified by law) may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses. Corporal punishment – spanking or paddling the student – will **not** be used as a discipline management technique.

Students with Disabilities

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct. To the extent any conflict exists, state and/or federal law will prevail.

In accordance with the Education Code, a student who is enrolled in a special education program may not be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying, harassment, or making hit lists (see glossary) until an ARD committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

In deciding whether to order suspension or expulsion, the district will take into consideration a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct.

Techniques

The following discipline management techniques may be used—alone or in combination—for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Cooling-off time or "time-out."
- Seating changes within the classroom.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Rewards or demerits.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Grade reductions or withdrawal from RMA for academic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Detention.
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area, or to in-school suspension.
- Assignment of school duties such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Withdrawal or restriction of bus privileges.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- In school suspension, as specified in the Suspension section of this Code.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in the Suspension section of this Code.
- Expulsion for Certain Serious Offenses section of this Code.
- Expulsion, as specified in the Expulsion section of this Code.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by RMA.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

Notification

The principal or appropriate administrator will notify a student's parent by phone or in writing of any violation that may result in a suspension or expulsion. Notification will be made within three school days after the administrator becomes aware of the violation.

Appeals

Parental questions or complaints regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher or campus administration, as appropriate, and in accordance with local School Board policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of the policy may be obtained from the principal's office. Consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of a grievance.

V. Removal from the Regular Educational Setting

In addition to other discipline management techniques, misconduct may result in removal from the regular educational setting in the form of a routine referral or a formal removal.

Routine Referral

A routine referral occurs when a teacher sends a student to the principal's office as a discipline management technique. The principal may then employ additional techniques.

Formal Removal

A teacher or administrator **may** remove a student from class for a behavior that violates this Code to maintain effective discipline in the classroom. A teacher **may** also initiate a formal removal from class if:

1. The student's behavior has been documented by the teacher as repeatedly interfering with the teacher's ability to teach his or her class or with the student's classmates' ability to learn; or
2. The behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the teacher cannot teach, and the students in the classroom cannot learn.

A teacher or administrator **must** remove a student from class if the student engages in behavior that under the Education Code requires or permits the student to be placed in suspension or expelled. When removing for those reasons, the procedures in the subsequent sections on suspension or expulsion will be followed. Otherwise, within three school days of the formal removal, the appropriate administrator will schedule a conference with the student's parent; the student; the teacher, in the case of removal by a teacher; and any other administrator.

At the conference, the appropriate administrator will inform the student of the misconduct for which he or she is charged and the consequences. The administrator will give the student an opportunity to give his or her version of the incident.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom by a teacher and a conference is pending, the principal may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion

Returning Student to Classroom

When a student has been formally removed from class by a teacher for conduct against the teacher containing the elements of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, the student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent.

When a student has been formally removed by a teacher for any other conduct, the student may be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent, if the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative available.

VI. *Suspension*

Misconduct

Students may be suspended for any behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation or expellable offense.

In deciding whether to order suspension, RMA will take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student's disciplinary history.

Process

State law allows a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

Before being suspended a student will have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator, who shall advise the student of the conduct of which he or she is accused. The

student will be given the opportunity to explain his or her version of the incident before the administrator's decision is made.

The number of days of a student's suspension will be determined by the appropriate administrator, but will not exceed three school days. The appropriate administrator will determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

VII. Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Serious Offenses

This section includes two categories of serious offenses for which the Education Code provides unique procedures and specific consequences.

1. Registered Sex Offenders

Upon receiving notification in accordance with state law that a student is currently required to register as a sex offender, the administration must remove the student from the regular classroom and determine appropriate placement unless the court orders JJAEP placement.

If the student is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, the placement will be in JJAEP for at least one semester.

If the student is not under any form of court supervision, the placement may be in JJAEP for one semester or the placement may be in a regular classroom. The placement may not be in the regular classroom if the board or its designee determines that the student's presence:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interests of the district's students.

Review Committee

At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in an alternative educational setting and before the beginning of each school year for which the student remains in an alternative placement, the district shall convene a committee, in accordance with state law, to review the student's placement. The committee will recommend whether the student should return to the regular classroom or remain in the placement. Absent a special finding, the board or its designee must follow the committee's recommendation. The placement review of a student with a disability who receives special education services must be made by the ARD committee.

Newly Enrolled Student

If a student enrolls in the district during a mandatory placement as a registered sex offender, the district may count any time already spent by the student in a placement or may require an additional semester in an alternative placement without conducting a review of the placement.

Appeal

A student or the student's parent may appeal the placement by requesting a conference between the board or its designee, the student, and the student's parent. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender. Any decision of the board or its designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

2. Certain Felonies

Regardless whether expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the Expulsion section, in accordance with Education Code 37.0081, a student **may** be expelled and placed in JJAEP if the board or its designee makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to a felony offense under Title 5 (see glossary) of the Texas Penal Code. The student must:

- Have received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been charged with engaging in conduct defined as a Title 5 felony offense;

- Have been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as a Title 5 felony offense; or
- Have received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred,
2. The location at which the conduct occurred,
3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district, or
4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

Hearing and Required Findings

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Length of Placement

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school,
2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense, or
3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

Newly Enrolled Students

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

VII. Expulsion

In deciding whether to order expulsion, the district **will** take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student's disciplinary history.

