

Student Handbook

2013-2014

Enter to learn.
Go forth to serve.

Access this document electronically at
<http://www.newcastle-isd.net>

My child and I have received a copy of the *Newcastle ISD Student Handbook* and the *Student Code of Conduct* for 2013–2014. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

Please sign and date this page, remove it from the handbook, and return it to the student's school.

**Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of
Student Handbook**

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at *newcastle-isd.net* the *Newcastle Student Handbook* and the *Student Code of Conduct* for 2013–2014.

I have chosen to:

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

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Code, I should direct those questions to the principal at 846-3531 or ty.spitzer@esc9.net

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

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

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

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Newcastle ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing September 9, 2013

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 21 for more information.]

Newcastle ISD has designated the following information as directory information: student directory, student yearbook, district publication, academic/athletic honors, rosters, awards, and media. Newcastle ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- 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 purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student 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. [See **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page 21 for more information.]

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*), request 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 _____

Consent/Opt-Out Form

Dear Parent:

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

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 the student has a close family relationship;
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 or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

This notice and consent/opt-out requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information and to certain physical exams and screenings.

Following are activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the 2013–2014 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.

-
- Learning Style Survey on approximately October 14, 2013.
 - Effective Schools Survey for grades 6-12 on approximately October 28, 2013.
 - School Climate Survey for grades K-6 on or about November 11, 2013.
 - Safe School Survey for grades 7-12 on or about December 9, 2013.
 - Gifted/Talented Survey on or about May 2, 2014

"Contact Gayle Bailey at 846-3531 or gayle.bailey@esc9.net no later than September 9, 2013 if you do not want your child to participate in this activity."

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information survey, please submit a request to Ty Spitzer at 505 Washington, Newcastle, Texas 76372. Mr. Spitzer will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to a student.

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2013–2014! 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 Newcastle ISD 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—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES—with 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.

Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT 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 “parent,” unless otherwise noted, 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 Newcastle ISD 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 posted on the district’s Web site at *newcastle-isd.net*.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance.

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

Also, please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, the Student Handbook does not create any additional rights for students and parents. It does not, nor is it intended to, create contractual or legal rights between any student or parent and the district.

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the school counselor, or the principal.

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

1. Acknowledgment Form or Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook form;
2. Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information form;
3. Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education form, if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities; and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Form.

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 11 and **Directory Information** on page 21 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 superintendent's office or online at .
www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/252902.

Newcastle ISD Board of Trustees

Bruce Bailey, President
Ken Lowe, Vice President
Beth Jordan
Carla Short
Thomas Spurlin
Tradd Strawbridge
Dancey Creel

Administration

Superintendent
Ty Spitzer
Dean of Students
Deborah Wilkinson
Associate Administrator
Gordon Grubbs

Newcastle High School Colors

School Colors: Green and White

Mascot:

Bobcat

School Song:

To Newcastle High we pledge our hearts
Forever to be true
For all the things we stand for
We'll always strive to do
The friends we make
While living here
Will last our whole lives through
To Newcastle High and our school
We pledge our hearts anew.

Fight Song:

Fight, Bobcats, Fight!
Fight, Bobcats Fight!
Fight for the school you love so dearly.
You'll hit 'em high, you'll hit 'em low.
You'll push the ball across the goal,
Cats, Fight! Fight!
We'll praise your name
Boost you to fame
Fight for the green and white.
You'll hit 'em
You'll wreck 'em
Hit 'em, wreck 'em, cats!
And the victory bells will ring out.

Vision Statement and Goals

Board of Trustees

Newcastle Independent School District

Vision March 13, 2008

The **vision** of the Board of Trustees for Newcastle Independent School District is that we are committed to each individual student's achievement by providing a challenging and encouraging educational experience

Goals May 19, 2008

Goal 1 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will provide all students the necessary support and maximum opportunities to become successful students in their chosen endeavors.

Performance Indicators

- 1.1 The district will promote and encourage academic excellence.
- 1.2 The district will continue to encourage student success.
- 1.3 The district will embrace the belief that “all students can learn”.
- 1.4 The district will promote a safe and friendly learning environment for each individual student.
- 1.5 The district will provide the resources and support for a successful athletic program.

Goal 2 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District will support the actions of the administration and professional staff to develop a curriculum and effective instructional strategies that prepare students for academic success and their post-secondary endeavors.

Performance Indicators

- 2.1 The district will provide increased opportunities for “life experiences” throughout the curriculum.
- 2.2 The district will continue to maintain an instructional focus.
- 2.3 SAT scores will improve when compared to previous years.
- 2.4 The district will provide the support for all students to be reading at grade level by 3rd grade.

Goal 3 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District will employ, support, and retain highly-qualified administrators, faculty, and staff to respond to the personnel needs of the district.

Performance Indicators 3.1 The district will employ teachers who are fully certified and who demonstrate a caring attitude toward students.

Goal 4 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will encourage parents, community members, and alumni to be active participants in the education of Newcastle students.

Performance Indicators

- 4.1 The district will examine various strategies and approaches to increase the student population including cooperating with city officials for advertising and recruiting families to the district and city.
- 4.2 The district will initiate the formation of a school and community development committee.
- 4.3 The district will investigate the formation of a foundation to provide continued financial support for the district.

Goal 5 – The Board of Trustees of Newcastle Independent School District and administration will provide for the efficient and effective operation of facilities and grounds that are conducive to a safe and positive teaching and learning environment.

Performance Indicators

- 5.1 The district will continue facility and grounds improvements and investigate the feasibility of a new elementary campus by developing a multi-year facilities improvement plan.

SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the Newcastle ISD Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

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 school 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 once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 33 and **Academic Programs** on page 26.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 846-3531 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 69.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 80.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include:
Newcastle Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), Newcastle Athletic Booster Club and Parent advisory Council.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact Ty Spitzer.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness

issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 57.]

- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

Parent Involvement Coordinator

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Gordon Grubbs and may be contacted at 846-3531.

