

**Brazos School for Inquiry and  
Creativity (BSIC)  
Charter School  
2016-2017  
Student Handbook**

[BRYAN CAMPUS](#)

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This Student Handbook is a reflection of Module 400: Students 2015-2016, Charter Board Policy for Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity adopted by the Board, June, 2015, and posted to the BSIC website at [www.thebrazoschool.org](http://www.thebrazoschool.org). If inconsistencies are found with that Module, Module 400 Policies will take precedence.

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## PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

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

The Handbook is organized in the following sections:

- Required Legal Notices and Information
- Directory Information
- General Information about Admission, Attendance, and Conduct
- Curriculum and Program Information
- Of Special Interest to Students
- Of Special Interest to Parents

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

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

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

## **LETTER TO PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

Dear Student and Parent or Guardian:

The Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity provides this Student Handbook to parents and students to provide you with information about the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education in our schools.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it among your family. If you have any questions about the information here, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher or campus administrator.

For your convenience, we have attached a copy of an Acknowledgement Page on the front of the handbook for you to acknowledge that you have received and read the handbook.

The student and parent should each sign the attached page on the space provided, then return the page to the student's school. Thank you.

Campus Principal

## **REQUIRED LEGAL NOTICES**

### **Nondiscrimination**

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

The Title IX Coordinator for the school district is Dr. Katy Greenwood, whose office is located at 410 Bethel Lane, Bryan Texas, 77802 and who can be reached by telephone by calling 979-775-2152.

The Section 504 Coordinator for the school district is Mr. Brian Rosas, whose office is located at 1055 West Tidwell Rd., Houston Texas, 77091 and who can be reached by telephone by calling 713-681-1960.

### **Homeless Liaison and Title I Participants**

Your campus principal is our liaison for services to students who are determined to be homeless, as defined by federal law. If you believe your child may be eligible for services or assistance, contact your principal's office.

Dr. Katy Greenwood is our Parent Involvement Coordinator who works with families and children participating in Title I programs. If you have questions about the program or need assistance related to the program, contact her at 410 Bethel Lane, Bryan Texas, 77802.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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

Parents control the access to their children's education records until the child becomes an adult at age 18. When the child reaches age 18, she or he controls the access to his or her records and is the one who can consent to the release of the records to other persons. However, parents continue to have a right to see and

obtain a copy their children's education records so long as the child is a dependent for federal income tax purposes, even if the child does not want them to.

If a parent wants to see or obtain a copy his or her child's education records, she or he should contact the principal of the child's school if the child is currently enrolled. If the child has withdrawn or graduated, parents should contact the school superintendent for access to records. Records can be reviewed in administrative offices during regular office hours, from 9 A.M to 3 P.M., and someone will be available to answer questions about the records.

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

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

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

- The district will forward education records on request to a public or private school or institution of higher education in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The district may disclose education records to a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other person who is performing services for the district, who is under the district's control related to the use of the records, and who has complied with district limitations on the re-disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.
- The district will comply with a lawful subpoena for student education records, but will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents before complying, unless the subpoena indicates that parents should not be notified.
- The district will release directory information about students to any person who submits a written request for the information, as provided in the DIRECTORY INFORMATION notice included in this Student Handbook, unless the district has a written waiver form signed by the parent, excluding his or her child from the Directory Information procedures.



- The district will release educational records to a juvenile justice agency in accordance with an agreement between the district and the agency. The information will be released before the student is adjudicated and will be provided so that the juvenile agency can appropriately serve the student.
- The district will release educational records to “school officials,” meaning any employees, trustees, or agents of the district, including persons employed in shared services arrangements or cooperatives of which the district is a member, school volunteers, parents or students serving on official committees, and the district’s legal counsel, who have a “legitimate educational interest” in the records, meaning they are persons who work directly with your child at school or any school activity, including officials involved in disciplinary or academic decisions affecting your child directly, persons who are compiling statistical data for the district, who are reviewing such records to fulfill their employment responsibilities, or who are investigating or evaluating district programs.

If you believe the district is not following the law regarding student records, you have the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education.

## **Directory Information**

The Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity has designated the following information about your child as Directory Information: name, address, date of birth, place of birth.

If you do not want the Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by September 20, 2013 by signing the form attached to the front of the Handbook

The Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity receives federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), and we are therefore required to disclose your secondary (grades 7-12) child’s name, address, and phone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education, on their request, unless you have told us that you do not want that information released without your prior written consent. Please note that you may not selectively withhold this information from military recruiters but provide it to institutions of higher education.

If you DO NOT want us to release your secondary school (grades 7-12) child’s name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education, check this box, you must return the form with your signature attached to the front of the Handbook.