A. Discretionary Expulsion: Misconduct That May Result in Expulsion

Any Location

A student may be expelled for:

- Engaging in the following, no matter where it takes place:
 - Conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer.
 - Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of one of the following offenses against another student, without regard to where the conduct occurs:
 - Aggravated assault.
 - Sexual assault.
 - Aggravated sexual assault.
 - Murder.
 - Capital murder.
 - Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
 - Aggravated robbery.

- Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.

At School, Within 300 Feet, or at School Event

- Committing any of the following offenses on or within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school’s real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
 - Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony.
 - Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
 - Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of assault under Section 22.01(a)(1) against an employee or a volunteer.
 - Engaging in deadly conduct. (See glossary)

Within 300 Feet of School

- Engaging in the following conduct while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school’s real property boundary line:
 - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
 - Arson.
 - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
 - Indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, or aggravated robbery.
 - Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children.
 - Felony drug- or alcohol-related offense.
 - Use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm (as defined by state law), an illegal knife, a club, or prohibited weapon, or possession of a firearm (as defined by federal law).

Property of Another District

- Committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.

B. Mandatory Expulsion: Misconduct That Requires Expulsion

A student **must** be expelled for any of the following offenses that occur on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

Federal Law

- Bringing to school a firearm, as defined by federal law. “Firearm” under federal law includes:
 - Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
 - The frame or receiver of any such weapon.
 - Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon.
 - Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Texas Penal Code

- Using, exhibiting, or possessing the following, as defined by the Texas Penal Code:
 - A firearm (any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use).
 - Any knife including a pocketknife.
 - A club (see glossary) such as an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

- A prohibited weapon, such as an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a short-barrel firearm, a firearm silencer, a switchblade knife, knuckles, armor-piercing ammunition, a chemical dispensing device, or a zip gun. (See glossary)
- Behaving in a manner that contains elements of the following offenses under the Texas Penal Code:
 - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
 - Arson. (See glossary)
 - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
 - Indecency with a child.
 - Aggravated kidnapping.
 - Aggravated robbery.
 - Manslaughter.
 - Criminally negligent homicide.
 - Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children.
- Behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol.
- Engaging in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer combined with one of the above-listed mandatory expulsion offenses, with the exception of a federal firearm offense, on or off school property or at a school-related activity.

Emergency

In an emergency, the principal or the principal's designee **may** order the immediate expulsion of a student for any reason for which expulsion may be made on a nonemergency basis.

Process

If a student is believed to have committed an expellable offense, the principal or other appropriate administrator will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time. The student's parent will be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the principal may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension

Hearing

A student facing expulsion will be given a hearing with appropriate due process. The student is entitled to:

1. Representation by the student's parent or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district,
2. An opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense, and
3. An opportunity to question the district's witnesses.

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student or the student's parent attends.

The Board of Trustees delegates to the RMA School Director authority to conduct hearing and expel students.

Expulsion Order

After the due process hearing, if the student is expelled, the board or its designee will deliver to the student and the student's parent a copy of the order expelling the student.

Not later than the second business day after the hearing, the RMA School Director will deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the expulsion order and the information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the length of the expulsion is inconsistent with the guidelines included in the Student Code of Conduct, the expulsion order will give notice of the inconsistency.

Length of Expulsion

The length of an expulsion will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements. The duration of a student's expulsion will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The maximum period of expulsion is one calendar year except as provided below.

An expulsion may not exceed one year unless, after review, the district determines that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees, or
2. Extended expulsion is in the best interest of the student.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. However, the superintendent or other appropriate administrator may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Students who commit offenses that require expulsion at the end of one school year may be expelled into the next school year to complete the term of expulsion.

Withdrawal during Process

When a student has violated the district's Code in a way that requires or permits expulsion from the district and the student withdraws from the district before the expulsion hearing takes place, the district may conduct the hearing after sending written notice to the parent and student.

If the student then reenrolls in the district during the same or subsequent school year, the district may enforce the expulsion order at that time, less any expulsion period that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district.

If the appropriate administrator or the board fails to issue an expulsion order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings.

Additional Misconduct

If during the expulsion, the student engages in additional conduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the appropriate administrator or the board may issue an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

Restrictions during Expulsion

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

No district academic credit will be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion unless the student is enrolled in a JJAEP or another district-approved program.

Newly Enrolled Students

The district will place a newly enrolled student expelled from another district or another open-enrollment charter school directly into a regular classroom setting.

If a student expelled in another state enrolls in the district, the district may continue the expulsion under the terms of the expulsion order, may place the student in a DAEP for the period specified in the order, or may allow the student to attend regular classes if:

1. The out-of-state district provides the district with a copy of the expulsion order, and
2. The offense resulting in the expulsion is also an expellable offense in the district in which the student is enrolling.

If a student is expelled by a district in another state for a period that exceeds one year and the district continues the expulsion or places the student in a DAEP, the district will reduce the period of

the expulsion or DAEP placement so that the entire period does not exceed one year, unless after a review it is determined that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees, or
2. Extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

Emergency Expulsion Procedures

When an emergency expulsion occurs, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. Within ten days after the date of the emergency expulsion, the student will be given appropriate due process required for a student facing expulsion.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

STUDENT HANDBOOK

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: The School Director, Richard Milburn Academy.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Dr. Norman Hall, 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Dr. Norman Hall, 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 27 and **Academic Programs** on page 24.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 42.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see Texas School Board Policy GKG and contact the school principal.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [See Texas School Board policies BQA and BQB, and contact the school principal.]
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See Texas School Board policies BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 36.]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See Texas School Board policies BE and BED for more information.]