Parental Involvement Policy

Newcastle ISD

2013-2014

Statement of Purpose

Newcastle ISD is dedicated to providing quality education for every student in our district. To accomplish this objective, we will develop and maintain partnerships with parents and community members. Each student will benefit from supportive, active involvement of all members of the population. A positive link between home and school will create the most conducive learning condition for every child. For this reason, parents are actively recruited as our partners for success. These open communication lines will expand and enhance learning opportunities for all stakeholders. The parent involvement policy is reviewed and amended during the annual SBDM (Campus Educational Improvement Committee) Title I evaluation and planning meeting, which is held during the spring. The policy will be distributed, or published online in the student handbook at the beginning of each school year.

Grade level learning objectives and goals are available online at: www.tea.state.tx.us/index11.aspx. All students will be expected to work toward mastering these objectives. Our campus recognizes the fact that some students will need extra assistance to achieve their full potential. The extra assistance is available to all students through the Title I program and various other educational services offered through the district.

Newcastle ISD intends to include parents in all aspects of the title I program. Students will be given every opportunity for success through the development and enhancement of the home-school partnership.

Parent Involvement in Developing Policy

Newcastle School's Campus Educational Improvement Committee (CEIC) is comprised of parents, community members, administrators, teachers, and other staff members. This committee will meet annually to discuss the design and implementation of the Parent Involvement Policy.

Newcastle ISD will actively recruit volunteers for the CEIC Committee through Open House sign up sheets, a notice at the post office, and the local newspaper. Committee selections will produce a diverse group of stakeholders that represent an array of student populations served by the district.

Meetings will be planned at convenient times and locations for all concerned parties. An all-day evaluation, needs assessment, and planning meeting is generally scheduled during the summer. If a translator is needed, the campus will arrange for one to be present.

Parent Involvement Activities to Improve Student Academic Achievement and School Performance

One of the primary functions of the SBDM will be to identify ways that Newcastle School can plan and implement effective parent involvement programs. The campus will also promote and encourage staff development for employees on establishing effective relationships with parents as a means to increase academic achievement.

The school handbook will include:

- The Newcastle ISD Parent Involvement Policy.
- Information on the parent's right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers.
- Information explaining state academic standards and assessments.

During the school year, parents will also be provided with:

- Timely information about programs.
- A description and explanation of the school's curriculum, forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- Information on the level of achievement of the parent's child in each of the required state academic assessments.
- Frequent reports on their child's progress.
- Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and observe.
- A Home-School compact that describes parents' and the schools' responsibilities.
- Parent-teacher conferences after the first nine weeks, at which the Home-School compact will be discussed.
- A flexible number of meetings, such as meeting in the morning or evening, and may provide, with Title I funds, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services are related to parental involvement.
- As necessary, timely notice if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Building the Schools' and Parents' Capacity for Strong Parent Involvement

Newcastle School will involve the CEIC in identifying barriers to parent involvement and to provide parent involvement strategies. The campus will support a variety of parental involvement strategies as it strives to develop and maintain an optimum learning environment for all students. To the extent practicable, parents of LEP, disabled, and Migratory students will be given full opportunities to participate in parent involvement activities. Information will be provided, to the extent practicable, in a format and language such parents understand.

Annual Title I Parent Meeting: Newcastle School will hold an annual meeting to review Title I guidelines and services offered through the campus. Copies of the campus' current Parent Involvement Policy and the Newcastle School Home-School Compact will be distributed at the meeting. Parents will be encouraged to become involved in revising and updating the policy as necessary, and parent volunteers will be recruited for the district and campus SBDMs.

The meeting will be held at a convenient time and location; notice of the meeting will be provided through written invitations to parents and through public notices. If needed, a translator will be available to help with non-English speaking parents.

Home-School Compact: In accordance with Title I regulations, the school will develop and annually update a home-school compact. This compact will explain how students, parents, and staff will share responsibility for student performance and success, and will enable them to do so. Members of the school's CEIC Committee will be consulted in the design and implementation of the compact.

All parents will be given a copy of the compact detailing the responsibilities that teachers, parents, and students have in helping students accomplish their goals.

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss the contents of the compact. They are also encouraged to sign that they are in agreement with the compact and return them to the school; however, parents and/or students are not required to return the compacts to school.

Staff/Parent Communication: Parents will be informed of school activities through various avenues of communication throughout the school year. Newsletters, conferences, personal contacts, and written notices will be utilized to establish and maintain an open line of communication.

Staff development will include strategies to promote effective parent involvement activities. Activities will educate all staff members in the value of parent involvement.

Cross-Program Coordination of Parent Involvement Activities

Parent Involvement strategies will be incorporated into Newcastle School's curriculum and programs through the Campus/District Improvement Plan. Parent Involvement will be a top priority and will be aligned with the entire educational program.

Newcastle School will coordinate Title I Parent Involvement activities with other programs within the district to meet special needs (Early Childhood, Public Preschool, PPCD, etc.).

Annual Evaluation

The CEIC Committee will annually review and evaluate all aspects of the parent involvement program. Parent surveys including questions about the effectiveness of the program will be distributed and the results analyzed. Teacher surveys and teacher

contact logs will be used to determine the number and kind of interaction between schools and parents. The CEIC Committee will revise the campus Parent Involvement Policy and Home-School Compact based on the results of this annual review.

Involving Parents in Activities of Title I Campuses

Newcastle School will use Title I funds to provide schoolwide services to all students of Newcastle School. Parents will be involved in a variety of strategies as the campus strives to develop and maintain an optimum learning environment for all students. Parents may contribute through a sign-up to volunteer during open house, as well as by creating a supportive home atmosphere. Parents and community members may participate through an array of activities that promote student success including: **Grades EC – 5 Storytelling, reading with children, visits to local businesses, work-based learning, Family Night Bookfair, Open House, Young Author’s Day, PTO meetings, Campus Education Improvement Committee (CEIC) meetings, Parent Night for each athletic sport, Grandparents Breakfast, Gifted/Talented Program Project Display Night, Salt Creek 4-H, Annual Elementary Field Day, Little Dribblers Basketball, Spring Musical, Christmas Program, Miss Newcastle Pageant, and various class field trips.** The campus and its parents will develop and maintain specific parent involvement activities best suited to meet the individual needs of all stakeholders.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

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

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.

