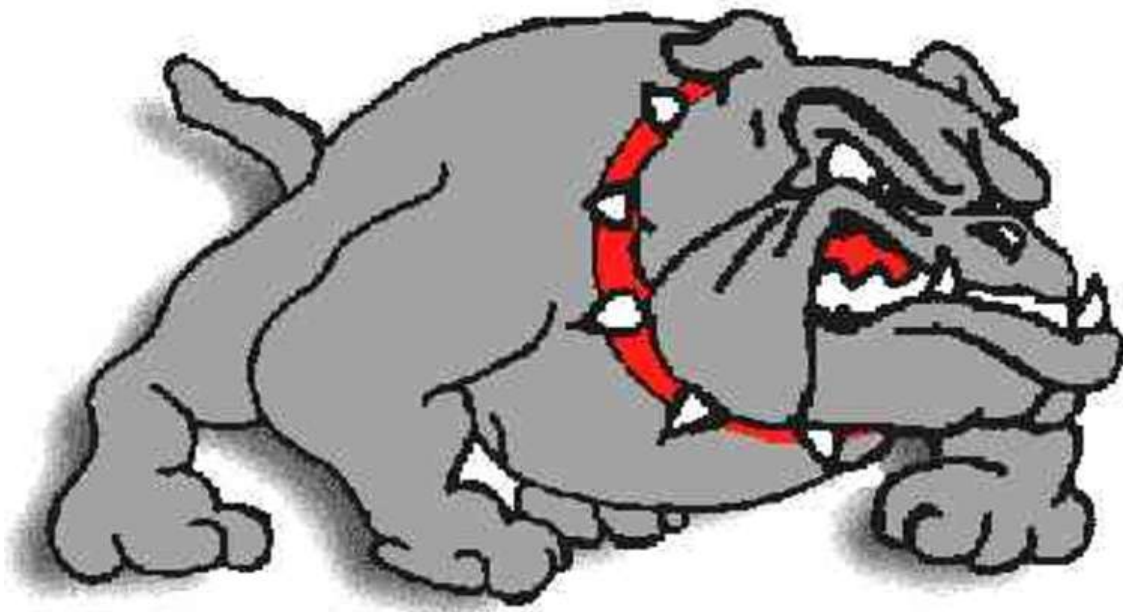


# Three Rivers Middle School

**STUDENT—PARENT HANDBOOK**

**&**

**CODE OF CONDUCT**



**2009-2010**

# PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

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

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

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

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

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Three Rivers 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 as an attachment to this handbook.

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

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

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact Mrs. Hortensia Brooks, Principal at 361-786-3626 EXT 301.

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

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form;

3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning Forms;  
and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Forms.

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 4 and **Directory Information** on page 10. [[www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/149902](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/149902)]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or on-line at [www.trisd.esc2.net](http://www.trisd.esc2.net).

## **SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

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

### ***STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION***

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

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Mr. Mac Johanson, Superintendent at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Mr. Mac Johanson, Superintendent at 361-786-3626 EXT 101
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Mr. Mac Johanson at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.

### ***PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT***

#### **Working Together**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.

- Monitoring your child’s academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 23 and **Academic Programs** on page 15.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 361-786-3626 EXT 101 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 41.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact Mrs. Hortensia Brooks, Principal at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact Mrs. Hortensia Brooks, Principal at 361-786-3626 EXT 301.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 34.]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

## ***PARENTAL RIGHTS***

### **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights**

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

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

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

### **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any 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.

### **Displaying a Student’s Artwork and Projects**

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

### **Accessing Student Records**

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

- Attendance records,

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

[See **Student Records** on page 8.]

### **Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student**

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

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

### **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom**

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

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance** and **A Minute of Silence** on page 39 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

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

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a

portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

### **Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct**

A 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*.]

### **Requesting Transfers for Your Child**

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the principal to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for information. [See policy FDB.]  
[See **Bullying** on page 16, and policy FFI(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

### **Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings**

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

## ***OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS***

### **Parents of Students with Disabilities**

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, see Special Programs on page 45 and contact Mrs. Sherri Nelson at 361-786-3626 EXT 113.