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

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

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

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

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See Texas School Board policies EF and FFAA.]

Inspecting Surveys

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

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

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

Reviewing Instructional Materials

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

Displaying a Student's Artwork and Projects

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

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child's student records. [See **Student Records** on page 18.] These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,

- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

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

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

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

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

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and A Minute of Silence** on page 41 and Texas School Board policy EC(LEGAL).]

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

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

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to your child's misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See Texas School board policy FO(LEGAL) and the **Student Code of Conduct**.]

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for information. [See Texas School Board policy FDB.] [See **Bullying** on page 24, and local School Board policy FFI(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a

violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See local School Board policy FDD(LOCAL).]

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

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

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

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, see **Special Programs** on page 44 and contact Dr. Norman Hall at 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.

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

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

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

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Dr. Norman Hall at (830) 557-6181.

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

Services for Title I Participants

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Dr. Norman Hall and may be contacted at (830) 557-6181.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent

or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

- The parents - whether married, separated, or divorced - unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- District staff members who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release to any other person or agency - such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application - will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate. The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent’s office is Dr. Norman Hall, 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123.

The addresses of the principals’ offices are:

- RMA, Amarillo: 4106 SW 51st Street, Amarillo, TX 79109
- RMA, Beaumont: 1310 Pennsylvania Ave., #C, Beaumont, TX 77701
- RMA, Corpus Christi: 5333 Everhart Rd., Bldg. C, Corpus Christi, TX 78411
- RMA, Fort Worth: 6785 Camp Bowie Blvd., #200, Fort Worth, TX 76116
- RMA, Houston: 713 East Airtex Drive, Houston, TX 77073
- RMA, Killeen: 1001 E. Veterans’ Memorial Blvd., #301C, Killeen, TX 76541
- RMA, Lubbock: 4902 34th Street, #10, Lubbock, TX 79410
- RMA, Midland: 3303 West Illinois, #14, Midland, TX 79703
- RMA, Odessa: 2525 North Grandview, #600, Odessa, TX 79761

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student’s records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. A request to correct a student’s record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible

student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in local School Board policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 42 and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 25 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office. The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

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

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

Directory Information

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as “directory information.” This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the “**Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**” included in **Appendix III.**]

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes:

- Student Recognition Activities
- Yearbook
- Student Newspapers
- Printed Programs for Graduation, Prom, Extracurricular activities
- News Releases to Local Media

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

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

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

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

Bacterial Meningitis

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

- What is meningitis?
Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.
- What are the symptoms?
Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

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

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.
- How serious is bacterial meningitis?
If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.
- How is bacterial meningitis spread?
Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.
- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?
Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.
- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?
You should seek prompt medical attention.
- Where can you get more information?
Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Dr. Norman Hall at (830) 557-6181.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

Compulsory Attendance

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

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

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

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

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

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

Attendance for Credit

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

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

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

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See Texas School policy FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with local School Board policy FNG(LOCAL). The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit, will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Parent's Note After An Absence

When a student must be absent from school, the student – upon returning to school – must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness

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

Richard Milburn Academy Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is essential for a quality education. Parents should call the office by 8:00 a.m. on the day their student is going to be absent from school. Three types of excused absences will be recorded for the current school year.

- TYPE A – excused absence with a phone call or a note from the parent.
- TYPE B – excused absence with a note from a professional (doctor, dentist, etc.)
- TYPE C - school approved trip
- Type B & C absences will not be used to deny credit.
- If a student has 10 or more Type A absences or a combination of 10 or more Type A absences and unexcused absences during a semester, an attendance committee will determine if the student receives his/her credits. If the attendance committee denies a student credit for course(s), the student may appeal the decision through the superintendent's office.
- Students whose absences place them in jeopardy of losing credit under the 90% attendance rule may pay back the excessive days missed to regain lost credit. This time will be in addition to making up missed assignments.
- Makeup time will be scheduled through the Director's office.
- State law prohibits students from getting or renewing driver's licenses if the student does not meet the 90% attendance requirement the preceding semester.

Richard Milburn Unexcused Absence Policy

- Cumulative for the semester.
- Parents will be notified of each unexcused absence.
- Disciplinary Action as a result of unexcused absences may include Loss of Privilege, ISS, withdrawal from RMA, charges being filed, and the possibility of credit(s) being denied.

- Students will be given 3 school days to turn in any assignment missed.
- The director will make all decisions concerning unexcused absences.
- A student absent for any reason should promptly make up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth study assigned by the teacher.
- Class time is important. Doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A parent wishing to withdraw a student from school must present a signed request to the director stating the reason for the withdrawal and the effective date.

Please note: In those rare circumstances when a student must be absent from school, the student - upon returning to school - must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

Driver License Attendance Verification

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

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see **Academic Counseling** page 27 of this handbook and Texas School Board policy EIF.]

AWARDS AND HONORS

The Principal shall be responsible for setting forth criteria used in the presentation of student awards. Awards and honors may be presented for academics, citizenship, spirit, participation, or other qualities recognized by the Principal. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 27].

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment. The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying. [See local School Board policy FFI(LOCAL).]

