

# La Vega ISD

## ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK



2017-2018

### LA VEGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

4400 HARRISON, WACO TX 76705

254-799-6229

### LA VEGA ELEMENTARY

3100 WHEELER, WACO, TX 76705

254-799-1721

### LA VEGA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

#### H.P. MILES CAMPUS

4201 Williams Road, WACO, TX 76705

254-799-5553

*La Vega ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing educational services, activities, and programs.*



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

## *Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook Electronic Distribution*

Dear Student and Parent:

As required by state law, the board of trustees has officially adopted the Student Code of Conduct in order to promote a safe and orderly learning environment for every student.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it with your family. If you have any questions about the required conduct and consequences for misconduct, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher or appropriate campus administrator.

The student and parent should each sign this page in the space provided below, and then return the page to the student's school.

Thank you.

Dr. Sharon Shields, Superintendent

We acknowledge that we have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of the La Vega ISD Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook for the 2017-2018 school year or to electronically access them on the district's website at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>. We understand that students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Code.

We have chosen to:

- Receive a paper copy of the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook.
- Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Code of Conduct and the Student Handbook on the district's website.

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

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

Print name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this page, remove it, and return it to the student's school. Thank you.

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

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want La Vega ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing September 1, 2017.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. The district is providing you the following form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues.

The La Vega ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

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

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

**Parent, please circle one of the choices below:**

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (*student's name*), [**do give**] [**do not give**] the district permission to release the information in this list in response to a request.

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that if this form is not returned within the specified time frame above, the district will assume that permission has been granted for the release of this information.

## **PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS PAGE.**

### **LA VEGA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT/PARENT ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCE AGREEMENT**

Please read this document carefully. When this document is signed by the student and the parent, it becomes an agreement between the student, parent, and the District. The student's and parent's signature indicates agreement to abide by the conditions and guidelines established herein.

#### **Terms and Conditions of this Agreement**

These policies shall apply to:

1. Users of electronic information resources which are utilized with equipment located in the LVISD.
2. Users who obtain their access privileges through association with LVISD.
3. Electronic information resources include (but are not limited to) CD-ROMs, videodiscs, multimedia, on-line services, software, videocassettes and electronic mail.

#### **Personal Responsibility**

I agree to report misuse of the network to the Technology Department. Misuse can come in many forms, including but not limited to, sending or receiving material that exhibits or suggests pornography, unethical or illegal behavior; using racist, sexist or inappropriate language; or violating the guidelines set forth below.

#### **Acceptable Use Guidelines**

The use of electronic information resources must be in support of education, research and the educational goals and objectives of LVISD.

1. I will use electronic information resources for educational purposes only.
2. I agree not to submit, publish, display, or retrieve any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or illegal material.
3. I will abide by all copyright regulations.
4. I will not reveal home addresses or personal phone numbers of others.
5. I understand that electronic mail is not private.
6. I will not use the electronic information resources in any way that would disrupt use by others.
7. I understand that many services and products are available for a fee and acknowledge that I am responsible for any expenses incurred. Failure to pay for expenses may result in denial of my privileges.
8. I will not use the electronic information resources for any commercial purposes.

9. I will not attempt to harm, modify or destroy hardware or software, or interfere with system security.
10. I agree to accept financial responsibility for any intentional harm to the system.
11. I will abide by the regulations established by the District regarding use and access of the electronic information resources.
12. I will follow all rules of the LVISD Student Code of Conduct while using electronic information resources.

**Rights of the System Administrator**

1. LVISD reserves the right to log the use of all systems and monitor fileserver space utilization. Should it become necessary, files may be deleted.
2. The System Administrator may close an account at any time.
3. LVISD is not responsible for any service interruptions, changes, or consequences arising therefrom, even if these arise from circumstances under the control of the District.
4. LVISD makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied regarding use of the electronic information resources. Service is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. The District is not responsible (1)for the accuracy of information received.
5. LVISD reserves the right to establish such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the efficient operation of the electronic information systems.

**Consequences**

The use of the electronic information resources is a privilege, not a right; and may be revoked in accordance with Policy CQ (Local) and Policy CQ (Regulation). Infractions of the provisions set forth in this Electronic Information Resource Agreement or the policies and regulations established pursuant to the Agreement may result in suspension or termination of access privileges and/or appropriate disciplinary action. Additionally, activities in violation of state and federal statutes will be subject to prosecution by those authorities.

The user of electronic information resources agrees to accept full responsibility for his/her use and will hold the District harmless for any damages resulting from use of the resources, whether that injury or damage is to the user or to another person.

I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I have read, understand, and agree to abide by all of the provisions of the Electronic Information Resource Agreement.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or guardian of this child, I have read the Electronic Information Resource Agreement. I understand that access to electronic information resources is intended to be for educational purposes only and that students are required to refrain from sending or receiving illegal or offensive material. I also accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to use electronic information resources.

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# La Vega I.S.D.