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

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

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

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Mrs. Sherri Nelson at 361-786-3626 EXT 113.

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

### **Services for Title I Participants**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Mrs. Hortensia Brooks, Principal and may be contacted at 361-786-3626 EXT 301.

### **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, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official or staff in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

The principal 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 108 N. School Road, Three Rivers, TX 78071.

The address(es) of the principals’ offices are:

108 N. School Road

Three Rivers, TX 78071

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, on inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See Finality of Grades at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 41 and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 18 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 at [www.trisd.esc2.net](http://www.trisd.esc2.net).

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

**Please note:**

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

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

**Directory Information**

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

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

**Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: all District publications and announcements found in your FL(LOCAL)].

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

- The student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, and date and place of birth.
- The student's photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of member of athletic teams.
- The student's major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended.
- Other school-sponsored purposes in FL(Local).

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.

### **Directory Information for All Other Purposes:**

Directory information for all other purposes shall include: student name, address, and grade level.

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

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

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

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

- What is meningitis?

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

- What are the symptoms?

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

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

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

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

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

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

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

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

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

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

## **SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Mrs. Hortensia Brooks, Principal at 361-786-3626 EXT 301.

### ***ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE***

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

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Attendance for Credit**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Parent's Note After An Absence**

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older. This note must be turned into the office on the day of return to school. A one day grace period will be given if student forgets the note; thereafter, the absence will be considered unexcused. The student will also be assigned a day of detention for not providing a note on the day of return to school .

A student absent, for any reason, is encouraged to make-up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth study assigned by the teacher to meet specific course requirements. A student who does not make-up the assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher may receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student that is not in class when the tardy bell rings, will be considered tardy. A student who comes to class, twenty minutes after the tardy bell rings, will be considered absent. Detention will be assigned on the third tardy and on all other tardies thereafter. Detention will be held from 3:25 to 3:55 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday. It is the student's and their parent's responsibility to get to Detention Room in a timely manner.

A student absent from school or from any class without permission will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action according to the Student Code of Conduct.

A parent wishing to withdraw a student from school must present a signed statement to the principal explaining the reason for the withdrawal and the effective date. The student must then follow the procedure outlined in this handbook on the last day of attendance.

For further information, see policies at EHBC, EIA, FDC, and FDD.

In order for the student to be considered for perfect attendance, they must attend all periods throughout the day.

## **Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than five (5) consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

## **Driver License Attendance Verification**

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

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see page 22 of this handbook and policies at EIF.]

[See **Academic Counseling** on page 23.]

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

### “A” Honor Roll

In order to be listed on the “A” Honor Roll each six weeks period, a student must earn a grade of 90 or better in each of the classes in which they are enrolled. In order to make the “A” Honor Roll for the semester or year, a student must maintain an “A” average for each course in which they are enrolled for the semester or year.

### “A-B” Honor Roll

In order to be listed on the “A-B” Honor Roll each six weeks period, a student must earn an average of 80’s and 90’s in each class in which they are enrolled. In order to be listed on the “A-B” Honor Roll for the semester or year a student must have an 80 or better average for the semester or year.

### “Perfect Attendance”

In order to be listed on the Perfect Attendance each grading period, a student must not be absent for any class in which they are enrolled.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student’s property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying. [See FFI(LOCAL).]

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

Students at Three Rivers Middle School will be scheduled into eight (8) classes each school day. Most of the time students will be scheduled into classes that they pre-register for the preceding spring.

Changes in student schedules will be considered the first two weeks of school. Any change in scheduling requires the approval of the principal. Changes after the first two weeks are discouraged, but are sometimes necessary.