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

Policies Concerning the School-to-Work (STW) Program

Richard Milburn Academy offers the School-To-Work Program. The policy is the same for the first and second semesters. The state considers 18 weeks to be a semester. There are no admission criteria to be met for placement into the program other than the student must be at least 16 years of age and eligible to work in the United States.

If a student quits a job or is fired:

- Student is immediately removed from the STW Program
- Student receives no credit for the first semester
- Student may not enroll in STW Program the following semester.

If a student is dismissed from a job station (no fault of the student):

- Student is given 2 weeks to find another job
- In case a job is not located within 2 weeks, the student may remain in class for the remainder of the semester; .5 credit will be awarded; no credit for work will be granted

If a student chooses to get out of the STW Program at the end of the first semester or early part of 2nd semester (no problems with employer and proper notice is given to employer):

- Student's schedule will be changed
- State credit will be granted for the first semester for class and for work

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

CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

The grades earned will be calculated in the office when determining the rank of the student.

- **Regular Classes:** Actual recorded grade will be used when figuring student rankings.
- **Valedictorian Honor:** A student **must** be enrolled in RMA before November 1st of the current school year during their senior year and earn a minimum of 5 credits in order to be considered for graduation rankings. A minimum of 90% attendance during enrollment is required.
- **Salutatorian Honor:** The student second in class rank – who was enrolled in the Academy on or before November first (1st) shall be designated as salutatorian.

Grades taken through the 3rd week of the 6th weeks will be used as the 6th six-week average in determining rankings for seniors.

The following will **not** be used in figuring averages for rankings or the Honor Roll:

- TAAS/TAKS classes
- Office Aides
- PE/Athletic
- Yearbook/Photography
- Study Hall
- Summer School Classes
- Home School Courses
- Elective Courses

Three-year graduates shall be eligible for all honors positions.

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

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

Students and parents should contact the counselor for further information about the application process and deadlines. [For further information, see Texas School Board policy EIC.]

CLASS SCHEDULES

Students may drop courses or change their schedules in accordance with administrative regulations and approval. The director shall inform students of deadlines and requirements for dropping courses or changing schedules.

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

High school graduation credit will be granted for certain college courses that replace Richard Milburn Academy curriculum. Prior permission from the counselor must be attained before enrollment in a college course for which graduation credit may be allowed. (For more information, contact the principal or the counselor.)

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office. In general, the student or parent

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

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers is not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see Texas School Board policy CQ.]

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

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

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the **Student Code of Conduct** and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, whether on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment - spanking or paddling the student - will **not** be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the **Student Code of Conduct**.

Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

Telecommunication Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess telecommunications devices, including mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of mobile telephones in locker rooms or restroom areas at any time while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event is strictly prohibited.

A student who uses a telecommunications device during the school day shall have the device confiscated. The student/parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15. Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See Texas School Board

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

Other Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to possess such items as radios, CD players, MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the ***Student Code of Conduct***. The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest. A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The district permits high school students to take correspondence courses - by mail or via the Internet - for credit toward high school graduation with prior approval by the Principal. [For further information, see Texas School Board policy EEJC.]

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

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

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

Personal Counseling

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

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports. [For more information, refer to Texas School Board policies FFE(LLEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

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

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject. The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam. A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. [For further information, see the counselor and Texas School Board 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 had no prior instruction. A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam. If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see local School Board policy EEJB(LOCAL).]

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect. The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See Texas School Board policy FFH.]

Dating Violence

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

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

Discrimination

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

Harassment

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

academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office.

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

Sexual Harassment

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

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

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

Retaliation

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

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

Reporting Procedures

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

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by an adult associated with the district. In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy. If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with the local School Board policy FNG(LOCAL).

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Richard Milburn Academy makes the following statement:

Richard Milburn Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The superintendent has been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: The School Director, Richard Milburn Academy.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Dr. Norman Hall, 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.

DISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Richard Milburn Academy makes the following statement:

Richard Milburn Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The superintendent has been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: The School Director, Richard Milburn Academy.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Dr. Norman Hall, 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, Texas 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.

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

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc. The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal. [See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 20 and **Appendix III**.]

Nonschool Materials...from students

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

The principal has designated the commons as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See Texas School Board policy FNAA.]

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

Nonschool Materials...from others

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

Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards, instill discipline, and teach respect for authority. RMA students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health and safety hazard to themselves or others. Clothing and grooming that in the director's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operation is prohibited. If the director or assistant director determines that a student's grooming violates the dress code, the student will be given the opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day or until the problem is corrected.

RMA prohibits pictures, emblems, or writing on clothing that:

- Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
- Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or that have (or suggest) vulgar or offensive language of any kind (this includes pictures and/or print deemed to be lewd, offensive, or obscene).
- Refer to satanic, cult, or gang activities.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class - other than an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language - may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 18 (9 per semester) absences not related to post-district competition. The maximum of absences for post-district competition prior to state and the maximum of absences for state competition will be determined by the school. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior - including consequences for misbehavior - that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the **Student Code of Conduct** or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior. [For further information, see Texas School Board policies FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups** on page 44.]

Offices and Elections

Sponsors

The class or activity sponsors are selected by the administration. The selection of these sponsors is based on the interests and needs of the pupils.