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

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

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

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

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

Inspecting Surveys

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

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

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

Reviewing Instructional Materials

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

[Also see **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 14 for additional information.]

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

Teachers may display students’ work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying

students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the district's Web site, on any campus or classroom Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The district will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

Accessing Student Records

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

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom.

[See **Student Records** on page 18.]

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 cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction

As a parent, if your child is under the age of 14, you must grant permission for your child to receive instruction in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program or your child will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE), is incorporated into the district's health education classes.

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.

Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction.

State law requires that any instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome must:

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to a standard of behavior in which abstinence from sexual activity before marriage is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

In accordance with state law, below is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

(Newcastle ISD contracts with David Gordon who is trained to instruct the human sexuality curriculum.)

As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of the human sexuality instruction with no academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. You may also choose to become more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

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 66 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

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

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

Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual’s professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee or if you have questions related to the use of electronic media by district employees, please contact the campus principal.

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

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

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

If you do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child as a method of student discipline, please return the form included in this handbook OR please return the form included in the forms packet OR submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. A signed statement must be provided each year.

You may choose to revoke this request at any time during the year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal. However, district personnel may choose to use discipline methods other than corporal punishment even if the parent requests that this method be used on the student.

School Safety Transfers

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided in this circumstance.
[See **Bullying** on page 84, policy FDB, and policy FFI.]
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL).]
- Request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

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 policy FDB(LEGAL).]

Parents of Students with Disabilities with Other School-Aged Children in the Home

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

Request for the Use of a Service Animal

A parent of a student who uses a service animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service animal on campus.

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

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 (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of 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 evaluation report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*. Additional information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available from the school district in a companion document, *A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

The following Web sites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- Texas Project First, at <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org>
- Partners Resource Network, at <http://www.partnerstx.org>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Deborah Wilkinson at 846-3531.

Parents of Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

Accommodations for Children of Military Families

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the

absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

Student Records

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

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

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

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

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school 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, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

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

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is 505 Washington Street, Newcastle, TX 76372. .

The address(es) of the principals' office is 505 Washington Street, Newcastle, TX 76372.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 69, and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 31 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/252902/.

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Please note:

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

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

Directory Information

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

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

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: student directory, student yearbook, or district publication.

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child’s.

- Name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth.
- Photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of member of athletic teams.
- Dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, honors and awards received in school, and most recent school previously attended.

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 included in this handbook OR included in the forms packet is available if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT 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 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 Ty Spitzer at 846-3531.

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 a student’s final grade or 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. 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 policy FEA.]

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

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

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and/or applicable subject area.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s arrival or return to campus; and

- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
 - Mental health or therapy appointments; or
 - Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.

In addition, a junior or senior student’s absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the principal prior to the absences.

As listed in Section I at **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. Please see page 18 for that section.

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

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; or from required tutorials or ZAP will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action. The Newcastle ISD school day begins at 7:00am for students assigned to ZAP or detention, at 7:30am for students in grades 9-12 assigned to tutorials, and at 8:00am for all other students. Newcastle ISD has a free breakfast available to all students. Parents of students in Prekindergarten through grade 5 may bring their students to school anytime after 7:30am to take advantage of the free breakfast, but generally, arrival by 7:45am gives students ample time to finish eating before they leave the cafeteria at 8:00am. The cafeteria serving line will close at 7:55am. The school day ends at 4:00pm for students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8 that are assigned to tutorials or intervention and at 3:28pm for all other students.

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.

For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student’s parent could be charged with an offense based on the student’s failure to attend school.

If a student age 12 through age 17 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with an offense.

[See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 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 or a final grade 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 or a final grade for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the 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 or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

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

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- 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 or a final grade.

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

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

Official Attendance-Taking Time

The district must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.

Official attendance is taken every day at 10:00 am.

A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below.

Documentation after an Absence

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return 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 or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note. **Written excuse notes will not be accepted more than five days after the student’s return to school.**

Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence.

Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than five 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. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

Driver License Attendance Verification

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student’s attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student’s attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

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** on page 33 of this handbook and policy EIF.]

AWARDS AND HONORS

Newcastle students that have perfect attendance, in each class, for the school year (no excused or unexcused absences and no more than three tardies) earn a “Perfect Attendance” award and students with all “E’s” in conduct in every class for all four of the Nine-Weeks grading periods earn a “Citizenship” award. Students with all “A” averages for the year will earn the “A’ Honor Roll” award. Students with all “A” and “B” averages for the year will earn the “A’ and ‘B’ Honor Roll” award. These awards and individual teacher recognition awards are presented during an awards ceremony or banquet in May

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or -related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, and the behavior:

- Results in harm to the student or the student’s property,
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student’s property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student’s education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called “cyberbullying.”

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student’s parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district

to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [Also see **School Safety Transfers** on page 16.]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's Web site, and is included at the end of this Handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's Web site.

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

[Also see **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35, **School Safety Transfers** on page 16, **Hazing** on page 53, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technology programs in business, vocational shop and agriculture. Admission to these programs is based on aptitude testing, scheduling and instructor recommendation. Newcastle ISSD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs. [Also see **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 65 for additional information regarding the district's efforts regarding participation in these programs.]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at the central office. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/Programs Available In Your County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention%20and%20Early%20Intervention/Programs%20Available%20In%20Your%20County/default.asp).

The following Web sites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>

<http://sapn.nonprofitoffice.com>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

CLASS RANK / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

Valedictorian honors will be given to the student making the highest weighted, scholastic average during the four years of high school study at Newcastle. Salutatorian honors will be awarded to the student making the second highest weighted four-year scholastic average at Newcastle High School. These honors are determined after the 3rd Nine-Weeks grading period of the senior year and are awarded only among honor graduates with a grade average of 90 or above.

Only grades from state approved core-curriculum and foreign language courses will be used in determining averages. Vocational classes, Physical education classes, Instructional Math, and Independent English courses will not be used in determining class rank. The school administrator will determine appropriate course work for all students. Alternate courses such as college courses that are not dual-credit, correspondence courses, and NovaNET will be approved on an individual basis. Grades from these alternate course choices (rather than classes at Newcastle High School) will not be used in averaging grades for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

In calculating the averages for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, the course weight system defined in the section on **grading policies** will be used.