### Daily Time Schedule

7:35 am	Teacher Duty
7:45 am	All Staff Arrive
7:55 am	First Bell
8:00—8:47 am	First Period
8:52—9:39 am	Second Period
9:44—10:31 am	Third Period
10:36—11:23 am	Fourth Period
11:28 am—12:15 pm	Fifth Period
12:15—12:50 pm	Lunch
12:55—1:42 pm	Sixth Period
1:47—2:34 pm	Seventh Period
2:39—3:25 pm	Eighth Period
3:30 pm	Buses Run
3:25—3:55 pm	Tutorials

### Early Release Schedule

7:35 am	Teacher Duty
7:45 am	All Staff Arrive
7:55 am	First Bell
8:00—8:27 am	First Period
8:32—8:59 am	Second Period
9:04—9:31 am	Third Period
9:36—10:03 am	Fourth Period
10:08—10:35 am	Fifth Period
10:40—11:07 am	Sixth Period
11:12—11:39 am	Seventh Period
11:44 am—12:15 pm	Eighth Period
12:15—12:50 pm	Lunch
12:55 pm	Buses Run

## **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 website at <http://threerivers.esc2.net/>.

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

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

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

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

### **Student Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Electronic Communications System:**

Students are given access to the District's electronic communications system. Through this system, students are able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people around the world through the Internet and electronic systems/network.. with this educational opportunity comes responsibility. Read the District policy and ask questions if you need help. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege to use this educational tool.

Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that some material and content might be objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to resist access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access; therefore, it will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use.

#### Rules for appropriate use:

- You will have access only through the teacher's account.
- You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of your account; the District may suspend or revoke you access if you violate the rules.
- E-mails received from you with a school address might be considered to be representative of the school's point of view.

#### Inappropriate uses:

- Illegal purposes
- Disabling or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device.

- Encrypting to avoid security review.
- Borrowing someone’s account without permission.
- Posting personal information.
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal.
- Wasting school resources through the improper use of the computer system.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.

Consequences for Inappropriate use:

- Suspension of access to the system;
- Revocation of the computer system account; or
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable laws.

**The student agreement must be renewed each academic year.**

[For additional information, see policy CQ]

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

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

### **Minor Infractions**

Minor infractions are rule violations and are not considered violations to the Student Code of Conduct. The teacher is not required to make a Student Code of Conduct violation report but will issue a detention hall notice. The principal is not required to notify parents.

- Assemblies—Pep Rallies: School Assemblies from an important part of a school’s activities. All students must attend pep rallies and assemblies conducted during school hours. Misconduct at an assembly will not be tolerated.
- Automobile Use: Student use of an automobile (parking or driving) is a privilege granted by the Board of Trustees of the Three Rivers ISD. As such, this privilege may be modified or revoked by the school administration as needed. Any car driven to school must be parked on school property in the designated student areas. All vehicles parked on school property are subject to search at any time there is reasonable cause to search the vehicle. An alert by a trained drug-sniffing dog is considered reasonable cause.  
  
Cars parked illegally on school property will be towed away at the owner’s expense. Students are not allowed to sit in cars during the school day. Reckless driving will result in suspension of driving privileges and disciplinary action.
- Cafeteria Behavior: The cafeteria is maintained at the school for the student’s convenience. Standards of conduct and dress will be enforced at the cafeteria. Students are expected to dispose of their trays and return utensils when they are finished eating. Students are not allowed to cut in front of others in the serving line.
- Public Display of Affection: Affection (hugging, kissing, holding hands, etc.) demonstrated among students has no place on a public school campus. Personal relationships should be practiced at the proper place and time; the public school is not the proper setting.
- Dress Code: Students are encouraged to present a neat appearance. Any clothing item, hairstyle, or adornment that draws undue attention, creates disruption, or presents safety hazards, will not be allowed. Please refer to the section on Dress Code in the Student-Parent Handbook for further information.
- Hall Pass: Students must obtain a hall pass from their teacher to leave class. The student is not to go to any area other than the one designated on the pass.
- Late Note for Absence: An excuse for absence note must be presented to the office on the first day back at school. If a note is not presented, the student will be given an additional day to bring a note to school or the absence will be considered unexcused. The lack of a note on the first day will result in detention.
- Library: Failure to return books and materials will result in a Minor Infraction violation for each weekly reporting period the book or fine remains overdue.
- Loitering: Students are not to loiter in the halls before school, during lunch, or between classes. Students are not allowed to loiter in front of the Middle School building at any time.
- Pass Time: During pass time between classes, students should be headed toward their next class, not standing or visiting in the halls. When the tardy bell rings, any student not in their classroom will be considered tardy.
- Preparation for Class: Students are expected to be prepared for class with all the necessary materials (pens, pencils, paper, books, etc.) and assignments completed.