Student Clubs and Organizations

- It is the desire of the administration and faculty of RMA to provide suitable clubs and organizations for students. Such groups are intended to promote citizenship and social skills, as well as to create and broaden student interest. Under no circumstances should a club meet without the presence of its sponsor.
- Student Council
- A student council shall be formed consisting of members elected by the student body. Students wishing to run for student council must secure sponsorship from a faculty member. A person eligible for membership in the student council shall be one, who consistently conforms to all regulations, passes all subjects the previous semester, and who possesses unquestionable integrity.

Leadership Position Disciplinary Guidelines

Students who hold leadership positions and commit major infractions of the student code of conduct, such as cases involving drugs, alcohol, assault, theft, or commit lesser offenses repeatedly, will be subject to the following disciplinary actions in addition to the regular discipline a student would receive:

- First Offense: 2-week suspension from all leadership responsibilities. The student may be required to attend work and/or practice sessions (in town only) during the suspension period. The student may try out for any leadership position during the suspension period.
- Second Offense: 18-week suspension from all leadership responsibilities. The student may not attend any work or practice sessions and may not try out for any leadership position during the suspension period.
- Third Offense: Suspension of all leadership positions for the remainder of that school year. The student would not be eligible to hold any leadership position during the remainder of his/her attendance at high school.

FEES

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

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

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the school principal at least 15 days before the event. [For further information, see Texas School Board policies FJ and GE.]

GRADE CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation. This interpretation varies with each independent school district. Each RMA will follow the standards set by the district in which they are located.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following grades will be used on all levels in reports to parents; all grades will be reported numerically.

A+ = 97 - 100	C+ = 78 - 79
A = 93 - 96	C = 76 - 77
A- = 90 - 92	C- = 75
B+ = 87 - 89	D = 70 - 74
B = 83 - 86	F = below 70
B- = 80 - 82	

GRADE AVERAGING

Grades will be averaged under these conditions. The second semester grades can be used to raise the first semester grades to an overall passing (70) for a yearly average. The first semester may **not** be used to raise the second semester grade to a 70 for a full credit course. Summer school will be averaged with the year that has just been complete. Grades will be averaged under these conditions.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE COMPUTATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL

- (a) The commissioner may develop a standard method of computing a student's high school grade point average but provides for additional weight to be given to each honors course, advanced placement course, international baccalaureate course, or dual credit course completed by a student.
- (b) If the commissioner develops a standard method under this section, a school district shall use the standard method to compute a students' high school grade point average, except that to the extent of a conflict between that method and the method adopted under Section 51.807, the student's grade point average computed in accordance with the method established under Section 51.807 shall be used in determining the student's eligibility for university admissions under Subchapter U, Chapter 51.
 - (b-1) Subsection (b) applies only to students entering grade nine during or after the 2007-2008 school year. This subsection expires September 1, 2010.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam. The exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

Graduation Programs

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program. Permission to graduate under the minimum high school program must be agreed to in writing and signed by the student, student's parent (or other person standing in parental relation to the student), and a school counselor or school administrator. [See Texas School Board policy EIF(LEGAL).]

Under House Bill (HB) 3, to graduate under the minimum high school program, students must:

- Be at least 16 years of age;
- Have completed 2 credits required for graduation in each subject of the foundation curriculum; or
- Have failed to be promoted to the 10th grade one or more times as determined by the school district.

Students already in the minimum high school program do not have to meet the HB 3 requirements to enter the program, but must be given the choice of opting back into the recommended high school program.

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

- Minimum Program 22 credits
- Recommended Program 24 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 24 credits

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

- Minimum Program 22 credits
- Recommended Program 26 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program 26 credits

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

Graduation Program Courses

	<u>Minimum High School Program</u> <i>For students entering grade nine in 2007-2008 and subsequent years</i>	<u>Recommended High School Program</u> <i>For students entering grade nine prior to the 2009-2010 school year</i>	<u>Recommended High School Program</u> <i>For students entering grade nine in 2009-2010 and subsequent years</i>
English Language Arts	4 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English I • English II • English III • 4th English Course; may be satisfied by English IV, Research/Technical Writing, Creative/Imaginative Writing, Practical Writing Skills, Literary Genres, Business Communication, Journalism, or concurrent enrollment in a college English course. 	4 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English I • English II • English III • English IV 	4 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English I • English II • English III • English IV
Mathematics	3 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I • Geometry • 3rd Math Course; of student choice 	4 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I • Geometry • Algebra II • 4th mathematics; can be an advanced CTE course approved by SBOE after completion of Algebra II 	4 Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I • Geometry • Algebra II • 4th mathematics; can be an advanced CTE course approved by SBOE after completion of Algebra II
Social Studies	2½ Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History – 1 credit or World Geography – 1 credit • US History – 1 credit • US Government – ½ credit 	3½ Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History – 1 credit • World Geography – 1 credit • US History – 1 credit • US Government – ½ credit 	3½ Credits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History – 1 credit • World Geography – 1 credit • US History – 1 credit • US Government – ½ credit