## Elementary Student Handbook 2017-2018

This student handbook belongs to:

Name:

---

## Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	1
SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	2
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.....	2
Working Together.....	2
Parent Involvement Coordinator.....	3
PARENTAL RIGHTS .....	3
Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights.....	3
“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities .....	4
Inspecting Surveys.....	4
Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff.....	4
Reviewing Instructional Materials.....	4
Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work .....	4
Accessing Student Records.....	5
Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student.....	5
Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction .....	5
Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom .....	5
Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction.....	6
Removing a Student from Class for Tutoring or Test Preparation Purposes.....	6
Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags.....	7
Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence .....	7
Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media.....	7
Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct .....	7
Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment.....	8
School Safety Transfers .....	8
Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings.....	8
Parents of Students with Disabilities with Other School-Aged Children in the Home .....	9
Request for the Use of a Service/Assistance Animal.....	9
Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services.....	9
Students With Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504 .....	10
Parents of Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English .....	10
Accommodations for Children of Military Families .....	10
Student Records .....	10
Directory Information.....	12
Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education .....	13

SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS..	14
ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE .....	14
Compulsory Attendance.....	14
Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance .....	14
Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance .....	15
Attendance for Credit or Final Grade .....	16
Official Attendance-Taking Time.....	16
Documentation after an Absence .....	17
Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness.....	17
ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW .....	18
BEGINNING AND ENDING TIMES.....	18
CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR PHONE NUMBER .....	18
BULLYING.....	18
CELEBRATIONS.....	19
Deliveries .....	19
Food and Drinks .....	19
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN.....	20
COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS.....	21
CONDUCT.....	<b>Er</b>
<b>ror! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
Campus Behavior	
Coordinator.....	<b>Er</b>
<b>ror! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
Disruptions of School Operations.....	22
Social Events.....	23
Standards for Student Conduct.....	21
Levels of violations .....	23
Level 1 Violation .....	23
Level 2 Violation .....	27
Level 3 Violation .....	30
Criminal Justice System .....	33
Demerits .....	34
Detentions .....	35
Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) .....	35
Emergency Expulsion .....	36
Expulsion .....	37
Firearms .....	38

In-School Suspension .....	38
Alternative Meal for Students Placed in In-School Suspension .....	38
Removal By a Teacher (Discretionary-Formal) .....	39
Student Removal By a Teacher .....	40
Suspension .....	40
Violations of Law .....	41
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS .....	41
COUNSELING .....	422
Academic Counseling .....	422
Personal Counseling.....	422
Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment .....	432
CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course.....	432
CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course.....	433
DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION .....	443
Dating Violence .....	444
Discrimination.....	444
Harassment.....	444
Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment .....	454
Retaliation .....	455
Reporting Procedures.....	465
Investigation of Report .....	466
DISCRIMINATION .....	466
DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS .....	476
School Materials .....	476
Nonschool Materials...from students .....	476
Nonschool Materials...from others.....	477
DRESS AND GROOMING .....	47
ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES.....	49
Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones .....	50
Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices.....	50
Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices .....	50
Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources .....	50
Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources .....	511
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS .....	521
Standards of Behavior.....	522
Offices and Elections .....	532

FEES .....	532
FUND-RAISING .....	543
GANG-FREE ZONES .....	543
GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT .....	543
GRADING GUIDELINES .....	544
HARASSMENT .....	554
HAZING .....	555
HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS .....	555
Student Illness .....	555
Bacterial Meningitis .....	566
Food Allergies .....	587
Head Lice .....	588
Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School .....	588
School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) .....	598
Other Health-Related Matters .....	59
Physical Fitness Assessment .....	59
Vending Machines .....	59
Tobacco Prohibited .....	59
Asbestos Management Plan .....	59
Pest Management Plan .....	59
HOMELESS STUDENTS .....	60
HOMEWORK .....	60
ILLNESS .....	60
IMMUNIZATION .....	60
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES .....	61
Questioning of Students .....	61
Students Taken Into Custody .....	61
Notification of Law Violations .....	62
LEAVING CAMPUS .....	632
During Lunch .....	643
At Any Other Time During the School Day .....	643
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS .....	644
LOST AND FOUND .....	654
MAKEUP WORK .....	654
Makeup Work Because of Absence .....	654
DAEP Makeup Work .....	665
In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work .....	665

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL.....	665
Psychotropic Drugs.....	676
NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT.....	676
PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS.....	687
PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE.....	687
PRAYER.....	688
PROMOTION AND RETENTION.....	698
RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL.....	69
REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES.....	69
RETALIATION.....	70
SAFETY.....	70
Accident Insurance.....	70
Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies.....	70
Emergency Medical Treatment and Information.....	71
Emergency School-Closing Information.....	71
SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS.....	71
SCHEDULE CHANGES.....	71
SCHOOL FACILITIES.....	71
Use by Students Before and After School.....	71
Conduct Before and After School.....	732
Use of Hallways During Class Time.....	732
Cafeteria Services.....	732
Library.....	732
Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups.....	732
SEARCHES.....	732
Students' Desks and Lockers.....	733
Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices.....	743
Vehicles on Campus.....	743
Trained Dogs.....	743
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	743
SPECIAL PROGRAMS.....	744
STANDARDIZED TESTING.....	754
SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test).....	754
STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness).....	754
Grades 3–8.....	74
TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment.....	765
STEROIDS.....	765

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE .....	765
SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION.....	765
SUICIDE AWARENESS .....	766
SUMMER SCHOOL .....	776
TARDINESS.....	776
TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS .....	776
TRANSFERS .....	776
TRANSPORTATION.....	787
School-Sponsored Trips.....	787
Buses and Other School Vehicles .....	787
VANDALISM.....	798
VIDEO CAMERAS.....	798
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL .....	78
General Visitors .....	78
Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students.....	78
VOLUNTEERS .....	79
VOTER REGISTRATION .....	79
WELLNESS POLICY.....	79
WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL .....	79
Glossary .....	80
APPENDIX I: Freedom From Bullying Policy .....	83
APPENDIX II: Acknowledgment Form—Amendment .....	86

## **PREFACE**

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2017-2018! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

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

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**—with information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

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

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the La Vega Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found on the district’s website at [www.lavegaisd.org](http://www.lavegaisd.org) and is available in hard copy upon request.