- Camera-Phone, TV-Phone, Pagers, I-Pods, CD Players, Game Boys, Radios: All these items are not allowed at school. Students will be assigned detention and items will be turned in to the principal's office.

Violations of the above listed campus guidelines, or any other violations listed later in this handbook will result in a Minor Infraction violation discipline response for the first time offender with modification of the administrative response.

## **Minor Violation Responses**

Students who commit Minor Infraction Violations rules will be written up and processed by the administration. The following list contains brief descriptions of the possible response.

### Conference Cleared

The student was charged with some offense; but after investigation, the charge was determined to be an error and the student cleared. The record will show conference cleared to maintain documentation the student was cleared of the charge.

### Detention or D-Hall

Student assigned to D-Hall are required to attend on the assigned date from 3:20 pm to 3:50 pm in the assigned classroom. Student must sign-in to verify attendance. Failure to attend will result in In-School Suspension (ISS). Only the campus principal may change a D-Hall assignment date. It is the student's responsibility to speak with the principal prior to the D-Hall assignment about a needed date change.

### In-School Suspension

Students may be placed in ISS for excessive number of minor violation reports or for more serious level of offenses.

## **Disruptions**

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.

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

### **Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones**

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess telecommunication devices, including mobile telephones; however these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of mobile telephones in locker rooms or restroom areas at any time while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event is strictly prohibited. A student who uses a telecommunications device during the school day shall have the device confiscated. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

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

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

### **Other Electronic Devices**

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

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

### **Social Events**

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

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

### **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS**

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

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

## **CORRESPONDENCE COURSES**

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

[For further information, see policies at EEJC.]

## **COUNSELING**

### **Academic Counseling**

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

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

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should contact Mrs. Stephanie Schuette at 361-786-3626 EXT 303.

### **Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment**

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

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

### **CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course**

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

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

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

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

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

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

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2009–2010 school year include:

Dates Scheduled:

August 26, 2009

August 28, 2009

September 24, 2009

January 14, 2010

February 4, 2010

March 30, 2010

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

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).]

### ***DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION***

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

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

## **Dating Violence**

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

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

## **Discrimination**

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

## **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's Web site <http://threerivers.esc2.net>.

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

## **Sexual Harassment**

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

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

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

## **Retaliation**

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

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

## **Reporting Procedures**

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

## **Investigation of Report**

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

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

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

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

## ***DISCRIMINATION***

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation on page 25.]

## ***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, *the Bark*, and the yearbook *the Grawl*, , are available to students.

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

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

### **Nonschool Materials...from students**

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

The principal has designated the bulletin board in the Middle School office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

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

### **Nonschool Materials...from others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by 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.]

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:

All students should dress as wholesome young ladies and men. Because of different body builds and personal likes and dislikes, it is difficult to state specifically what may or may not be worn. The final authority on proper attire at Three Rivers Middle School will be with the administration. Subject to the educational process, the appearance of students at school is a responsibility that rests primarily with the parents of the students. The school becomes involved in that responsibility when the total appearance of the student body directly affects the attitude, safety, health, behavior, and learning environment of the school. Individual cases not covered by the guidelines will be acted upon by in accordance with the discretion of the administration.

The school dress code applies to students when they are at any school related function, home or away, with the following exception. Caps with bills facing forward, may be worn to sporting events. The sponsors or group will determine dress for field trips.

Students who violate dress and grooming standards established by the district will be required to correct the infraction when an appropriate change of clothes is brought to the student. During the wait time, the student will report to ISS.