Economics	<u>½ Credit:</u> Economic – emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits	<u>½ Credit:</u> Economic – emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits	<u>½ Credit:</u> Economic – emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits
Science	<u>2 Credits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology • Integrated Physics and Chemistry (IPC) • A student may substitute Chemistry or Physics for IPC and then must use the second of these two courses as the academic elective credit. 	<u>4 Credits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology • Chemistry / IPC • Physics or Principles of Technology • 4th Science; can be an advanced CTE course approved by SBOE after completion of Physics 	<u>4 Credits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biology • Chemistry / IPC • Physics or Principles of Technology • 4th Science; can be an advanced CTE course approved by SBOE after completion of Physics
Enrichment / Electives	<u>2½ required Credits as follows:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PE – 1½ credit required; must include Foundations of Personal Fitness ½ credit • Health – ½ credit required • Speech – ½ credit required • Technology Applications – 1 credit required <u>1 required Academic Electives from the following:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History Studies • World Geography Studies • Science Course approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE) • If the student elects to replace IPC with either Chemistry or Physics as described above, the academic elective must be the other of these two science courses. 	<u>6½ required + 3½ open Credits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Other Than English – 2 credits required in same language • Fine Arts – 1 credit required • PE – 1½ credits required; must include Foundations of Personal Fitness ½ credit • Technology Applications – 1 credit required • Health – ½ credit required • Speech – ½ credit required • Career and Technical Education • ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies electives 	<u>4 required + 6 open Credits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Other Than English – 2 credits required in same language • Fine Arts – 1 credit required • PE – 1 credit required; must include Foundations of Personal Fitness ½ credit • Technology Applications • Health • Speech • Career and Technical Education • ELA, Math, Science, or Social Studies electives

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will **not** be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony a student must not only successfully complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education, but also must pass all TAKS test requirements.

Students with Disabilities

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

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

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include practice for graduation, commencement exercises and project graduation.

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony a student must not only successfully complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education, but also must pass all TAKS test requirements.

Graduation Speakers

Graduating students will be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Only the Valedictorian and the Salutatorian will be eligible to give these remarks; however, if the student was assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester, he or she will not be eligible to speak at graduation. [See local School Board Policy FNA(LOCAL).]

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered shall be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks. [For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 45.]

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation - such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture - both student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 32.]

State Scholarships and Grants

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

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

HARASSMENT

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

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the counselor's office. [See Texas School Board policies BDF and EHAA.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

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

Vending Machines

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

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

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

Asbestos Management Plan

Richard Milburn Academy takes responsibility to notify the school staff and students at the school of the presence of asbestos in each of our buildings. This asbestos program is in compliance with all state and local administrative procedures. A copy of the asbestos plan is located in the RMA director's office and is updated with 6-month surveillance. By signing for this handbook, the notification is in compliance with the asbestos program for Richard Milburn Academy. If you have any questions, please contact the school principal.

Pest Management Plan

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

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Dr. Norman Hall at (830) 557-6181.

HOMEWORK

Because education is a lifelong process, which extends beyond the school, it is important that student's recognize that learning occurs in the home and community. Homework is one means of teaching the necessary skills of independent study and learning outside the school. A broad definition of homework is considered here to include not only written work, but also related activities such as viewing specific television programs, new reporting, recreational reading, and other activities which are related to classroom work, but which are assigned to be done at home.

Purposes of Homework

- To complete work started in class
- To expand and/or enrich regular class-work
- To build interest in reading and learning
- To make up work missed due to absence
- To encourage parents' awareness of student learning
- To provide an opportunity to pursue special interest or ability areas
- To increase learning time
- To establish and reinforce independent study skills
- To strengthen basic skills
- To develop initiative, responsibility, and self direction
- To stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time

Homework Responsibilities

Teachers:

- Homework should be the independent practice of an effectively taught skill.
- It is important that homework be within the student's capability.
- Homework assignments are not to be given as busy work.
- Evaluation of homework should be prompt.
- The frequency and duration of homework assignments should take into consideration time requirements for extracurricular activities and community involvement of students.

Parents:

- Parents will rarely be asked to play a formal instructional role in homework. Instead, they should be asked to create a home environment that facilitates the student's study.
- Parents should be willing to work with instructors to create a positive climate for academic advancement.
- Parents should be willing to come to a conference with instructors about student progress.
- If parents see a student's problem before a teacher does, parents should notify the teacher.
- If emergency circumstances prevent a child's finishing his homework, the parent must notify the teacher of the specific circumstance. This should rarely happen.

Students:

- All students in a class will be responsible for their own assignments. Failure to turn in assignments will necessitate remedial activities.
- Students will exercise self-discipline and time management skill.
- Parents may pick up student's homework in the main office at the end of the 3rd consecutive day of absence. For shorter periods of absence it would be better if the student gets work from teacher upon returning to school.
- For each day that a student is absent, the student will be allowed one day to complete and turn in make-up work.

IMMUNIZATION

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

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

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**Questioning of Students**

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

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

Students Taken Into Custody

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see Texas School Board policy FL(LEGAL) and GRA(LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements. A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see local School Board policy EIAB(LOCAL).] A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

In-school Suspension Makeup Work

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

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

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

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
 - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
 - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
 - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
 - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
 - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

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

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

Psychotropic Drugs

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

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

NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 33.]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

Vision and Hearing Screening at Enrollment

- When a student's initial enrollment in the District is also the student's initial enrollment in any Texas school, the student shall be screened for possible vision and hearing problems. This screening shall occur prior to completion of the first semester, or within 120 calendar days of enrollment. Students may meet this requirement by providing evidence of screening conducted one year prior to enrollment.
- The student or minor student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian may elect to substitute one or more professional examinations for the required screening tests.