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

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

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

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

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. The district's official policy manual is available for review at the administration building or on line at [www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/161906](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/161906).

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact your child's principal.

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section of the La Vega ISD Student Handbook includes information related to the rights and responsibilities of parents as specified in state or federal law and provides parental notices required by law.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

#### **Working Together**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 40.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 68.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 78
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB.

- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 57.]
- Serving on a committee to determine criteria to be used to evaluate the overall performance of the district and each campus in community and student engagement. For further information, please contact the campus principal.
- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

### **Parent Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Peggy Johnson and may be contacted at the administration building.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Inspecting Surveys**

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

## **Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff**

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

## **Reviewing Instructional Materials**

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

[Also see **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom** on page 5 and **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 6 for additional information.]

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

Teachers may display students’ work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students’ artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the district’s website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom website, and in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication

## **Accessing Student Records**

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

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

[See **Student Records** on page 10.]

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

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

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

## **Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction**

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

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

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further,

your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

### **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction**

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

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

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

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

The District's Health Education Advisory Council, representative of parents, teachers, and administrators from all LVISD schools, has reviewed all materials used in instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The committee, a majority of whom are parents, is charged with recommending appropriate materials, content and appropriate time to be spent in instruction on human sexuality and related subjects. The Board of Trustees adopts guidelines for the District's Health Curriculum.

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

### **Removing a Student from Class for Tutoring or Test Preparation Purposes**

Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student is in need of additional targeted assistance in order for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible. In accordance with state law and policy EC, the school will not remove a student from a regularly

scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent consents to this removal.

The school may also offer tutorial services, which students whose grades are below 70 will be required to attend.

Also refer to policies EC and EHBC, and contact your student's teacher with questions about any tutoring programs provided by the school.

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 66 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

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

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

### **Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media**

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

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

However, instant or text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity needs to communicate with a student participating in the extracurricular activity.

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

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

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

## **Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment**

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

- The student is told the reason for the corporal punishment.
- Corporal punishment may be administered only by the principal or assistant principal. The instrument to be used will be approved by the principal.
- Corporal punishment will be administered in the presence of one other District professional employee and out of view of other students.

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

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

## **School Safety Transfers**

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. [See **Bullying** on page 18, policy FDB, and policy FFI.]
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL).]
- Request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

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

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in

separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

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

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. However, the district is not required to provide transportation to the other children in the household. The parent or guardian should speak with the principal of the school regarding any transportation prior to requesting a transfer for any other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

### ***Request for the Use of a Service/Assistance Animal***

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Texas Project First, at <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org>

- Partners Resource Network, at <http://www.partnerstx.org>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is the school counselor.

### **Students With Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**

A child determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services, may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine if the child is in need of services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law.

The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is the school counselor.

[Also see policy FB.]

### **Parents of Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English**

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

### **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

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

### **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally

identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

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

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

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

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

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and

the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 68 and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 20 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district website at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>

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

**Please note:**

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

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

***Directory Information***

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

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

[See the "Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information" included in this handbook.]

The district has identified the following as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Photograph/videos of my child to be used in newspaper, newsletters, media sports, promotional and marketing materials, and publications (including the LVISD Internet Home Page)
- Date and place of birth
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

If you object to the release of the student information included on the directory information response form, your decision will also apply to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as the honor roll, school newspaper, the yearbook, recognition activities, news releases, and athletic programs.

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

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

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

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact your child's campus.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

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

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

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

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

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

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

#### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

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

- Religious holy days;

- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s arrival or return to campus; and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  - Mental health or therapy appointments; or
  - Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.

In addition, a junior or senior student’s absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided this has been authorized by the board under policy FEA(LOCAL), the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the district’s board of trustees has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences.

As listed in Section I at **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. Please see page 10 for that section.

An absence of a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district.

### **Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

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

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

- Is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent without excuse on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

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

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

[See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

### **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

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

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

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

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

### **Official Attendance-Taking Time**

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

Official attendance is taken every day at 10:00. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments after 10:00. Parents should notify the school by 8:45 each day their child is absent.

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

### **Documentation after an Absence**

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

### **Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than five consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

### **Beginning and Ending Times**

7:00 a.m. School building opens for early arrivals at La Vega Primary and La Vega Elementary

7:15 a.m. School building opens for early arrivals at La Vega Intermediate H.P. Miles Campus

**PLEASE NOTE** - The school is locked until designated opening times. **There is no supervision for children prior to designated opening times; therefore, it is not safe for students to arrive before this time.** Do not leave your children unattended before designated opening times.

7:30 a.m. Classes begin for La Vega Primary School

7:45 a.m. Classes begin for La Vega Elementary School

7:50 a.m. Classes begin for La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus

2:45p.m. Dismissal for La Vega Primary School

- 3:00 p.m. Dismissal for La Vega Elementary School  
3:05 p.m. Dismissal for La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus

### **Change of Address and/or Telephone Number**

Students who move must notify the school office of the new address and telephone number immediately. This new information is critical in order for the school to be able to contact the parent in case of an emergency.