### **The students of the middle school shall adhere to the following standard of dress and grooming:**

1. Students shall come to school looking clean and neat and wearing clothing and exhibiting grooming that shall not be a distraction or health and safety hazard to the student or others.
2. The district prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing or jewelry that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene, or that depict or advertise tobacco products, alcoholic beverages of any kind, drugs, or any substance prohibited under policy FNCF (Local) and prohibits any dress or grooming that, in the administration's judgment, may reasonably be expected to interfere with normal school operations.
3. Clothing and jewelry that depict death, drugs, violence, occult, witchcraft, or gang involvement are prohibited. Leather collars, choke collars, necklace with dog-like chain links or spikes, are not allowed. Any clothing or articles that are determined as gang affiliated by the administration will not be allowed.
4. Sleepwear, loungewear, house shoes, and beachwear of any kind are prohibited.
5. Pant length must not exceed the heel of the shoe. Pant hems cannot be frayed or torn. Pants also include jeans.
6. Fatigues and pants with leg pockets below the knee are not acceptable. All pants must be worn at the waist.

7. All shirts, tops, and blouses must have set-in sleeves. Blouses, tops, and shirts must cover the shoulders, back, front and sides to the waist at all times. No tube or halter tops are allowed even under a cover-up shirt. The principal may require a student wear a school owned tee shirt, tuck in a shirt if it is of excessive length, or report to ISS.
8. Excessively baggy clothing (especially pants) is not allowed. The seat of the pants must not hang down. Excessively tight clothing (especially tops) is not allowed. It must fit appropriately to the body. Baggy and tight is determined by the administration.
9. Any head gear (including baseball caps, beanies, hats, bandanas, knit caps) may not be worn in the middle school buildings during school hours by boys or girls.
10. Shorts are permitted if they are not shorter than 6 inches above the floor without any adjustment when kneeling. The shorts must have a zipper and pockets. The shorts must be of a pant-weight material. The length rule also applies to skirts.
11. Clothing with tears or holes that expose the skin will not be allowed.
12. Abnormal colored hair is prohibited. Hair coloring or dyeing of hues that cause a distraction is prohibited. Hair art is prohibited.
13. No visible body piercing jewelry, except for earrings on girls is allowed.
14. Tattoos are not permitted. Students with tattoos must cover them at all times.
15. All students are to wear appropriate footwear while in attendance to class or to any school function or activity, unless otherwise approved by the administration.

**Additional Rules for Girls:**

1. The basic attire for girls shall be dress, or blouse/top worn with skirts, slacks, Capri pants, jeans, shorts, or split skirts of the proper length and material.
2. If shirts are layered, the top shirt must have sleeves and be buttoned except for the top two buttons, the bottom layer may not be a tube or halter top.
3. Specifically prohibited are tops with see-through material, tank or tube tops, or top that expose the midriff at any time. Low necklines are not allowed.
4. Leggings, leotards, tights, exercise tights, leisurewear, or other hosiery type leggings may not be worn as pants. They may be worn with dresses or skirts that are of the proper length.
5. Chain-linked ear jewelry and visible body piercing other than earrings are prohibited.
6. Distracting make-up is not allowed.
7. Any other type of dress, wearing apparel, or hairstyle, that in the judgment of the administration is not conducive to the purposes of the school, will not be allowed.

### **Additional Rules for Boys:**

1. Hair must not be longer than the bottom of the collar in the back, to the eyebrows in the front, and to the middle of the ear. Sideburns may not extend beyond the bottom of the ear.
2. Beards, mustaches, long sideburns, and any other type of facial hair is prohibited. The face must be free of all facial hair.
3. If shirts are layered, the top shirt must have sleeves and be buttoned except for the top two buttons. If shirts are of excessive length (below the bottom of the buttock), shirt will be tucked in and pants will require a belt be worn at the waist.
4. Earrings are prohibited and may not be worn, even if covered. Visible body piercing is prohibited.
5. Any other type of dress, wearing apparel, or hairstyle that, in the judgment of the administration is not conducive to the purposes of the school, will not be allowed.

If and when the administration takes action, it will be considered final action for the students. Appeal of the administrator's decision may be filed in writing only by the parent or legal guardian of the student to the superintendent, who will serve as the final administrative authority.

The District's dress and grooming code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruptions, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. (FNCA, Local)

## ***EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS***

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

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

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten (10) absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five (5) absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two (2) absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and

public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

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

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

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups on page 44.]