## **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment**

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

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

## **Invasive Examinations or Screenings**

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

## **Teacher Qualifications**

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

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

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

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

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

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is the Campus Principal at each campus.

## **Bacterial Meningitis Information**

### **What is meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord--- also called the meninges. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral (aseptic) meningitis is common; most people recover fully. Medical management of viral meningitis consists of supportive treatment and there is usually no indication for the use of antibiotics. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

There are two common types of bacteria that cause meningitis: - *Strep pneumoniae* causes pneumococcal meningitis; there are over 80 subtypes that cause

illness - *Neisseria meningitidis*—Meningococcal meningitis; there are 5 subtypes that cause serious illness—A, B, C, Y, W-135

### **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, but any of the following are possible. Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have:

- Severe headache
- High temperature
- Vomiting
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Neck stiffness, joint pains
- Drowsiness or confusion

*\*In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots or bruises caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. They are a sign of blood poisoning (septicemia), which sometimes happens with meningitis, particularly the meningococcal strain.*

### **What is the risk of getting bacterial meningitis?**

The risk of getting bacterial meningitis in all age groups is about 2.4 cases per 100,000 population per year. However, the highest risk group for the most serious form of the disease, meningococcal meningitis, is highest among children 2 to 18 years old.

### **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, such as deafness, blindness, amputations or brain damage (resulting in mental retardation or paralysis) even with prompt treatment.

### **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. Being a carrier helps to stimulate the body's natural defense system. The bacteria rarely overcomes the body's immune system and causes 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. Vaccines against pneumococcal disease are recommended both for young children and adults over 64. A vaccine against four

meningococcal serogroups (A, C, Y, W-135) is available. These four groups cause the majority of meningococcal cases in the United States. This 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%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

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

*Seek prompt medical attention.*

### **How is bacterial meningitis diagnosed?**

The diagnosis is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood. Spinal fluid is obtained by a lumbar puncture (spinal tap).

### **For more information**

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

## **Pest Control**

Periodically, district buildings and grounds are treated by licensed or trained individuals to control unwanted pests, such as insects and rodents. We will post notices of those treatment dates as required by law and will schedule treatment times when students or employees are least likely to be in the building or on the grounds.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, is designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations.



# General Information

## 2016-2017 School Calendar

Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity							2016-2017 Academic Calendar																																																																																																																															
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<b>Student Holidays</b> Labor Day: Sept. 5 Columbus Day: Oct. 10 Thanksgiving: Nov. 23-25 Winter Break: Dec. 19-Jan. 3 M.L. King: Jan. 16 President's Day: Feb. 20 Spring Break: Mar. 13-17 STAAR Training Holiday: Mar. 24 Spring Holiday: Apr. 14 Early Dismissal Days (Dismissal at 1:00 pm): Sep. 28, Nov. 4, Dec. 16, Feb. 15, Apr. 7, May 24							<b>Legend</b> Student Holiday: [Grey Box] Reporting Period Begins: [Green Box] Reporting Period Ends (Early Dismissal @ 1:00): [Red Box] STAAR Testing Dates: [Star] TELPAS Testing Dates: [Yellow Box] STAAR Alt Testing Dates: [Star with 'A']																																																																																																																															
<b>Calendar Details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All instructional days not noted as an exception start at 8:00 am and end at 3:00 pm.</li> <li>Instructional days = 186 (450 Min * 166 = 74,700 Minutes)</li> <li>Instructional days noted as early release start at 8:00 am and end at 1:00 pm.</li> <li>Early Release days = 6 (200 min * 6 = 1,200 minutes)</li> <li>Total Instructional Minutes: (74,700 + 1,200 = 75,900 min)</li> <li>There are 2 bad weather days built into the calendar to cover unexpected weather occurrences.</li> </ul>							<b>Designated Party Days</b> Nov 22; Field Day: May 24																																																																																																																															

## **Student's Legal Name**

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

## **Admission, Release, Withdrawal**

These are the basic requirements for admission to district schools:

Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity is an open enrollment public charter school. It is open to all eligible students on a space available basis and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, income, or disability. As a public school, we comply with state and federal regulations

All students currently enrolled at the Charter School will maintain their enrollment status if an application is turned in by the deadline of March 31, 2013

Priority will be given to siblings upon initial enrollment only. The purpose of allowing siblings priority is to reduce the incident of family members having to attend different schools. However, if a parent decides not to enroll a sibling of a current student, or withdraws a sibling of a current student, the sibling priority is forfeited.

Students residing within the approved geographical boundaries of the Charter School are eligible to enroll in the Charter on a first come, first served basis until the cap of 500 students is reached.