Proof of residency is required for address changes.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW**

La Vega ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA;
- The performance ratings of the district's evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Information about all of these can be found on the district's website at [www.lavegaisd.org](http://www.lavegaisd.org). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at <http://www.texaschoolaccountabilitydashboard.org> and <http://www.tea.texas.gov>.

### **BULLYING**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [Also see **School Safety Transfers** on page 8.]

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

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

[Also see **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42, **School Safety Transfers** on page 8, **Hazing** on page 54, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## **CELEBRATIONS**

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for his or her birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.

Also see **Food Allergies** on page 56.

## **DELIVERIES TO STUDENTS**

No balloons, flowers, toys, or other similar items will be accepted for student delivery at school.

## **FOOD AND DRINK**

Food, drinks, water, and candy in inappropriate places can create unsanitary conditions and insect infestations. Food and drinks of any type are not permitted anywhere on campus except in areas and classrooms specifically designed for food and drink preparation and consumption. Food should not be kept in classrooms, lockers, or offices. Other areas may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the campus principal.

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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

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

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp).

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

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf>

- [http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child\\_abuse.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child_abuse.html)
- <http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>
- [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml)
- [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml)

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the TDFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal’s or superintendent’s office or on the district’s website at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>.

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

## **Student Code of Conduct**

### **Purpose**

The Student Code of Conduct (“Code”) is the district’s response to the requirements of Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

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

The law requires the district to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences including removal from a regular classroom or campus, out-of-school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), or expulsion from school.

This Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the La Vega ISD Board of Trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level committee. This Code provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline. It remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until an updated version adopted by the board becomes effective for the next school year.

In accordance with state law, the Code shall be posted at each school campus or shall be available for review at the office of the campus principal. Additionally, the Code shall be available at the office of the campus behavior coordinator and posted on the district’s website. Parents shall be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended,

placed in a DAEP or JJAEP, expelled, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under Chapter 37 of the Education Code.

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

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

### **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

As required by law, a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The designated person may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. The district maintains a current list of the persons serving as a campus behavior coordinator in the Student Handbook or on the district's website at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>.

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

The district has disciplinary authority over a student:

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

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

## **Disruptions of School Operations**

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

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

## **Social Events**

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

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

Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events.

## **STANDARDS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT**

Schools are places of learning. For individual students and schools as a whole to succeed, courtesy, respect, and diligence are essential and are required. In general, each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline. Attend all classes, regularly and on time.

- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class. Meet District and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students and of the teachers and other District staff. Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.
- Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline. Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

School rules and the authority of the District to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the District is involved on or off the

## **LEVELS OF INAPPROPRIATE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Inappropriate student behavior will fall into one of the following levels:

**LEVEL 1:** Includes lesser violations of the Student Code of Conduct, routine office referrals, removal by a teacher (discretionary-informal); and/or removal by a teacher (discretionary-formal).

**LEVEL 2:** Includes violations resulting in mandatory removal by a teacher, mandatory placement in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP), emergency placement in a disciplinary AEP, and/or emergency expulsion for a period not to exceed three (3) school days.

**LEVEL 3:** Includes violations resulting in expulsion and referral to authorized officer of the juvenile court.

Each of the levels is defined in the following pages. Information regarding the inappropriate behaviors that fall into each of the levels, **minimum** possible disciplinary consequences, duration of disciplinary consequence(s), procedural requirements, and any restrictions for extracurricular activities and/or school-related events are detailed for each level.

## **LEVEL 1 VIOLATIONS**

**Included lesser violation of the Student Code of Conduct, routine office referrals, removal by a teacher (discretionary-informal) and/or removal by a teacher (discretionary-formal)**

### **LEVEL 1 VIOLATIONS INCLUDE:**

- 1.1 Cheating or copying the work of another
- 1.2 Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
- 1.3 Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
- 1.4 Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or district employees (Police will be notified, and a citation may be given.)

- 1.5 Scuffling or fighting
- 1.6 Stealing from students, staff, or the school
- 1.7 Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others
- 1.8 Defacing or damaging school property – including textbooks, furniture, and other equipment – with graffiti or by other means
- 1.9 Possessing fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
- 1.10 Possessing or selling —look-alike weapons
- 1.11 Possessing air guns or BB guns
- 1.12 Possessing mace or pepper spray
- 1.13 Possessing or using articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists
- 1.14 Gambling
- 1.15 Making false threats, hoaxes, or accusations regarding school safety
- 1.16 Violating safety rules as communicated in the student handbook or campus or classroom rules
- 1.17 Disobeying school rules about conduct on buses
- 1.18 Hazing
- 1.19 Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel
- 1.20 Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person)
- 1.21 Forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force
- 1.22 Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft that does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code
- 1.23 Name-calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements that school officials have reason to believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
- 1.24 Engaging in any misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
- 1.25 Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact
- 1.26 Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors
- 1.27 Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student’s private body parts
- 1.28 Possessing or using matches or a lighter
- 1.29 Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products
- 1.30 Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs and contraband
- 1.31 Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance
- 1.32 Possessing a paging device or cellular telephone
- 1.33 Possessing or using a laser pointer for other than an approved use
- 1.34 Violating computer use policies, rules, agreements signed by the student, and/or agreements signed by the student’s parent or guardian
- 1.35 Using the Internet to threaten students, employees, or cause disruption to the educational program