### **Assemblies and Pep Rallies:**

Assemblies will be held from time to time during the school year. Pep rallies will be held as scheduled for Friday during the football season. Middle School pep rallies will be held during activity period and only for selected games. Student conduct and dress must meet the same standards as apply in the classroom for these activities. Student attendance is mandatory at these activities, unless excused by the principal or a teacher. Failure to attend will be considered truancy.

### **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 47.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

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

## **FUND-RAISING**

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

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

In grades 6–8, achievement is reported to parents as:

All grades will be recorded in numbers, with a passing range from 70 to 100.

Students will be required to do homework in various classes. This homework is designed to reinforce what the student has studied in class that day or recently. Homework is considered part of a student’s preparation of successfully mastering the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for that course of study. Most of the time, teachers give students time to work on homework in class, but this is not required. Grades can be taken on this work. If a student is having difficulty with an assignment, it is recommended they participate in tutorial sessions in that particular class from 3:25—3:55 pm each day (except Friday).

Six weeks tests will be averaged as 1/5 of the six weeks average. Semester grades will be determined as follows: Each six weeks of the semester will .28 (5/18) and the semester exam will count .16 (1/6). When a student is exempt from the semester exam, the semester average will be calculated by averaging together the three six weeks averages.

In accordance with the State Mandate for Accelerated Exams, Three Rivers Middle School will give student the option to take an Accelerated Exams. For the Middle School campus, student would have to pass all core curriculum accelerated exams with a 90% or above in order to skip a grade level. The core curriculum courses are: Math, Language Arts (Reading and English), History, Science, and Social Studies. Students will not be permitted to have multilevel scheduling; passing only an area test does not allow single course advancement.

Exemption Policy:

Students passing the fall benchmark TAKS tests will be exempt from first semester exams in that subject area provided the student is present on the day the semester exam is given.

Students passing the TAKS tests in the spring will be exempt from second semester exams in that subject area provided the student is present on the day the semester exam is given.

## **GRADUATION**

### **Requirements for a Diploma**

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

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

### **Graduation Programs**

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

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

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

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

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

## **HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 25.]

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### **Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School**

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

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

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

### **School Health Advisory Council**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held two (2) meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from Mrs. Diane Dye, Principal. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

### **Physical Fitness Assessment**

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

### **Vending Machines**

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

### **Other Health-Related Matters**

#### **Tobacco Prohibited**

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

#### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the Business Manager's office. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Donald Kasper at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.

## **Pest Management Plan**

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Mr. Donald Kasper at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Mr. Mac Johanson at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework will be required in most classes. It is designed to reinforce what has been studied in class. It is considered part of a student's preparation in being successful in a particular course of study. Grades can be taken, and usually are, on homework. Most of the time, when students fall behind and fail courses, it is because they have failed to do their homework or daily assignments. The school recommends students attend tutorials, with their homework, if they are having problems in a course.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

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

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

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

and the Department of State Health Services Web site:  
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm.>]

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **Questioning of Students**

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

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

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

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

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

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments**

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

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

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

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

### **DAEP**

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

### **In-school Suspension Makeup Work**

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

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

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

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
- In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
- When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

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

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

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

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

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to

recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

## ***PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS***

A student desiring to participate in the UIL athletic program shall submit a statement from a health care provider authorized under UIL rules indicating that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third year of high school competition. In other years, the student shall complete a medical appraisal form. A student may be required to have a physical examination based on answers to the appraisal form.

Parents of students identified through any screening programs as needing treatment or further examinations shall be advised of the need and referred to appropriate health agencies. (FFAA, Local)

- Spinal Screening: Grades 5 and 8—to identify students for referral to the doctor to rule out abnormal curvatures of the spine—scoliosis.
- Acanthosis Nigricans Screening: Grades 3, 5, and 7—to identify students who may be at risk for developing diabetes; it includes blood pressure check.
- Lice Screening: All Grades—to identify students with lice; those students will be sent home for treatment and may not return to class until nurse checks again to verify that the student is free of lice.