Within the open enrollment period, offers of admission will be made in the following order for each grade level:

1. Returning students and siblings
2. New students residing within the geographical boundaries of the Charter

If there are more applicants than the number of spaces available for grade level, spaces remaining in each such class after the students who were registered during pre-enrollment will be awarded on the basis of first come first served.



## **Enrollment Procedures**

Admission to the Charter School is open to all eligible students on a space available basis and does not discriminate in its admission policy or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, proficiency in English, race, color, or religion. Once a student is offered enrollment, parents/guardians must complete the enrollment packet and necessary registration forms. Parents/Guardians will be notified as to when enrollment will be held at the respective campus.

To be eligible the student must provide:

- Proof of residence
- Proof of age (birth certificate required)
- Immunization records

As a part of the enrollment packet, parents/guardians must complete the following:

- Student Registration form
- Health History
- Student Pick-Up form
- Application for Free and Reduced Lunch Program
- Home Language Survey
- Internet Permission Form
- Student Residency Questionnaire
- Family Survey

Students under the age of 18 must be enrolled by a parent, legal guardian, or adult who has accepted a Power of Attorney from the child's parent or legal guardian or who is a grandparent, adult aunt or uncle, or adult sibling who has accepted responsibility for the child by an Authorization Agreement in compliance with Texas Family Code § 34.002. Students who are 18 or older, who are legally married, or who have ever been legally married, and who have not graduated from high school can enroll themselves.

The adult enrolling the student must present current immunization records or show proof that the required immunizations have been begun.

## **Grounds for Denial of Admission**

Subject to the school's responsibilities under applicable federal, state and local laws, the following will constitute ground for denial of admission to the school:

- Failure to meet age requirement.
- Having been expelled from any school district the preceding twelve months.
- Having engaged in behavior in another school during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.'
- An applicant who is not a Texas resident, unless otherwise entitled to attend, is not eligible.
- Failure to comply with the immunization provisions. (Families who choose not to immunize their children must file an affidavit signed by parents/guardians choosing the exemption for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief annually.)
- Falsification of application or enrollment documents.

We do not admit underage students to school. Your child must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year to be admitted to kindergarten. To be admitted to first grade, your child must be 6 years old on or before September 1 of the current year or must have completed kindergarten, or been enrolled in first grade, in the public schools of another state.

The application for admission and enrollment forms are official government records, and it is a crime to provide false information of any kind or false records for identification.

At the time of enrollment, we will request that you disclose whether your child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy (including the food to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction) that, in your judgment, should be disclosed so that district officials may take necessary precautions regarding the child's safety. This information is confidential and will be disclosed only to those employees who need the information to appropriately care for your child.

## **Release During the School Day**

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

At the time children are enrolled, the parent or other adult completing the enrollment forms should list those people who are authorized to pick up children

during the school day. Unless the principal has a current court order signed by a judge, showing an official file stamp with the court, and indicating that a parent's right of access to and possession of his or her children has been limited in some way, the principal will release children to either parent.

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

## **Withdrawing from School**

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

Students who are age 18 or older, who are legally married, or who have ever been legally married are adults and can withdraw themselves from school.

## **Attendance Requirements**

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

A student who voluntarily remains enrolled after the age of 18 is required to attend school. If an 18-year-old student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, we may revoke his or her enrollment for the rest of the school year. If we revoke enrollment, the student will be treated as an unauthorized person and may be arrested for trespassing if he or she comes on school property. A student who is at least 18 years old and under the age of 21 will be required to attend school until the end of the school year.

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

School officials aggressively enforce the state compulsory attendance laws. If your child is absent from school on 10 or more days or partial days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, you, as parent or guardian, will be prosecuted for contributing to truancy and your child, if age 12 or older, will be prosecuted for failure to attend school.

You will be notified when your child has three unexcused absences within a four-week period or less to advise you that you must monitor your child's attendance, to inform you that you may be prosecuted, and to request a conference to discuss the absences. Every day that a child is out of school in violation of compulsory attendance laws is a separate offense. You may be assessed a fine for each offense and may also be ordered to participate in a class designed to help you make sure your child attends school as required.

If a student who is at least 18 years old and younger than 21 fails to attend school, the District will pursue legal action against the student for failure to attend school. We will not ordinarily send warning notices to parents under these circumstances. Parents of these older students will not be referred for prosecution for contributing to truancy.

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

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

Although students who are married are legally adults, this fact does not mean that they are not legally required to attend school until they are age 18. We have the authority to file charges directly against students who are married, have not graduated from high school, and do not attend school. We will work aggressively with local authorities to make sure that all students who are within compulsory attendance requirements come to school.