- 1.36 Sending or posting messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
- 1.37 Engaging in verbal or written exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, school employee, or school property
- 1.38 Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or could threaten school safety
- 1.39 Possessing material that is pornographic
- 1.40 Violating dress or grooming standards as communicated in the student handbook or by sponsors of extracurricular activities
- 1.41 Violating extracurricular standards of behavior
- 1.42 Repeatedly violating other communicated campus or classroom standards of behavior
- 1.43 Repeatedly interfering with the teacher's ability to teach his/her class, as documented by the teacher\*
- 1.44 Behaving so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the teacher cannot teach his/her class, as documented by the teacher\*

#### **CONSEQUENCES FOR A LEVEL 1 VIOLATION INCLUDE:**

- Verbal Correction
- Cooling-off time or time-out
- Seating changes within the classroom
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, other school personnel, or administrative staff
- Parent-teacher conferences, telephone calls, and/or letters
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
- Grade reduction as permitted by Policy EIA(LOCAL)
- In school/on campus suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Behavioral contracts
- Disciplinary referral to the principal/assistant principal
- Detentions
- Assigned school duties other than class tasks
- Removal to an assigned area
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extra-curricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior
- Withdrawal or restriction of bus privileges
- School-assessed and school-administered probation
- Corporal punishment in accordance with Policy FO (LOCAL)
- Referral to an outside agency and/or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the District
- Placement in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)

The discipline management techniques outlined above may be used—alone or in combination—for misbehavior violating campus or classroom rules that may not be violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **DURATION OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES --- FOR A LEVEL 1 VIOLATION**

The duration of the disciplinary consequence for a Level 1 violation will be determined by the principal or other appropriate administrator with the following exceptions:

- A student shall not be placed in in-school/on-campus suspension for a period longer than ten (10) days without review by the campus principal or other appropriate administrator.
- Out-of-school suspension shall be for a period no longer than three (3) school days per violation.
- A student who accumulates three (3) Level 1 violations, each of which result in a demerit being given, may be placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP).
- Placement in a disciplinary AEP shall not exceed 120 days, without prior review by the campus principal or other appropriate campus administrator.

### **PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEVEL 1 VIOLATION**

For each Level 1 violation, the teacher/district employee shall file a written report (not to exceed one page) to the principal or other appropriate administrator. Within 24 hours of receiving the teacher's/district employee's written report, the principal or other appropriate administrator must send a copy to the student's parent.

Additionally, the student will be advised of the conduct with which he or she is charged; and will be given an opportunity to explain his/her version of the violation.

### **RESTRICTIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL-RELATED EVENTS FOR A LEVEL 1 VIOLATION**

The following restrictions for participation in any school-sponsored or school related extracurricular or non-curricular activity, including sports events and seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations apply for a Level 1 violation:

- Students who are suspended (in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension) as a result of a Level 1 violation shall not participate in extracurricular activities or school-related events during the period of suspension.
- Students who have received one (1) Level 1 violation resulting in a demerit being issued shall be placed on probation in all organizations and extracurricular activities for six (6) weeks from the date the demerit was issued.
- Students who have received two (2) or more Level 1 violations resulting in two (2) or more demerits being issued shall be automatically placed on suspension in all

organizations and extracurricular activities for six (6) weeks from the date the second demerit was issued.

- Students who are placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP) shall be automatically placed on suspension in all organizations and extracurricular activities for the duration of the disciplinary AEP placement or for a minimum of six (6) weeks.

## **LEVEL 2 VIOLATIONS**

**Includes violations resulting in mandatory removal by a teacher, mandatory placement in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP); emergency placement in a disciplinary AEP; and/or emergency expulsion for a period not to exceed three (3) school days.**

### **LEVEL 2 VIOLATIONS INCLUDE:**

2.1 Assault that causes bodily injury if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.2 Terroristic threat if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.3 Selling, giving, or delivering, possessing or using or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance; or a dangerous drug that does not constitute a felony offense, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.4 Selling, giving, or delivering an alcoholic beverage; committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, if punishment is less than a felony offense, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.5 Possessing, using, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, if punishment is less than a felony offense, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.6 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of an offense related to abusable glue or aerosol paint or relating to volatile chemicals, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.7 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.8 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of the offense of indecent exposure, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a

school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.9 Exhibiting behavior that is a felony, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.10 Retaliating against any school employee, when not combined with another offense, either on or off school property, if committed on school property, or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property

2.11 Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and that injures a person in a way listed as a Title 5 offense (includes murder; kidnapping; sexual assault; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; and tampering with a consumer product) in the Texas Penal Code and the student receives deferred prosecution

2.12 Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and that injures a person in a way listed as a Title 5 offense in the Texas Penal Code and a court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct

2.13 Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and that injures a person in a way listed as a Title 5 offense in the Texas Penal Code and the Superintendent or designee has reasonable belief that the student has engaged in the conduct.