To be named Valedictorian or Salutatorian, a student must have enrolled in the Newcastle High School for all of high school courses, except for concurrent college credit and/or credit by exam. High School coursework must be completed within four years.

All transfer grades in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language shall be accepted for class rankings: however, Pre-AP weight shall be awarded to grades transferred for Pre-AP courses only when the same Pre-AP course is offered in the District. Transferred letter grades shall be converted to numerical grades and then to grade points before averages are computed for class rankings.

[For further information, see policy EIC.]

Junior High Honor Graduates Policy

The honor of Junior High Valedictorian or Salutatorian will be awarded to the students with the highest and second highest core-curriculum (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Foreign Language) averages for Seventh and Eighth Grade courses, providing that the average is 90 or above. The Newcastle Junior High honor graduates must have attended Newcastle Junior High for all of Eighth Grade.

CLASS SCHEDULES

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day's schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes** on page 70 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 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.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2014 term, the University will be admitting the top seven percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Students and parents should contact the school counselor or Teresa Koonsman for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

[See also **Class Rank/Highest Ranking Student** on page 29 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class].

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

Students in grades 9–12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB);
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Dual credit and dual enrollment college classes taught on-site at Newcastle School by Newcastle teachers: College English, College Biology, College Algebra, College Trigonometry, and College Statistics.
- Dual credit and dual enrollment college classes taught by Ranger College instructors via internet include College History, Government, Economics, and various other internet courses. Contact information: Cathryn Creel at 846-3531 or Bubba Adams at Ranger College at 254-647-3234 x 213.
- Certain CTE courses.

Note that if a student wishes to enroll in a community college course at a college that does not include the high school within its service area, the student is limited by state law to enroll in no more than three courses of this type.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, an end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

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

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

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 as well as on district vehicles—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. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

Disruptions of School Operations

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

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

Social Events

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

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

Administrator Assigned Detention

Morning detention assigned by the principal will be from 7:00AM – 8:00AM in the school library. Administrator assigned lunch detention will be for the entire lunch period.

Teacher Lunch Detention

NISD has extended the high school lunch from 30 minutes to 47 minutes, for the 2013-2014 school year. Detention assigned by the teacher will be the first 20 minutes of the high school

lunch period in the teacher's classroom. Students who fail to attend the assigned lunch detention will have a closed campus for 10 school days. Students who are tardy or absent after lunch for the third time will be restricted to campus for 10 days. Every tardy or absence thereafter will result in another 10 days of closed campus. Students who fail to comply with the closed campus will be given 3 days ISS in addition to completing the 10 days of closed campus for lunch.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

[See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 54.]

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 8-12 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 CTE opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the school principal 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 school 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, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should contact the principal or Teresa Koonsman. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

[Also see **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 77 and **Suicide Awareness** on page 77.]

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 policies EHBA(LEGAL), FFE(LEGAL), and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

COURSE CREDIT

A student in grades 9–12 will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

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 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, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school.

The school 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.

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

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 or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2013–2014 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district's Web site

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam or a score designated by the state for an exam that has alternate scoring standards. A student may take an exam to earn course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's course sequence, the student must complete the course.

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each exam in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

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 student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam. [For further information, see policy EHDC(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. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office. [See policy FFH.]

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense. 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, 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; threats to harm a student's current dating partner; attempts to isolate the student from friends and family; stalking; or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Discrimination

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

Harassment

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

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, intimidating, or humiliating 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.

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of 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.

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, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

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

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

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.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

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, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate district 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 promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged 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.

During the course of an investigation, the district may take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

When an investigation is initiated for alleged prohibited conduct, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law. If so, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See policy FFI and **Bullying** on page 26.]

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

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

DISCRIMINATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35.]

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the "no pass, no play" rules. [Also see **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 44.] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the TxVSN in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must

receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

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, *Bobcat Tracks*, and the yearbook, *The Whirlwind*, 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 21.]

Nonschool Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than ten copies of 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 within two school days.

The principal has designated the school office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with 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 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 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 policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

The principal has designated the school office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

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

All 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. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

The Newcastle Independent School District recognizes that parents should accept responsibility for developing appropriate standards of dress and grooming for their children. School personnel, however, share this responsibility because a student's behavior and achievement may be influenced by dress and grooming habits.

It is acknowledged also that schools have a responsibility for developing dress and grooming habits that will contribute to a student's success when he/she leaves school. Students' dress and grooming will be considered acceptable if it does not violate any of the following principles:

1. Clothing worn is not to be suggestive or indecent.
2. Clothing and general appearance is not to be the type that would interfere with the instructional program.
3. Clothing and general appearance is to be such as not to constitute a health or safety hazard.

The following rules and regulations shall be enforced:

1. A student must wear shoes and shoestrings must be tied.
2. Students may not wear clothing that is torn or that has holes between the shoulders and mid thigh.
3. Shorts must meet acceptable standards as established by the school administration.

Example: Boys

Acceptable: long, loose walking shorts, may not be shorter than mid thigh.

Unacceptable: tight, short tennis wear or PE type shorts, spandex worn as an outer garment.

Example: Girls

Acceptable: Walking shorts may not be any shorter than mid thigh.

Unacceptable: “Short” shorts or PE type shorts, short walking shorts that are not near the knee or spandex worn as an outer garment.

4. Board policy FNCA (LOCAL) prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that:
 - A. Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
 - B. Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCF (LEGAL).
5. Mini-skirts are prohibited.
6. Boys’ hair must be no longer than shoulder length (top of the shoulder) and must be kept neat and clean. Any exceptions to this policy must have prior approval by the Newcastle ISD administration. The hair may not fall over the eyes, so as to cause a health or safety hazard.
7. Boys shall be clean-shaven and sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the earlobe.
8. Boys and girls may not wear hats or caps in the building unless it is part of a special event or activity approved by the school administration.