**Doctor and Dental Appointments:** Absences for appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, physical therapists, and other health care professionals will be classified as excused absences if the student returns to school on the same day as the appointment and presents a note from the health care provider stating the time of the appointment and the time the student left the doctor's office. If the appointment is at the end of the school day and the student has been at school all day up to that time, the absence will be excused if the student brings a note from the health care provider the following day. These excused absences include those for a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to attend appointments with health care practitioners to receive a generally recognized service for persons with that diagnosis, such as applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

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

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

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

**Citizenship/Naturalization Activities:** Absences for appearing at a government office to complete citizenship application paperwork and for taking part in a United States naturalization oath ceremony will be excused upon verification of the student's participation.

## **Attendance and Credit**

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

Students who are in attendance in a class at least 75% of the days but less than 90% are eligible to receive credit if they complete a plan approved by the principal providing for the student to meet the instructional requirements for the class.

In the 2016-17 school year, we require students to be in class for 80 days in the Fall Semester and 100 days in the Spring Semester to meet the 90% attendance for credit requirements. Each campus has an attendance committee that will review student attendance records. If the committee decides that extenuating circumstances prevented a student from meeting the minimum attendance for credit standard or fulfilling the principal's plan for meeting instructional requirements, the committee can award credit or tell the student what additional work, additional time, or both time and work must be completed in order for the student to get credit for the grade level or course. Some campuses offer a Saturday school program as one way students can make up time and ordinarily will charge a fee for participating in that program. If your child needs this program, the principal will provide complete information about the times and cost before your child is assigned.

You will be notified when your child is in danger of losing credit because of absences and will have the chance to meet with the attendance committee to discuss your child's situation.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

Along with this Student Handbook, your child has also received a copy of the Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity Charter Student Code of Conduct. The

Code of Conduct contains the school district’s requirements for student conduct and behavior while at school or under the school’s jurisdiction. The Code of Conduct also explains the kinds of disciplinary action school officials can take in response to violations of the rules for student conduct and the steps involved in taking disciplinary action. If you have any questions about conduct or discipline rules, please refer to the Code of Conduct or call your child’s principal.

## Dress and Grooming Code

We expect students to come to school in clothes that are clean and neat, and we expect students to exhibit basic cleanliness and grooming that will not be a health or safety threat to themselves or to other students or staff. We do not permit students to wear clothing with pictures, emblems, or writing that is lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene or that advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance that students are prohibited from having or using at school. The principal makes decisions about dress and grooming violations. Specific campus rules regarding school uniforms take precedence over the dress code rules and policies.

<p>APPROPRIATE ATTIRE</p>	<p>Male students must wear clean clothing (shirt, slacks, jeans, trousers, “shorts”) that is not torn or damaged. Female students must wear clean clothing (dress, blouse, shirt, skirt, slacks, jeans) that is not torn or damaged. Pants must be worn with the waist at waist level, and shirts or blouses must be buttoned. All students must wear shoes and appropriate undergarments.</p>
<p>APPROPRIATE GROOMING</p>	<p>All students will exemplify grooming standards that project a positive image for the student, school, and District. Hair must be clean and neatly groomed and worn in a style that does not cover the eyes or eyebrows.</p> <p>Male students’ hair must be neatly trimmed and worn in a style above the eye brows that exposes the earlobes and has a length above the top of the collar of a button-up shirt or crew-neck tee-shirt. Male students must be clean-shaven. Sideburns may extend no lower than the bottom of the ear and must be trimmed in a straight line without flares at the bottom.</p>
<p>INAPPROPRIATE GROOMING</p>	<p>The following hair styles or colorings are inappropriate grooming for any student at school or a school-related or – sanctioned activity:</p> <p>Spikes or other sculptured hair styles.</p> <p>Neon or other hair colorings or bleaching, whether permanent or temporary, in a shade or tone that the principal determines to be unnatural, such as neon orange, neon pink, magenta, any shade of blue, any shade of green, violet, purple, white.</p> <p>Hair coloring or bleaching for the purpose of creating extreme</p>