2.14 Engaging in expellable conduct, if the student is between six and ten years of age

2.15 Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony, other than those listed as offenses involving injury to a person in Title 5 of the Texas Penal Code, that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, and for which the Superintendent or designee has reasonable belief that the student's presence in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will hinder the education of students

2.16 Being involved in gang activity, including participating as a member, pledge, or soliciting another person to become a pledge or member of a gang

2.17 Being involved in a public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society, whether it be as a member, pledge, or soliciting another person to become a pledge or member of a public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society

2.18 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of criminal mischief if punishable as a felony, whether on or off school property, or at a school-related activity

2.19 Exhibiting serious and persistent behavior, that is behavior that is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that a teacher cannot teach; maintain order and discipline; or provide for the safety of the other students

2.20 Displaying or inappropriately using a knife (including a pocket knife) with a blade less than 5 1/2 inches

2.21 Pulling a fire alarm

2.22 Possessing razors, switchblades, box cutters, chains, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person

2.23 Making bomb threats

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR A LEVEL 2 VIOLATION INCLUDE:**

- Demerit(s)
- Placement in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP)
- Emergency expulsion for a period not to exceed three (3) school days

State law mandates that students be placed in the disciplinary AEP for violations 2.1 through 2.14 as specified above. Additionally, the District has designated violations 2.15 through 2.23 as violations that require mandatory disciplinary AEP placement.

## **DURATION OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES FOR A LEVEL 2 VIOLATION**

The duration of the disciplinary consequence for a Level 2 violation will be determined by the principal or other appropriate administrator with the following exceptions:

- Placement in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program (AEP) shall not extend beyond the end of the next grading period without prior review by the campus principal or other appropriate administrator. [TEC §37.009(b)]
- Placement in a disciplinary AEP shall not exceed 120 days, without prior review by the campus principal or other appropriate campus administrator.
- Emergency expulsion shall not exceed a period of three (3) school days.

## **PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEVEL 2 VIOLATION**

For each Level 2 violation, the teacher/district employee shall file a written report (not to exceed one page) to the principal or other appropriate administrator. Within 24 hours of receiving the teacher's/district employee's written report, the principal or other appropriate administrator must send a copy to the student's parent.

The principal or other appropriate administrator will schedule a conference within three (3) days with the student's parent or guardian, and the student. The student may not be returned to his/her regular classroom before the conference.

At the conference, the student is entitled to written or verbal notice of the reasons for the removal, an explanation of the basis for the removal, and an opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.

Following the conference, whether or not each requested person attended, the principal shall order the placement of the student according to the Student Code of Conduct. Parents will be notified in writing upon the placement of a student in a disciplinary AEP.

## **RESTRICTIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL- RELATED EVENTS FOR A LEVEL 2 VIOLATION**

The following restrictions for extracurricular activities and school-related events apply for a Level 2 violation:

- Students who are placed in a disciplinary AEP or who are emergency expelled as a result of a Level 2 violation shall be automatically removed from all organizations and extracurricular activities and shall be banned from all school-sponsored activities for the duration of the disciplinary AEP placement or for a minimum of six (6) weeks from the date of the Level 2 violation.

## **LEVEL 3 VIOLATIONS**

**Includes violations resulting in expulsion and referral to authorized officer of the juvenile court**

### **LEVEL 3 VIOLATIONS INCLUDE:**

- 3.1 Using, exhibiting, or possessing a firearm, according to federal law
- 3.2 Using, exhibiting, or possessing a firearm, as defined by the Texas Penal Code §46.01(3)
- 3.3 Using, exhibiting, or possessing an illegal knife (such as a knife with a blade over 5 1/2 inches) according to the Texas Penal Code §46.01(6)
- 3.4 Using, exhibiting, or possessing a hand instrument, designed to cut or stab another by being thrown; dagger, including but not limited to a dirk, stiletto, and poniard; bowie knife; sword, or spear
- 3.5 Using, exhibiting, or possessing a club according to the Texas Penal Code §46.01(1)
- 3.6 Using, exhibiting, or possessing a prohibited weapon, such as an explosive weapon; a machine gun; a short-barrel firearm; a firearm silencer; a switchblade knife; knuckles; armor-piercing ammunition; a chemical dispensing device; or a zip gun, according to the Texas Penal Code §46.05
- 3.7 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault according to the Texas Penal Code §22.02, §22.011, and §22.021, respectively
- 3.8 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of arson according to the Texas Penal Code §28.02
- 3.9 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder according to the Texas Penal Code §19.02, §19.03, and §15.01, respectively
- 3.10 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of indecency with a child according to the Texas Penal Code §21.11
- 3.11 Exhibiting behavior that contains the elements of aggravated kidnapping according to the Texas Penal Code §20.04
- 3.12 Exhibiting behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering

to another person; possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug or alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol [TEC §37.007(a)(3)]

3.13 Retaliation against a school employee and one of the above listed offenses on or off school property or at a school-related activity [TEC §37.007(a)(3)(c)]

3.14 Exhibiting serious or persistent misbehavior and, while being placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program, continues to violate the District's Student Code of Conduct. Serious misbehavior is defined as behavior that is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that a teacher cannot teach; maintain order and discipline; or provide for the safety of the other students. Persistent misbehavior is defined as two or more violations of the code of conduct in general or repeated occurrences of the same violation [TEC §37.007(a)(3)(b)]

3.15 Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or is under the influence of any amount of marijuana or a controlled substance in an amount not constituting a felony offense [TEC §37.007(b)] if the student has previously been placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program for a prior offense of the same nature

3.16 Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or is under the influence of any amount of a dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense [TEC §37.007(b)] if the student has previously been placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program for a prior offense of the same nature

3.17 Selling, giving, or delivering to another person an alcoholic beverage; committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possessing, using, or is under the influence of alcohol, if punishment is less than that of a felony [TEC §37.007(b)] if the student has previously been placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program for a prior offense of the same nature

3.18 Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable glue or aerosol paint or relating to volatile chemicals [TEC §37.007(b)] if the student has previously been placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program for a prior offense of the same nature.