Routine Screening

Students in grade 9 shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually at any time during the reporting year prior to May 31.

Spinal Screening

Students in grade 9 shall be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. This requirement may be met by a professional examination performed by a state-licensed practitioner with expertise in diagnosing spinal deformities. Students entering the ninth grade not previously screened shall be screened within 120 days of enrollment.

If the screening indicates the student may have an abnormal spinal curvature, the director shall send the original of the screening report to the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian along with a letter advising of the parent's responsibility to select an appropriate health practitioner for an examination.

Exemption from Screenings

A student is exempt from the screening requirements if the tests conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or a member. The student or minor student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian shall submit to the director on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Department of Health Annual Report

Each school shall submit to the Texas Department of Health by June 30 of each year an annual report on the screening status of the individuals in attendance during the reporting year and shall include in the report any other information required by the Board of Health. The report shall be on a form prescribed by the health department and submitted according to Board of Health rules. [Legal Board Policy EHB]

Dyslexia and Related Disorders

In accordance with a program approved by the State Board of Education, enrolled students shall be tested for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times and any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder shall be provided with treatment.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 17.]

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See Texas School Board policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

PRAYER

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

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards. A student must attend 90% of the time that the course is offered in order to receive credit for any one course.

In grades 9-12, promotion is based on academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course. [See Education Code 28.021(a) [See E1]].

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

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

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

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time. A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

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

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks. During the fourth week of a nine-week grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 15 for how to schedule a conference.]

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

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with School Board policy FNG(LOCAL). The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject. Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within three (3) days.

RETALIATION

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

SAFETY

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

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

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

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

Fire Drill Bells

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

Tornado Drill Bells

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

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

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

Emergency School-Closing Information

The decision to cancel school or begin late will be made by 6:00 a.m. Information on school closing may be obtained from the school office, or in case of bad weather, the local T.V. information channel or any major T.V. or radio station.

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year. (Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment [THEA]).

SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

Use By Students Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

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

Use of Hallways During Class Time

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

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups

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

SEARCHES

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

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others. Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

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

Trained Dogs

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

Metal Detectors

[For further information, see local School Board policy FNF(LOCAL).]

Drug-Testing

[For further information, see local School Board policy FNF(LOCAL). Also, see ***Steroids***, below.]

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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

STEROIDS

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

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

STUDENT SPEAKERS

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: graduation ceremonies, parent-teacher open house meetings, beginning/end of school year student and parent involvement activities, student council sponsored activities, community service events, athletic events, homecoming or prom events, leading the U.S. and Texas Pledge of Allegiance at public events, and any other campus events approved by the principal or the principal's designee. Students are eligible to introduce these events if the student is within 90% attendance compliance and is an exemplary model of student citizenship, behavior, and service to the school.

A student who is eligible and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above should submit his or her name to the principal during the first week of the fall semester and/or spring semester. The names of all students who volunteered will be randomly drawn and matched to the event for which the student will give the introduction. If the selected student speaker declines or becomes ineligible, then no student introduction will be made at that event. As determined by the principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events. [See local School Board policy FNA(LOCAL).]

SUMMER SCHOOL

Contact the principal for summer school options.

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated tests (such as TAKS: the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grade 3-11
- Reading, annually in grade 3-9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11
- Any other subject and grade required by federal law

[See Texas School Board policy EKB(LEGAL).]

TARDINESS

Late arrivals to school are not acceptable. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the **Student Code of Conduct**.

TEXTBOOKS

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

TRANSFERS

[See **Requesting Transfers for Your Child**, on page 17, and **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education**, on page 18, for other transfer options.]

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

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

VANDALISM

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

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the ***Student Code of Conduct***.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

On High School Career Day the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

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

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

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

Glossary

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook.

Abuse is improper or excessive use.

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

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

Alternative assessment instrument, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

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

Armor-piercing ammunition is handgun ammunition used in pistols and revolvers and designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

Arson is a crime that involves starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:

1. Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
2. Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
 - a. Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
 - b. Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
 - c. Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
 - d. Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
 - e. Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another, or
 - f. When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.

Assault is defined in part by Texas Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

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

Bullying is written or oral expression or physical conduct that a school district's board of trustees or the board's designee determines:

1. To have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
2. To be sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Chemical dispensing device is a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being. A small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection is not in this category.

Club is an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death. A blackjack, mace, and tomahawk are in the same category.

Criminal street gang is three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

Dating violence is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship, as defined by Section 71.0021 of the Family Code.

Deadly conduct occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, such as knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

Deferred adjudication is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Deferred prosecution may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Delinquent conduct is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

Discretionary means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

Explosive weapon is any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine and its delivery mechanism that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror.

False Alarm or Report occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

1. Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

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

Graffiti are markings with aerosol paint or an indelible pen or marker on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

Harassment is:

1. Conduct that meets the definition established in district local School Board policies DIA(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL); or
2. Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety.

Hazing is an intentional or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.

Hit list is a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

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

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

Knuckles is any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

Machine gun is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

Mandatory means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

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

Paraphernalia are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

Persistent misbehavior is two or more violations of the Code in general or repeated occurrences of the same violation.

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

Possession means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse, or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including but not limited to an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including but not limited to a locker or desk.

Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student. Educational organizations listed in Section 37.121(d) of the Education Code are excepted from this definition.