<p>INAPPROPRIATE OR UNACCEPTABLE ATTIRE</p>	<p>differences in color, shade, or tone between sections of individual strands of hair or areas of hair on the head.</p> <p>Hair coloring or bleaching for the purpose of creating extreme differences in color, shade, or tone between the student's natural and original hair color and the colored or bleached color, shade, or tone.</p> <p>Patterns or designs shaved or cut into the hair, e.g., "mohawks," partially shaved heads, etc.</p> <p>The following clothing and accessories are inappropriate attire for any student at school or a school-related or –sanctioned activity:</p> <p>Shorts or skirts shorter than the length of all fingertips, unless the student is in a primary grade (K-3).</p> <p>Pants worn below the natural waistline or sagging, bagging, or extremely loose pants.</p> <p>Shirts or blouses that reveal undergarments or cleavage, midriff length tops that leave exposed skin, or halter tops.</p> <p>Exposed undergarments.</p> <p>Bedtime attire, pajamas, undershirts, or undergarments worn as outerwear, e.g., boxer shorts.</p> <p>Clothing made of any see-through material, fish net, or very loosely-woven fabric, unless other clothing is worn underneath.</p> <p>Shirts or blouses that are split up the side such that the vent or split is unfinished or extends above the natural waistline.</p> <p>Unhemmed or cut-off clothing of any kind.</p> <p>Muscle shirts, shirts with oversized armholes, or backless shirts, blouses, or tops.</p> <p>Any clothing made of Spandex or similar body-hugging fabric or material.</p> <p>Thongs, slippers, or house shoes.</p> <p>Sunglasses, hats, or caps worn inside a school building.</p> <p>Hair rollers, hair curlers, plastic hair bags, and other similar grooming items worn inside a school building.</p>
<p>CLOTHING WITH WORDS OR PICTURES</p>	<p>Clothing worn at school or school-related or-sanctioned activities may not display printed statements or pictures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that are vulgar or obscene;</li> <li>2. that are related to or depict sexual activity;</li> <li>3. that promote hate or violence in general or are directed at any specific person or group of persons; or</li> <li>4. that are related to or depict the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.</li> </ol>
<p>JEWELRY, TATTOOS,</p>	<p>Students may not wear on the outside of their clothing any</p>

BODY PIERCING	<p>jewelry or similar artifacts that are obscene or distracting or that are likely to cause disruption to the educational environment.</p> <p>Students may not wear facial jewelry of any kind, other than nondistracting earrings worn on the earlobe. Male students may not wear earrings at all.</p> <p>Any body piercings or tattoos, including temporary tattoos, must be covered at all times while students are under the school's jurisdiction.</p>
GANG ATTIRE AND GROOMING	<p>Clothing, grooming, or any attire that identifies or connects a student with a gang [There is a definition in the S&amp;E Code of Conduct.] is prohibited. The principal will maintain and regularly update a list of clothing, grooming, and other attire that has been identified as gang-related and will make the list available to teachers and parents for review.</p>
PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY	<p>The principal will determine if clothing or attire not addressed in this policy creates a distraction to the educational process and may prohibit that clothing or attire for his or her campus. Administrators have the discretion to determine the appropriateness of dress and grooming and to make special exceptions, including for religious or medical necessities.</p>

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

## **Harassment or Bullying of Students**

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

If you or your child have a complaint about sexual comments, conduct, contact, or any other inappropriate conduct by a school employee or about any other kind of harassment or bullying, do not hesitate to contact the Title IX coordinator whose name appears at the beginning of this Handbook regarding sexual harassment or the Superintendent regarding any other harassment or bullying. We will listen to



your concern and conduct a prompt investigation, if warranted based on the allegations. We also will look into reports that other students have been making sexual or other harassing comments to or engaging in bullying or sexual or other inappropriate conduct or contact with your child at school or school activities and take appropriate disciplinary action according to the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

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

Copies of the complete policies and procedures addressing prohibited bullying, harassment or retaliation and the process for making reports or complaints related to alleged harassment or retaliation is included in the appendix of this handbook.

H.B. 1942, effective in part with the 2015-16 school year, requires that the "policy and necessary procedures" related to the prohibited bullying conduct, retaliation, counseling options, and so on, be published in the Student Handbook annually
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## **Searches of Students, and Vehicles on School Property**

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

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

We periodically bring in trained dogs to sniff around vehicles parked on school property or within 300 feet of school property. If the trained dog alerts to a vehicle, that alert provides a reasonable basis to search the car. We will always ask the student for permission to search when a dog alerts or we have any reasonable basis, such as a reliable tip, to search the vehicle. If the student does not consent, we will ordinarily contact a parent and local law enforcement and turn the matter over to the police. Because students are responsible for any contraband that is found in a vehicle they have parked on school property and will be disciplined accordingly, they should be aware of and very careful about what goes on in any vehicle they drive to school.

## **Questioning Students at School**

As school officials, we have the right to question your child about his or her own conduct at school and, in the investigation of alleged misconduct by other students or employees, to question him or her about the conduct of others. We expect students to cooperate in this process, and the refusal to cooperate will be treated as insubordination and disciplined accordingly. We will not ordinarily contact you before questioning your child about his or her own conduct or about the conduct of other students or employees, but certainly will contact you as provided in the Student Code of Conduct if our investigation shows that your child has violated school conduct rules.

The Code of Conduct provides a complete explanation of the discipline processes and when you will be contacted. Our investigation of possible violations of the Code of Conduct is not a criminal proceeding, and there is no such thing as “taking the Fifth” or a student’s right not to incriminate him or herself in a school discipline investigation.