3.19 Engages in criminal mischief (damage to property in excess of \$1500) if punishable as a felony, whether committed on or off school property or at a school-related event

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR A LEVEL 3 VIOLATION INCLUDE:**

- Demerit(s)
- Expulsion for students ten years of age and older (If a student under ten engages in expellable conduct, the student **must** be placed in a disciplinary Alternative Education Program.)
- Report filed with local law enforcement
- Referral to authorized officer of the juvenile court

## **DURATION OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES FOR A LEVEL 3 VIOLATION**

The duration of the disciplinary consequence for a Level 3 violation will be determined by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, in accordance with District Policy FOD (LEGAL). If the student is expelled, the duration of the expulsion shall be determined by an officer of the juvenile court.

Any student ten years of age or over and who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law 18 U.S.C. §921, to any District school, shall be expelled for a period of one (1) year. The Superintendent may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's exclusion from the regular school program.

## **PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A LEVEL 3 VIOLATION**

For each Level 3 violation, the teacher/district employee shall file a written report (not to exceed one page) to the principal or other appropriate administrator. Within 24 hours of receiving the teacher's/district employee's written report, the principal or other appropriate administrator must send a copy to the student's parent.

According to District Policy FOD (LEGAL) and TEC §37.009(f), before a student may be expelled, the student shall be provided a hearing at which time the following due process rights are afforded:

1. Prior written notice of the charges and the proposed sanctions so as to afford a reasonable opportunity for preparation, including a written invitation to the student's parent to attend the expulsion hearing.
2. Right to a full and fair hearing before the Board or its designee.
3. An adult representative or legal counsel, who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the District.
4. Opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in his/her defense.
5. Opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration and to question the administration's witnesses.

If the District makes a good-faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place of the hearing, the District may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent, or another adult representing the student attends

## **RESTRICTIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL- RELATED EVENTS FOR A LEVEL 3 VIOLATION**

Students who are expelled as a result of a Level 3 violation shall not participate in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored or school-related events for the duration of the expulsion. Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds during the period of expulsion.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE LA VEGA I.S.D.**

Relationship of Criminal Justice System and the School District: The school district may place a student in the AEP regardless of any action or lack of action taken by the criminal justice system. However, in some circumstances, the district may re-assess the punishment based on information from law enforcement authorities.

The juvenile court will notify the District, if:

1. Prosecution of the student's case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication, or deferred prosecution will be initiated; or,
2. The court or jury found the student not guilty or made a finding that the child did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

On receipt of the notice from the juvenile court mentioned above, the principal or other appropriate administrator would review the placement in the disciplinary AEP. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review. The principal or other appropriate administrator will schedule a review of the student's placement with the student's parent or guardian no later than the third day after the Superintendent or designee receives the notice from the juvenile court. This review will occur regardless whether the offense occurred at school or a school-related activity or outside of school.

**Does a student have to be arrested or convicted of a felony offense before the District can place the student in an AEP?** No. A student may be removed from class and placed in an AEP if the administration determines that the student committed an offense requiring AEP assignment. The district will send the required information about the removal to the juvenile authorities.

When the assignment is necessary because of CONDUCT UNRELATED TO SCHOOL, the removal is based on the administrator's reasonable belief that the student has committed a felony offense. If the out-of-school offense is a non-Title 5 felony, before the student is placed in the AEP, the administration must also determine that the continued presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.

In determining whether there is a reasonable belief that a student has engaged in conduct defined as a felony offense in the Penal Code, the administrator may consider all information available, including information furnished by law enforcement.

**What happens if the courts later say the student did not commit the offense or the student is not prosecuted for other reasons?** If, after the placement, the administration receives notice from an appropriate law enforcement agency that the student was found not guilty of the felony offense and the case was dismissed with prejudice, or that the student was not prosecuted and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication, or deferred prosecution was initiated, the administration will review the student's placement in the AEP. This review will occur regardless whether the offense occurred at school or a school-related activity or outside of school.

The student will remain in the AEP pending the review, which will take place within three class days of the administration's receiving the notice. The parents or guardian will be provided an opportunity for input. However, if after the review the administration believes that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers, the administration may continue the student's placement in the AEP.

If the student is not being prosecuted for the offense, but the school wants to continue the AEP placement, what rights of appeal does the student have? The student or the parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the administration to continue the student's placement in the AEP to the La Vega ISD Board of Trustees. The appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled board meeting, where the board will review the notice letter from law enforcement and receive information from the administration and the student or the student's parent or guardian. The decision of the Board of Trustees is appealable to the Commissioner of Education. The student remains in the AEP pending all appeals. Education Code 37.006; Board policy FOAB (LEGAL)

**This appeals process does not apply to placements resulting from offenses for which the state requires mandatory disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.**

## **DEMERITS**

Each campus has a Discipline Review Committee composed of professional staff members. The Discipline Review Committee reviews violations of the Student Code of Conduct and assigns the appropriate number of demerits based upon the violation.

The first demerit may be prevented or removed through student-initiated restitution. The type of restitution appropriate for the violation of conduct will be determined by the Discipline Review Committee or campus administrator.