Reasonable belief is a determination made by the superintendent or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

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

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

Self-defense is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

Serious offenses include but are not limited to:

- Murder.
- Vandalism.
- Robbery or theft.
- Extortion, coercion, or blackmail.
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Hazing.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
- Possession or distribution of pornographic materials.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Sexual harassment of a student or district employee.
- Possession of or conspiracy to possess any explosive or explosive device.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

Short-barrel firearm is a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

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

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

Switchblade is any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or by the force of gravity or centrifugal force.

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

Terroristic threat is a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

1. Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;
4. Cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service;
5. Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
6. Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the district).

Title 5 offenses are those that involve injury to a person and include murder; kidnapping; assault; sexual assault; unlawful restraint; coercing, soliciting, or inducing gang membership if it causes bodily injury to a child; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; and tampering with a consumer product. [See FOC(EXHIBIT)]

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

Under the influence means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

Use means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

Zip gun is a device or combination of devices, not originally a firearm, but adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

APPENDIX I

Acknowledgment Form

My child and I have received a copy of the Richard Milburn Academy Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook for 2009–2010. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Code.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Date: _____

Print name of parent: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

School Location: _____

Entering Grade level: _____

APPENDIX II

Use of Student Work in District Publications

Occasionally, Richard Milburn Academy wishes to display or publish student artwork or special projects on the district's Web site and in district publications. The district agrees to only use these student projects in this manner.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (print student's name),

(do give) / (do not give) the district permission to use my child's artwork or special project on the district's Web site and in district publications.

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX III:

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

State law requires the Richard Milburn Academy (RMA) to give you the following information:

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

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See **Directory Information** on page 20 for more information.]

For the following school-sponsored purposes [See FL (LOCAL)]:

- Student Recognition Activities
- Yearbook
- Student Newspapers
- Printed Programs for Graduation, Prom, Extracurricular activities
- News Releases to Local Media

Richard Milburn Academy has designated the following information as directory information [See FL (LOCAL)]:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Email address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended

- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment status

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

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

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

Parent signature _____ Date _____

For all other purposes, Richard Milburn Academy has designated the following information as directory information [See FL(LOCAL)]:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Email address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment status

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

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

Parent signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX IV:
**Parent's Response Regarding Release of Information to
Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent.

Parent: Please complete the following only if you do not want your child's information released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without your prior consent.

I, parent of _____ (*student's name*) requests that the District **not** release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher education upon their request without my prior written consent.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX V: Consent/Opt-Out Form

Note to parents:

In order to meet district (or campus) obligations under the NCLB Act, Richard Milburn Academy will notify parents, at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates when the following will occur or are expected to occur:

- A survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns student-protected information as described below in Section I. For those surveys that will be funded in whole or in part by U.S. Department of Education funds, the district **must receive** a parent's **consent**. For those surveys not funded by the USDE, the district **must allow** a parent to **opt-out**.
- Any planned non-emergency, invasive physical examinations or screenings required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, other than hearing, vision, scoliosis screenings or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. See policies EF and FFAA. The district **must allow** a parent to **opt-out** of these examinations or screenings.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from a student for the purpose of marketing or selling that information. Depending on what personal information is being collected, disclosed, or used, the district **must either receive consent or allow** a parent to opt-out of these activities.

Should any of the above surveys or activities arise during the school year as part of campus or classroom activities, these guidelines will again be used to determine appropriate notices and consent/opt-out forms to be sent to parents before the surveys or activities are conducted.

Following are samples of consent/opt-out forms you may receive.

RICHARD MILBURN ACADEMY CONSENT/OPT-OUT FORM

To the Parents of _____:

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

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents 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 parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

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

Following are activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the 2009–2010 school year. Please note that this notice and authority to consent transfer from the parent to the student when the student reaches 18 or is an emancipated minor under state law.

I, _____ (*parent's name*), give my consent for _____ (*child's name*) to participate in the following surveys (check those for which you give consent):

- Richard Milburn Academy 'Your Opinion Counts' Survey – Spring 2010**
- Other:** _____

Parent's signature

"Contact the Richard Milburn Academy School Director no later than two weeks from the date of this notice if you do not want your child to participate in this activity."

APPENDIX VI: 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: Dr. Norman Hall, Superintendent

Phone Number: 830-557-6181

**APPENDIX VII:
Student Medical Information**

Print Student Name: _____

School Location: _____

Initial one:

___a) In case of an accident or sudden illness, and in the event that I cannot be reached by phone, I hereby authorize a representative of the Richard Milburn Academy to refer my son/daughter to our designated family physician,

Dr. _____

Doctor's Telephone Number _____

___b) We do not have a family physician; therefore, in case of an accident or sudden illness, and in the event that I cannot be reached by phone, I hereby authorize a representative of the Richard Milburn Academy to refer my son/daughter to a doctor, clinic, or hospital emergency room.

**APPENDIX VIII:
“Student” TAKS Security / Commitment Agreement**

All students will be required to sign a TAKS commitment/security statement upon enrollment into Richard Milburn Academy. The statement should be read carefully and understood. Provisions will be adhered to at RMA.

I will be present on all TAKS testing days for the 2009-2010 school year. I will take each test seriously and will participate to the best of my ability each test day. In addition, I will adhere to the State’s honor statement by signing it before each TAKS administration.

Student Signature

Date

Print Student Name

School Location