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

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

## **Pledges, Minute of Silence, Prayer, and Meditation**

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

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

# CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS

## General Curriculum Information

The Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity Charter School operates a program that meets all state curriculum requirements. The Bryan campus, located in Bryan, serves Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Tidwell campus serves Pre-K through 8<sup>h</sup> grade students in the Houston area, and the Pinemont campus serves PK through kindergarten students in the Houston area. Pre-kindergarten and Kinder grade levels are arranged in full-day programs.

## Structured Physical Activity

In accordance with state law, we have the following policies in place to ensure that all students in elementary school, middle school, and junior high school engage in the amount and level of physical activity required by the State Board of Education:

The School offers classes to students to meet physical education requirements for all grades. For additional information on the requirements and programs regarding physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-8 during the Fall and the Spring. 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 assessments conducted during the school year.

The district will ensure that students in all day pre-kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day or 135 minutes per week.

## Special Programs

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

**Special Education:** The Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity provides special education and related services for students with disabilities according to individualized plans developed by teachers, parents, counselors, and other professionals. You may request an evaluation of your child to determine eligibility for special education at any time. We decide whether a student needs special education after we complete a comprehensive assessment. Please

contact your principal to receive full information about our special education programs. See also the required Notice at the beginning of this Handbook.

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

**Dual Language Education/English Language Learners:** English is the basic language of instruction in our schools. Children who have limited English-speaking skills will have access to programs to help them learn to understand, speak, read, and write the English language. At the time you enroll your children for the first time, you will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey so we know whether to take additional steps to be sure your child is properly served.

## Testing and Assessment Programs

Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity conducts in-house pre and post testing of achievement for purposes of placement, of instructional interventions, and to establish base-line data to determine gain scores each six weeks;

In addition, BSIC is required to participate in the statewide assessment program. As this program is in transition, students and parents will be informed of changes in the program affecting them as those changes are implemented. The current transition will eliminate TAKS for high school students and implement instead a state-developed end-of-course examination in core curriculum courses. Students in grades 3-8 will now be assessed using the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness ("STAAR").

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

As required by state law, we will annually assess the physical fitness of students in grades 3-8. You may request the results for your child in writing at the end of the school year.

## Grading and Report Cards

Teachers establish their grading standards, including penalties for late work, but those standards must be consistent with guidelines approved by the campus principal. If you have a question about a grade your child receives on an assignment, you should talk first with the teacher. An exam or course grade issued by the

teachers is final and will not be changed unless we determine that it was arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with the grading standards and policy.

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each grading period. If your child is having trouble in a class, the teacher may ask you to schedule a conference. We encourage you to attend those conferences. If your child's performance in language arts, math, science, or social studies is consistently unsatisfactory, you will receive grade reports every three weeks.

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

## Grading Policies

In order for a student to be promoted to the next grade level they must meet each of the criteria outlined below.

- Student must pass 75% of all classes taken during the school year. For example, if a student takes 12 classes per year (6 per semester) they would need to pass at least 9 of those classes in order to be promoted.
- Students must pass both semesters of at least three of their core classes (math, English, reading, science, and social studies)
- Student must pass STAAR tests with a score of "Satisfactory" OR meet the "Progress Measure" requirements
- Students must meet attendance requirements (see page 21)

Letter grades are assigned as indicated below:

100-93	A
92-85	B
84-77	C
76-70	D
69 and below	F

## Promotion, Retention, Award of Credit

Students are promoted from grade to grade, or awarded credit for a course, based on their mastery of the knowledge and skills that will let them be successful at the next grade level. If enrolled in high school courses, middle students may receive credit for a course when they have met all the state and local requirements for that credit.

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

Implications of not passing the State assessments will be communicated to the parents as current policies and guidelines are finalized by the State.

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 test 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 teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will identify the student's educational goals and address the parent's educational expectations for the student and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. For additional information, see the Campus Principal.

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, or special education director.

### **Educational Technology and Acceptable Use**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Student Internet Safety Policy Agreement**

You, our student, are being given access to the District's electronic communications system. Through this system, you will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people around the world through the Internet and other electronic information system/networks. You will have access to hundreds of databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world. With this educational opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read the School policy, administrative regulations and agreement form and ask questions if you need help in understanding them. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege of using this educational tool.

Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across areas of adult content and some material you (or your parents) might find objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access.

It will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use. The internet is to be used mainly for identified educational purposes. You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of the internet, and the District may suspend or revoke your access if you violate the rules.

### **Inappropriate Uses**

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Encrypting communications to avoid security review.