Prohibited Articles

- Body suits backless tops or dresses mini-skirts
- Halter tops spaghetti strap tops and dresses tube tops
- Tank tops transparent or see-through clothing
- Bandannas caps/hats headbands
- Sunglasses baggy or saggy pants
- Sleeveless shirts on boys
- Shirts with midriff showing – No visible skin while standing or seated.
- Torn clothing or clothing with holes between the shoulders and knees.
- Clothing advertising or depicting tobacco or alcoholic products, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under board policy FNCF (LOCAL)
- Clothing with coloring, designs, symbols, or lettering that would be interpreted as inappropriate, suggestive, or vulgar
- Visible tattoos (must be completely covered up)
- Jewelry that is noisy, promotes undue attraction, or dangerous
- Jewelry worn in body piercing other than ears on females.

The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations. Clothing shall be properly fitted and

properly worn. Administrators are authorized to make the final decision. Teachers are authorized to confiscate earrings worn by males and/or females and all hats/caps on sight worn in school building. For the first offense hats/caps will be removed and kept in the administrative offices until the end of the school day. For subsequent offenses the hat/cap will be kept in the administrative office until the end of the school year. Students in violation of Newcastle ISD dress code will be placed in In-School-Suspension until their clothing is appropriate. Most dress code violations will be handled in the principal's office by exchanging the offending clothing for district-supplied clothing, which may be exchanged back after the end of the school day. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE CAMPUS TO CORRECT DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. For the first offense, parents may pick up the confiscated items from the principal's office at the close of the school day. For the second offense, parents may pick up the items for a fee of \$15 after the close of the school day. For each offense after the second each school year, parents may pick up the items in the principal's office for a fee of \$15 after May 30, 2014.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 72 and policy FNF.]

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

Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. 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.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student’s personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 72 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district’s network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as “sexting,” will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child <http://beforeyoutext.com>, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district’s computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS

See **Graduation** on page 48 and **Standardized Testing** on page 74.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [Also see **Transportation** on page 78.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. [See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information.]

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 language other than English—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.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Athletic Code

One area in which students can enrich their educational experience is interscholastic athletics. Competitive athletics can sharpen the intellect, improve concentration, and help assure that a healthy body is going to do better mental work.

The following player code has been established in order to help teach and impress the importance of good sportsmanship, respect for rules and authority, development of leadership, team pride, team work, team discipline, as well as to eliminate disruptive behavior in the locker rooms, at practice, in games, and on trips.

1. Abide by the policies established for the students of the Newcastle Independent School District.
2. Fulfill the eligibility requirements established by the University Interscholastic League.
3. Continue through with a sport once it is started.
4. Strive to have a proper diet and enough sleep.

5. Abstain from the smoking of tobacco, the use of alcoholic beverages, abusive drugs, and abusive language.
6. Be responsible for the school equipment that you are issued. The athlete will be held accountable for any damaged or lost equipment that he is issued. Unless prior permission has been obtained, the athlete will wear only the equipment issued by the coach for game participation.
7. Take care of personal belongings and leave the belongings of others alone. Stealing will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of the athlete to keep his/her dressing room locker locked.
8. Be on time at practices or games, conference with the coach about missing a practice or a game before it is missed. The athlete will be expected to make up the conditioning missed if absent. If the athlete is late to practice or to a game, he will be expected to carry out extra conditioning at the close of practice, or in the case of being tardy to the game, at the close of the next practice.
9. Accept the decisions of the game officials.
10. Accept the decisions of the coach.
11. Be a good representative of the team, school, and community. At all times, “remember who you are and where you are from.”

Violations of this code will result in a conference between the athlete and the coach. The penalties may be extra conditioning, suspensions, or dismissal from the program.

Standards of Behavior

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 board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups** on page 72.]

Offices and Elections

Class sponsors are certified teachers assigned by the principal to sponsor a specific class. Following the principal’s submitting of the sponsor list to the superintendent, the School board will give final approval of sponsors. Generally, the assignment is made at the beginning of the Seventh Grade and the sponsors continue with the class through high school graduation.

Class favorites will be nominated by each class and voted on by popular vote during the latter part of October.

Each year, each class in grades 9-12 elects two Student Council representatives from the eligible nominees. Eligible nominees must meet the following criteria: 1. Must have been a student at Newcastle ISD for all of the previous school year. 2. Must not have been in ISS or DAEP in the

last twelve months. 3. Must have an 85 or better average in each core curriculum class for the previous school year.

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 reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 78.]
- 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.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

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 Superintendent. [For further information, see 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 principal at least 10 days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

GANG-FREE ZONES

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35.]

GRADE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned	Classification
5	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
10	Grade 11 (Junior)
15	Grade 12 (Senior)

GRADING GUIDELINES

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

Also see **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 69 for additional information on grading guidelines.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully:

- Complete the required number of credits;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Depending on the year in which the student is scheduled to graduate, pass a statewide exit-level exam or achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

The exit-level test, for which satisfactory performance is required as a condition for graduation of any student who is in grade 12 during the 2013–2014 school year, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I and Geometry; Biology and Integrated Chemistry and Physics; English III; and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. If a student in grade 12 did not pass all sections while in grade 11, there will be opportunities to retake each applicable subject area test.

Also see **Standardized Testing** on page 74 for more information.

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2011–2012 school year, students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments.

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

Also see **Standardized Testing** on page 74 for more information.

Graduation Programs

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Program will be granted only if a written agreement is reached among the student, the student’s parent or person standing in parental relation, and the school counselor or appropriate administrator. In order for a student to take courses under the Minimum Program, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English language arts, math, science, and social studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed grade 9 one or more times. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

All students must meet the following credit and course requirements for graduation under the programs listed:

	<u>Minimum Requirements</u>	<u>Recommended Program</u>	<u>Distinguished Achievement</u>
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ENGLISH	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
MATHEMATICS	3 credits (Must include <i>Algebra I</i> and <i>Geometry</i> .)	4 credits (Must include <i>Algebra I</i> , <i>Algebra II</i> and <i>Geometry</i> , <i>Math Models</i> must be prior to <i>Algebra II</i> .)	4 credits (Must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. Does not include <i>Math Models</i> .)
SCIENCE	2 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> and Integrated Physics and Chemistry)	4 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> & two of: Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics, or Principles of Technology I, plus one listed lab-based course.)	4 credits (Must include <i>Biology</i> , <i>Chemistry</i> , <i>Physics</i> , plus one listed lab-based course. May not include IPC)
SOCIAL STUDIES	2 ½ credits World History or World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)	3 ½ credits World History, World Geography, US History Studies Since Reconstruction (1 credit each); and US Government (1/2 credit)
ECONOMICS	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH	None	2 credits in same language	3 credits in same language
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
FINE ARTS	None if entered 9 th grade before 2010-11. 1 credit for students who enter grade 9 in 2010 or later.	1 credit	1 credit
SPEECH	½ credit Communications Applications, Professional Communications	½ credit Communications Applications, Professional Communications	½ credit Communications Applications, Professional Communications
ELECTIVES	1 credit (academic) Must be selected from <i>World History Studies</i> , <i>World Geography Studies</i> , or any science course approved by the SBOE 7 ½ credits (any)	5 ½ credits	4 ½ credits
ADVANCED MEASURES	None	None	Must achieve a combination of four (4) of the advanced measures approved by the SBOE
SUBSTITUTIONS	Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course equivalents may be substituted.		
CREDITS	22	26	26

* A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

** State rules prohibit a student from combining a half-credit of a course for which there is an EOC assessment with another half-credit of an elective credit course to satisfy an elective credit requirement. However, the district will allow a student to satisfy a graduation requirement for which there are multiple options with one-half credit of one allowable option and one-half credit of another allowable option, if neither course has an EOC assessment.

*** A student graduating under the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program must also achieve a combination of four of the following advanced measures:

1. An original research project or other project that is related to the required curriculum. These projects must be judged by a panel of professionals or conducted under the direction of a mentor and reported to an appropriate audience. Please note that no more than two of the four advanced measures may be received from this option.
2. Test data where a student receives:
 - a. A score of three or above on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam;
 - b. A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam; or
 - c. A score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that qualifies the student for recognition as a commended scholar or higher by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, as part of the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) of the College Board, or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT/NMSQT score will count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.
3. College academic courses, including those taken for dual credit, and advanced technical courses, including locally articulated courses, provided the student scores the equivalent of a 3.0 or higher.

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area, along with a description of advanced measures available to students in the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program from the options listed above, will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

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 school 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 CTE, the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

Note: The state legislature passed new requirements for graduation that will go into effect in the 2014-2015 school year. The details of the new graduation requirements have not been released at the time of the publication of this student handbook. Meetings will be planned when the details are finalized.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her 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 policy FMH(LEGAL).]

Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed in the Minimum Program, in accordance with state rules.

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student's achievement and progress and, if so, whether successful performance is required for graduation, or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate are the alternative assessments currently allowed by the state. [See **Standardized Testing, pg 74** for additional information.]

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include:

Graduation activities will include commencement rehearsal and the commencement. Students in Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) or Expulsion may not participate in school graduation activities.

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on exit-level tests or end-of-course assessments will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

Graduation Speakers

Graduating students will be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Only currently enrolled students who are in good academic and conduct standing 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.

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 will 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.

In addition to the opening and closing remarks, the Valedictorian and Salutatorian may also have speaking roles at the graduation ceremony.

Non-student graduation speakers must be preapproved by the principal or superintendent. We encourage selection of graduation speakers from Newcastle High School graduates from five or more years previous and **retired** Newcastle ISD teachers.

[For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 77.]

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

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 the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Student Fees** on page 52.]

Scholarships and Grants

- Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended 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.
- Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

Earnest and Lola Remington Scholarship

Newcastle graduates attending Texas Tech University may qualify for the Earnest and Lola Remington Scholarship. Interested senior students should contact Texas Tech University and apply before February 15. All graduating seniors planning to pursue post-secondary education should complete the FAFSA form for financial assistance before graduation. Students may contact the Newcastle High School guidance counselor or principal for assistance.

HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35.]

HAZING

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid

another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[Also see **Bullying** on page 26 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

- 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 common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

- 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 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. 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. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

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?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.* The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They 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>.

* Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see

the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

Also refer to **Immunizations** on page 59 for more information.

Food Allergies

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed in the school office.

Also see policy FFAF.

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS Web site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School

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

Students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters.

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

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

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

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns, and employee wellness. See policies at BDF and EHAA.

[See **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 14 for additional information.]

Other Health-Related Matters

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines

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

Tobacco Prohibited

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, while on school property at any time or while attending an off campus school-related activity.

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

Asbestos Management Plan

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact Ty Spitzer or Leo Payne, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at 846-3531.

Pest Management Plan

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Ty Spitzer or Leo Payne, the district's IPM coordinator, at 846-3531.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Gayle Bailey, at 846-3531.

HOMEWORK

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES (Enrichment and Reinforcement of Learning)

The Newcastle Independent School District believes that homework is an integral part of the instructional programs and learning experiences articulated throughout the PreK-12 curriculum. Homework is an effective academic tool that is vital to students' academic success and can have significant positive effects on student learning. Newcastle Independent School District recognizes the classroom environment as the primary instructional center. However, most homework is accomplished at home where parents can support student learning through homework achievement. Newcastle Independent School District recognizes and respects the importance of quality family time. It is not the intent of this policy to significantly impact the family during holiday celebrations and/or school vacations throughout the school calendar year. Homework assignments should be carefully planned and assigned with respect to family needs as well as student learning.

The potential power of homework is directly related to the quality and evenly planned distribution of assignments. Homework is defined as those activities and assignments that students prepare outside of the classroom. Newcastle Independent School District further supports homework:

- A. Study skills and habits: Homework assignments designed to improve skills such as concentration, discipline, note taking, reading for understanding, and reading for pleasure.
- B. Practice/Review: Homework assignments designed to reinforce material presented in class and/or develop mastery of skills.

- C. Preparation: Homework assignments designed to introduce material that will be helpful in understanding future instruction.
- D. Skill Integration: Homework assignments designed to utilize separately learned skills and concepts and apply them in the completion of a single product such as a book report, science project, or writing assignment.

Extension: Homework assignments designed to transfer previously learned skills and concepts to other situations such as making real world and cross-curricular connections.

ILLNESS

[See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 54.]