## ***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 Flag on page 6.]

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

## ***PRAYER***

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

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

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

In grades 6-8, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for the academic subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and math. [refer to EIE(LOCAL)].

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

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 3 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 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.

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

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

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

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

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

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

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

### **Late Arrival to School**

A student who is tardy to class by more than twenty (20) minutes will be considered absent for that class period. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in assigned detention or more severe disciplinary action.

### **Closed Campus**

Three Rivers Middle School is a closed campus. Students will not be allowed to leave campus during the regular school day. Parent(s) who wish to take their own child(ren) to lunch will need to come to the middle school office and sign their child(ren) out. Students will not be permitted to leave campus with another individual other than their own parent. Failure of parent to sign child(ren) out will constitute as a violation of the student code of conduct.

## **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 six (6) weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

## **RETALIATION**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 25.]

## **SAFETY**

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

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

## **Accident Insurance**

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

## **Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

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

### **Fire Drill Bells**

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

### **Tornado Drill Bells**

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

## **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

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

## **Emergency School-Closing Information**

In the event that school should have to close due to an emergency, the information will be available on all Corpus Christi and San Antonio television stations. Most area radio stations will also carry the information.

## ***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 7:35 a.m.

- Middle School Patio Area
- Middle School Playground
- Cafeteria at the Student Activity Center

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

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

### **Conduct Before and After School**

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

## **Use of Hallways During Class Time**

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

## **Cafeteria Services**

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Contact Mrs. Sharon Clifton, Cafeteria Manager at 361-786-3626 EXT 118 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).]

## **Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. All students are expected to be good library citizens at all times. Students who misbehave or misuse the library may forfeit the privilege of using the library and be subject to disciplinary action.

### Library Procedures

- The Library is open each period of the day unless circumstances require it to be closed.
- Library passes are required before a student can use the library.
- Books may be checked out for a two week period, then should be returned to the library, or renewed
- Back issues of magazines may be checked out overnight. (Check out at the end of the school day.)
- Students will be allowed to check out no more than two books at a time. The only exception to this rule is when students are working on research papers.
- A fine of 10 cents per day will be charged on all overdue materials and books.
- Library notices will be sent to all students for overdue materials and books.
- Fines not paid will result in loss of library privilege and discipline referrals.
- Students are responsible for library materials and books checked out in their name.
- Book damage fees will be determined by the extent of the damage.

## **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.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

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

### **Trained Dogs**

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

### **Drug-Testing**

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also, see **Steroids**, on page 45.]

## **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 Mr. Mac Johanson, Superintendent at 361-786-3626 EXT 101.

## **STEROIDS**

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

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

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

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Placement Committee will determine students that are eligible for summer school program. A student who has been retained in the 6—8 grade for one or more years (including the current school year) or who has failed both language arts and math in the current school year or has not obtained an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level standards for all subject areas may be eligible to attend summer school. Students who did not meet standards on the Reading and Math sections of the TAKS test. Students will be required to attend daily summer school classes and follow the regular student code to conduct. If student qualified for program, parent(s) must fill out all required paperwork, provide transportation, and pay a fee for summer school program. Students who successfully complete summer school will be promoted to the next grade level.

## **TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)**

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

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

[See policy EKB(LEGAL).]

## **TARDINESS**

A student who is tardy to class by more than five (5) minutes will be assigned to detention hall. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

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

## **TRANSFERS**

[See **Requesting Transfers for Your Child**, on page 7, and **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education**, on page 8, for other transfer options.]

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

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

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

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

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Mr. Rocky Kopplin, Transportation Director at 361-786-3626 EXT 116.

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

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

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.

- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

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

## **VANDALISM**

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

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

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

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

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

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

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

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

Students from other schools are not allowed to visit Three Rivers Middle School students during the school day or to attend classes with them.

## **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

On certain days, the district may invite representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

## ***WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL***

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

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

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

## GLOSSARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten-grade12.

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

## Acknowledgment Form-Amendment

My child and I have received a copy of the Three Rivers Middle School *Student Handbook* Amendment dated 2009-2010.

Print name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Use of Student Work in District Publications

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

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:**

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

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_