- Users shall not erase, copy, rename, or otherwise make unusable any files or programs that do not belong to them.
- Users shall not introduce any software, hardware, or make changes to the configuration of computers without the consent of the administration.
- Users shall not attempt to use any other person's network user account to gain access to the network.
- Users shall not share their network account information with others.
- BSIC equipment shall only be used for legitimate educational purposes, and authorized school business.
- Users shall not use BSIC equipment for illegal reproduction of copyrighted material or downloading or using copyrighted information without the permission from the copyright holder.
- Posting personal information about yourself or others (such as addresses and phone numbers).
- Users shall not write, produce, generate, copy, propagate, or attempt to introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or hinder the performance of any computers memory, file system, or software.
- Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system.
- User shall not tamper with the computers, networks, printers, or other associated technology equipment except as directed by the administration.
- Users shall not use computers to annoy, harass, or threaten others.
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Users shall not attempt to access or distribute any unacceptable, obscene, or objectionable information, language, or image from the Internet or any other source.
- Wasting school resources through the improper use of the computer system.
- Users shall not make any unauthorized attempt to bypass, disable, or circumvent any system designed to filter or block the content of any Internet resource.

### **Consequences for Inappropriate Use**

- Users may lose computer privileges, and or Internet access for a length of time to be determined by the BSIC administration.
- Revocation of the computer system account
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable laws.



## **OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO STUDENTS**

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We offer a variety of school-related extracurricular activities and encourage students to participate in those that are of interest to them.

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

### **Student Publications/Distribution of Materials**

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

### **Parking/Driving at School**

Students driving cars to school are subject to all state and local traffic laws and regulations while they are on school property and must practice courteous and safe driving habits around school. The principal will establish student parking areas, and students must park only in those designated areas. Students may apply for a parking permit by submitting a copy of a valid driver's license, proof of financial responsibility. Cars parked in unauthorized areas will be towed away at the owner's expense.

# OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO PARENTS

## Parent Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to:

- Insure that their child regularly attends school
- Work with teachers to assist their child in obtaining the best possible education
- Monitor your child's assignments, grades, and conduct reports weekly via Parent Portal
- Attend parental involvement activities
- Maintain health insurance for their child

## Parent Rights

**Academic Programs:** You can ask the principal to change your child's teacher or class assignment; however, the principal is not required to make the reassignment and will not do so ordinarily if that change would affect the assignment or reassignment of another student.

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

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

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

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

**Records and Other Information:** As we stated in the "Required Notices" section of this Handbook, you have a right of access to all written educational records that we maintain concerning your child. You also can receive full information about any and all school activities in which your child is involved. However, as we explained in the section on "Questioning Students at School," we

must comply with a request or directive from a Child Protective Services investigator regarding contact with or information to parents about an investigation.

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

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

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

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

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

## Visiting School

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

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

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

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

## **Complaint Process**

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

In general, all parent complaints should be brought initially to the teacher involved or the campus principal within two to five business days of the events or situation that you are concerned about. Often the problem can be resolved through an informal conference with the teacher or principal.

On those occasions when a conference does not take care of problem, you should request a copy of the complaint policy and complaint form from the principal's office. In order for your concern to be resolved at the earliest possible level, you must put your complaint in writing on the form provided before meeting formally with the principal.

The principal will schedule a conference with you and give you a written response within ten business days after the conference. You will also have an opportunity for a conference with the superintendent if the principal has not resolved the matter. If the superintendent is not able to take care of the problem, you can make a written request for the Board of Trustees to consider the matter at a future meeting. You must, however, follow our established policies and use our forms.

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

## **Student Health Concerns**

We have adopted and enforce policies to ensure that our campuses comply with Texas Department of Agriculture guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines containing foods of minimal nutritional value. Generally, this means that soft drinks and other foods of minimal nutritional value will not be available to elementary students during the school day or to secondary students during any designated meal periods.

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

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

Students with diagnosed food allergy that places them at risk for anaphylaxis (student onset, whole body reaction to an allergen that can involve closing of airways, hives, swelling, irregular heartbeat, wheezing, and other symptoms) shall be cared for in accordance with guidelines developed by the commissioner of state health services in consultation with an appointed ad hoc committee.

## **Student Illness or Injury at School**

We will promptly attempt to notify you or a person you have authorized us to notify if we have knowledge that your child has been injured at school or has become ill at school.

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

**school-related activity. We cannot and will not use public funds to pay individual student medical expenses.**

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

## **Administering Medicine at School**

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

Children with asthma or children with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis will be allowed to carry and self-administer their prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medicine under certain conditions. However, you must provide us a written authorization for self-administration and a written statement from child's doctor that the student has asthma and is capable of self-administration and that includes the name and purpose of the medicine, the prescribed dosage, the times and circumstances for administration, and the period for which the medicine is prescribed.