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 (TDSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be 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, tetanus, and pertussis; measles, mumps, and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the TDSHS. 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 a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis**, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the TDSHS 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 taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

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

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

LEAVING CAMPUS

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave

campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

During Lunch

Students in grades 6-12 are allowed to leave campus during lunch if parents have submitted permission forms to the office.

At Any Other Time During the School Day

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an English language learner (ELL) in certain state statutes and state rules, is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student.

In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 74, may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I and II end-of-course (EOC) assessments. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make these decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

LOST AND FOUND

A "lost and found" collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. The district discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, as the district cannot be

responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

MAKEUP WORK

Makeup Work Because of Absence

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. 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 is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 24.]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

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

DAEP Makeup Work

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

In-school Suspension (ISS) 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, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

The district will not purchase medication to give to a student. 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 policy 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.

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

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

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

Psychotropic Drugs

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

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

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Newcastle ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Ty Spitzer, Superintendent, 505 Washington Street, Newcastle, Texas 76372 or ty.spitzer@esc9.net or 846-3531.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Deborah Wilkinson, Dean of Students, 505 Washington Street, Newcastle, Texas 76372 or debbie.wilkinson@esc9.net or 846-3531.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Ty Spitzer at ty.spitzer@esc9.net or 846-3531.

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

NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 48.]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

All students who participate in the Newcastle ISD athletic program will be required to have a physical in grades 6 or 7, 9 and 11.

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 15.]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

PRAYER

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not

encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

GRADES 1-5 In grades 1-5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in reading and mathematics.

GRADES 6-8 In grades 6-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in reading and mathematics and a grade of 70 or above in either science or social studies.

GRADES 9-12 Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9-12 shall be earned by course credits. [See EI]

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [Also see **Grade Level Classification** on page 47.]

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

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

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

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 74.]

Parents of a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 48 and **Standardized Testing** on page 74 for more information about EOC assessments.]

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, school 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 school 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 principal and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 61.]

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 nine weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course 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 6 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 48.]

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

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

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 5 days.

RETALIATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35.]

SAFETY

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on district vehicles 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 is expected to:

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

Accident Insurance

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

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded,

students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

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 may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat.

If the campus must close or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will alert the community in the following ways:

KSWA-KWKQ 93.5, Graham

KFDX TV Channel 3, Wichita Falls

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

See **Standardized Testing** on page 74.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

All schedule changes must be made by Deborah Wilkinson, Dean of Students.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use by Students Before and After School

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

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

- Grade K-5 cafeteria
- Grades 6-8 in the gym foyer
- Grades 9-12 on the pavilion in back of the school

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an 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, unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus in accordance with policy FNAB, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

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

Use of Hallways During Class Time

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

Cafeteria Services

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

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

Our cafeteria is under the supervision of competent workers who are striving to give the best products and services possible to students. Conduct in the cafeteria is expected to be courteous and orderly. Rules for the cafeteria include the following:

- Enter the cafeteria appropriately
- Wait your turn in line politely
- Speak in a normal tone of voice
- Express your thanks to the cafeteria staff
- Leave tables neat with all trash in the proper receptacle
- Lunch charges are limited to \$15.00.
- Due to our participation in a federal breakfast program, we provide a free student breakfast.

School lunch prices for 2012-2013:

- Adult Breakfast \$2.25
- Lunch reduced \$0.40 (established federally)
- Lunch full pay \$2.50

- Adult lunch \$3.00

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use Monday through Friday from 7:00 to 4:00 p.m.

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 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.

Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

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

Vehicles on Campus

A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the Student Code of Conduct.]

Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of the district. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student's parent will be contacted. If a search is also refused by the student's parent, the district will turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may, in certain circumstances, contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

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 policy FNF(LOCAL).]

Drug-Testing

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page 76.]

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 35.]

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 Ty Spitzer.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school 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.

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Grades 3–8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. See **Promotion and Retention** on page 67 for additional information.

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

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

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

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

- Algebra I
- English I and English II,
- Biology
- United States History

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

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

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

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

Also see **Graduation** on page 48 for additional information.

TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills)

TAKS is a state-mandated assessment currently being transitioned to the STAAR program.

Except in limited circumstances, a student in grade 12 during the 2013–2014 school year will be required to retake what is termed the “exit-level” TAKS in the subject areas of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, and/or science, for which satisfactory performance is required for graduation, if the student did not pass any of these areas while in grade 11.

Also see **Graduation** on page 48 for more information.

TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment

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

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 texas.org/health/steroid-information>.

STUDENTS IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY OF THE STATE

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district strives to assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in either temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state of Texas with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student’s enrollment in the district.

A student who is placed in the custody of the state and who is moved outside of the district’s attendance boundaries is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending

prior to the placement until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. In addition, if a student in grade 11 or 12 is transferred to another district and does not meet the graduation requirements of the transferring district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

Please contact Ty Spitzer, who has been designated as the district's liaison for children in the conservatorship of the state, at 846-3531 with any questions.

STUDENT SPEAKERS

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: pep rallies and some school assemblies. If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

[See policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities and **Graduation** on page 48 for information related to student speech at graduation ceremonies.]

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-child-adolescent-services/>.

SUICIDE AWARENESS

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access <http://www.texassuicideprevention.org> or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

SUMMER SCHOOL

The District may provide access to summer school for students and for Limited English Proficient students according to legal requirements. See EHDA (LOCAL), EHBC (LEGAL), and EIE (LEGAL).

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

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

See **Standardized Testing** on page 74.

TARDINESS

A student who is tardy to class by more than 20 minutes will be counted absent. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

TRANSFERS

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

[See **School Safety Transfers**, on page 16, **Bullying**, on page 26, and **Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services**, on page 17, 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. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's Web site. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact 846-3531.

See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.

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

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

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 and audio recording equipment is 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 and 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 main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

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. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

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.

VOLUNTEERS

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Shirley Rhodes or Gayle Bailey for more information and to complete an application.

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 and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the school counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

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

Glossary

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

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

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

Attendance review committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 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 or a final grade lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

EOC assessments are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments will be required for graduation beginning with students in grade 9 during the 2011–2012 school year. These exams will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that

local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

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

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments, effective beginning with certain students for the 2011–2012 school year.