If your child has unique medical conditions or any other condition that requires virtually immediate administration of medications under specified conditions, please contact the principal, who will schedule a meeting of appropriate personnel to discuss how the child's need will be met.

If your child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that, in your judgment, would require immediate medical attention if the student were exposed to the allergen, we will ask you to disclose that information, including the food to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction, at enrollment so that we may take necessary precautions for the child's safety. The information provided is confidential and will be disclosed only to those employees who need the information in order to appropriately care for your child.

## **Lost, Damaged, or Stolen Personal Items**

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

Each campus maintains a “Lost and Found” in the administrative offices; clothing and other items that are turned in as “lost” and not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated to a local charity.

## **Telephone or Electronic Device Use**

School telephones are for school business use. Students will be permitted to use school telephones only for emergencies and only with permission. If you call for your child during the school day, **we will take a message** and deliver it to the student at the end of the class period or other time that will least interfere with instruction. The Student Code of Conduct does not allow students to carry cellular phones or other electronic devices. Improper use of a cellular phone or other electronic device during the school day will result in the item’s being confiscated. The district is not responsible for any loss or theft.

Violation of the above policy will result in:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning, Confiscation Device Until End of Day, Parent Contact
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Warning, Confiscation Device Until End of Day, Parent Contact, Parental Pickup of Device Required
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Warning, 24 Hour Confiscation of Device, Parent Contact, Parental Pickup of Device Required
- 4<sup>th</sup> + Offense: Warning, 24 Hour Confiscation of Device, Parent Contact, Parental Pickup of Device Required, \$15.00 fee

## **Parent Organizations/Volunteer Opportunities**

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

We encourage parents to volunteer in our schools. All volunteers must complete an application form, and the district will obtain a Criminal History Report on all applicants for volunteer programs.

## **Transportation Program**

If transportation is provided for your campus, students are required to comply with rules for conduct on school buses and to comply with the Student Code of Conduct while at authorized school bus stops waiting for the bus. Students who misbehave or violate the Code of Conduct while on the bus will be disciplined according to the Code of Conduct and may be suspended from the bus for a period of time.

## **Authorized Fees**

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

- a fee to cover the cost of materials when the student makes, builds, or prepares some product that becomes the student's personal property.
- dues for voluntary student organizations and clubs and admission fees to voluntary extracurricular activities.
- security deposits for materials, supplies, or materials that must be returned to the district.
- a fee for lost student identification cards.
- a reasonable fee for transporting a student to and from school if the student is not an eligible rider and the district does not receive any state funds for a transportation allotment.

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

## **Food Service/Free and Reduced-Price Food Program**

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

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

Students pay in advance for their meals either with cash or check. We do not have a policy for student's charging their meals. Our schools participate in the federal Child Nutrition Programs, which provide free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs to students based on family income levels.



We maintain strict confidentiality as to whether students participate in the program. If you would like more information about the program or an application, please contact the Director of Food Services.

## **Safety**

The Brazos School for Inquiry & Creativity has adopted a multi-hazard Emergency Operation Plan based on recommendations from an Emergency Operations Planning Team made up of professional and paraprofessional staff members of the district. Our major goal of the plan is to have a contingency for any possible major events including those caused by nature or man-made. 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 safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

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

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

Fire Drill, Bells Fire Alarm/Verbal, ----leave the building halt at least 50 feet away from building; stand at attention. Walkie System/Verbal- return to the classroom.

Tornado Drill, Bells Walkie System/Verbal --- walk calmly into the hallway nearest the classroom, face the wall and kneel, place arms behind heads, place heads close to the floor. Walkie System/Verbal- return to the classroom

Lockdown Procedures --- follow the direction of your supervisor when a lockdown occurs.

## **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school will need to have written parental

consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, 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**

If the school were to have an emergency situation, school phone lines will be needed by school personnel. School Reach system is in place so the Brazos School for Inquiry and Creativity will automatically reach parents via cell phones, land-lines, and registered e-mails.

Parents are urged to refrain from calling the school. Incoming calls tie up the schools' lines and then the staff is unable to make necessary calls to handle the emergency. Please refrain from calling your student by cell phone. If the emergency were a bomb threat, the use of cell phones can activate the bomb. The school will release information per Brazos School for Inquiry & Creativity District Administration to:

BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION AREA: KBTX (CBS) TV, AGGIE 96 Radio;

HOUSTON AREA: KTRK (ABC), KHOU (CBS), KLXN, UNIVISION

Parents who want to check out their students should report to the office. Students with vehicles will be released at their regularly scheduled time if the emergency situation allows it. In some situations, students may not be allowed to move their vehicles until the emergency is over.