STAAR Alternate is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Modified is an alternative state-mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards that is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L) is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English language learners.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the exit-level TAKS or STAAR EOC assessments, when applicable, 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 and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test that is being transitioned to the STAAR program. A student in grade 12 who has not yet met the passing standard on this assessment will have opportunities to retake the assessment, for which satisfactory performance is required for graduation.

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

TxVSN is the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

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

APPENDIX I: Freedom From Bullying Policy

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit <http://pol.tasb.org/home/index/1272>. Below is the text of Newcastle ISD's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date that this Handbook was finalized for this school year.

STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

FFI(LOCAL)

Adopted on 8-15-2012

Note: This policy addresses bullying of students. Before proceeding under this policy, review FFH to first determine whether that policy applies. For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

BULLYING
PROHIBITED

The District prohibits bullying as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process set out in this policy is a violation of District policy.

DEFINITION

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students who are on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District engages in written or oral expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or oral expression or physical conduct and interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school; and
2. Such conduct:
 - a. Has the effect or reasonably will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a person in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
 - b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

RETALIATION	The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who, in good faith, makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation under this policy.
FALSE CLAIM	A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying under this policy is subject to appropriate discipline.
TIMELY REPORTING	Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair the District's ability to investigate.
REPORTING PROCEDURES	To obtain intervention and assistance, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District professional employee.
STUDENT REPORT	
EMPLOYEE REPORT	Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall promptly notify the principal or designee.
REPORT FORMAT	A report may be made orally or in writing. If a report is made orally, the principal or designee shall prepare a written report from the oral information.
INVESTIGATION OF REPORT	The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct under FFH(LOCAL), Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation. If so, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate District official, as set out in FFH(LOCAL), for processing in accordance with that policy. If not, the principal or designee shall conduct an investigation based on the allegations of bullying. If appropriate, the principal shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of the investigation.
	If the District official determines that the alleged conduct, if proven, would not be a violation of this policy or of policy FFH, the District official shall so notify the complainant/reporter in writing and dismiss the complaint.
CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION	Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.
	The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred. If the alleged victim is facing possible disciplinary action based on a physical interaction or altercation with the alleged perpetrator, the report shall include a determination whether the

	<p>victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report will be filed with the Superintendent or other appropriate administrator. The principal shall also communicate a summary of the report and its conclusions to the complainant.</p>
NOTICE TO PARENTS	<p>If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of both the victim and the perpetrator.</p>
DISTRICT ACTION BULLYING	<p>In no circumstance shall the District be required to inform the complainant of the specific disciplinary or corrective action taken.</p> <p>If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.</p>
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	<p>Before a student with disabilities is disciplined for engaging in bullying, the District shall comply with state and federal requirements related to discipline of students with disabilities.</p>
COUNSELING	<p>If the results of the investigation indicate bullying occurred, the principal or designee shall inform the victim, the perpetrator, and any witnesses of District counseling options available to them.</p>
TRANSFERS	<p>If the results of the investigation indicate bullying occurred, policy FDB will apply to any transfer request.</p>
IMPROPER CONDUCT	<p>If the investigation reveals improper conduct that was not “bullying,” the District may nonetheless take appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct or other corrective action to address the conduct.</p>
CONFIDENTIALITY	<p>To the extent possible, the District shall endeavor to protect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom the complaint is brought, and witnesses. However, limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.</p>
APPEAL	<p>A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.</p>
RECORDS RETENTION	<p>The District shall retain records of the complaint and investigation in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).</p>
ACCESS TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES	<p>Information regarding this policy and any related procedures shall be included annually in the employee and student handbooks. The policy and procedures shall be posted on the District’s Web site; a copy may also be obtained at each campus and the District’s administrative offices.</p>

**APPENDIX II:
Parent Statement Prohibiting Corporal Punishment**

A parent has the responsibility of submitting a signed statement to the principal each year if he or she chooses to prohibit the use of corporal punishment with his or her child. A parent may reinstate permission to use corporal punishment at any time during the school year by submitting a signed statement to the principal. Corporal punishment will be administered in accordance with the law, district policy, and the Student Code of Conduct (SCOC). [See FO and the SCOC]

Corporal punishment will be administered as soon as possible after an offense and will not be administered in anger. The principal or a designee may choose not to use corporal punishment even if the parent has requested its use. Any use of corporal punishment will be documented on a district form. The principal or a designee will inform the parent when corporal punishment is used. Paddles used for administering corporal punishment will not be generally displayed and will be under the control of the principal or designee. Corporal punishment will be limited to spanking or paddling and will consist of an appropriate number of strikes based upon the size, age, and the physical, mental, and emotional condition of the student. Before corporal punishment is used, the district may give the student a choice between other disciplinary measures and corporal punishment.

Parent Statement Prohibiting Corporal Punishment:

I have read the information on the use of corporal punishment in Newcastle ISD, and I prohibit the use of corporal punishment with my child.

This form must be submitted annually and can be revoked by the parent at any time.

Name of parent or guardian: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Date: _____

Name of student: _____

Campus: _____

Grade: _____

**APPENDIX III:
Acknowledgment Form—Amendment**

<p><i>Note to handbook developer: You might keep this form on hand throughout the school year to assist in documenting communication of Student Handbook amendments made during the year.</i></p>

My child and I have received a copy of the Newcastle ISD Student Handbook
Amendment # _____ dated _____.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

**APPENDIX IV:
Release Form for Display of Student Work and Personal Information**

*Note to handbook developer: As referenced at **Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**, below is a form you might use to seek parental consent prior to displaying or publishing the work.*

Occasionally, the Newcastle ISD wishes to display or publish original student work, which may include personally identifiable student information as defined in the Student Handbook, to promote student academic and extracurricular activities on the district's Web site, a Web site affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom Web site, and in district publications.

Original student work includes artwork, projects, photos taken by the student, or other academic or creative work. The district may also wish to publish or display original video and voice recordings.

The district agrees to use these student works and information only in the manner described above.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below and check the applicable boxes:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** my permission for the following to be displayed or published by the district:

- Original student work
- Voice recordings
- Video recordings

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____

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