The following restrictions for participation in any school-sponsored or school related extracurricular or noncurricular activity, including seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored

- Students who have received one (1) demerit shall be placed on probation in all organizations and extracurricular activities for six (6) weeks from the date the demerit was issued.
- Students who have received two (2) demerits shall be automatically placed on suspension in all organizations and extracurricular activities for six (6) weeks from the date the second demerit was issued.
- Students who have received three (3) or more demerits or who have been placed in a disciplinary AEP shall be automatically placed on suspension in all organizations and extracurricular activities for a minimum of six (6) weeks or for the duration of the disciplinary AEP placement, whichever is longer.

## **DETENTION**

Detention is used for minor classroom violations such as tardies, classroom misbehavior, or other violations as outlined by the teacher. Detention is served before or after school hours in the

teacher's classroom. A student's failure to serve detention may result in more severe consequences imposed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (DAEP)**

The Board has delegated the responsibility to the campus principal or other appropriate administrator the authority to remove a student to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Within three (3) school days of receiving the Student Code of Conduct Violation report, the principal or other appropriate administrator will schedule a conference with the student's parent, the student, and the teacher in the case of a teacher removal.

Until a conference can be held, the principal or other appropriate administrator may place the student in another appropriate classroom, in in-school/on-campus suspension, or in the DAEP. At the conference, the principal or other appropriate administrator will inform the student, verbally or in writing, of the allegations against him/her and the reasons for the placement. The student shall be given an opportunity to give his/her version of the incident. The principal or other appropriate administrator will inform the student of the consequences of the misbehavior and will determine the duration of a student's placement in DAEP. The District will **not** provide transportation for students in a DAEP for the duration of the disciplinary DAEP placement provided the student is in compliance with the Student Code of Conduct.

A student placed in a DAEP is **strictly prohibited** from attending or participating in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and noncurricular activities during the period of placement in DAEP. This prohibition includes seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.

A student removed to a DAEP during the school year will have an opportunity to complete a course needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements before the beginning of the next school year. The District may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The District will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the District.

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

Student and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student

A student placed in a DAEP will be provided a review of the student's placement, including academic status, by the principal or other appropriate administrator at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of high school students, the student's progress towards graduation and the student's graduation plan will also be reviewed. At the review, the student's parent or guardian will be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular

classroom or campus. The student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student without the teacher's consent.

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond the end of the school year, the principal or other appropriate administrator must determine that:

- The student's presence in the regular classroom or campus presents a danger of physical harm to students or others.
- The student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct.

DAEP is held at La Vega Learning Center on Ashleman Road. The hours may differ from the regular school day. Special transportation is provided.

## **EMERGENCY EXPULSION**

In an emergency, the principal or other appropriate administrator may order the immediate placement of a student into a DAEP, when the student is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the student's presence seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in a class, with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of school or a school-sponsored activity.

When an emergency placement occurs, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. Within a reasonable amount of time after the emergency placement, the student will be given appropriate due process required for placement in a DAEP. In an emergency situation, the campus principal or other appropriate administrator may place a student in a DAEP for a period not to exceed three (3) school days.

## **EXPULSION**

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

When a student under the age of ten (10) engages in behavior that is expellable behavior, the student will not be expelled, but will be placed in a District Alternative Education Program. Students under age six (6) will not be removed from class or placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. However, the Superintendent or other appropriate administrator may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis and/or the District may provide educational services to the expelled student in a DAEP. The District must provide educational services in the DAEP if the student is between six (6) and ten (10) years of age.

When a student commits a Level 3 (expellable) violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the Superintendent or designee will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time with the student's parent or guardian, the student, and the teacher if appropriate. The student's parent or guardian will be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the student may be placed in another appropriate classroom, in in-school/on-campus suspension, or in out-of-school suspension.

A student facing expulsion will be given appropriate due process as required by the federal Constitution. The student is entitled to:

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

The Board delegates to the Superintendent or designee the authority to expel students.

A student expelled by the Superintendent after the due process hearing may request that the Board review the expulsion decision. The student or parent must submit a written request to place the matter on the agenda of the next regular Board meeting to the Superintendent within ten (10) days after the receipt of the written decision.

The Board will review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting unless the parent requests in writing that the matter be held in open meeting. The Board may also hear a statement from the student or parent and from the Board's designee.

The Board will hear statements made by the parties at the review and will base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. The Board shall make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation.

Not later than the second business day after the expulsion hearing, the Board's designee will deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the order expelling the student and information required by the Family Code §52.04. A student may appeal the expulsion order to the Board of Trustees in accordance with Policy FNG (LOCAL). The duration of the student's expulsion will be determined by the juvenile court on a case-by-case basis.

During the duration of the expulsion, the student will not earn any District academic credit unless the student is enrolled in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). Expelled students are strictly prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

The District will not accept any student expelled from another district during the period of the expulsion order.

## **FIREARMS**

1. A firearm, as defined by federal law, includes
2. Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or which may readily be converted to expel a projective by the action of an explosive
3. The frame or receiver of any such weapon
4. Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon
5. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, or grenade

## **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

In-School Suspension (ISS) is used for minor violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The student is suspended from the regular classroom and placed in an alternative setting for a period not to exceed ten (10) days as determined by the administration or discipline committee. During the period of placement in ISS, the student continues in the regular courses of study. Students shall not participate in extra-curricular activities, UIL events, or other school related events on any day of assignment in ISS.

## **ALTERNATIVE MEAL FOR STUDENTS PLACED IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

The following administrative procedure was reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees on October 21, 2003 for immediate implementation. The procedure authorizes the use of an alternative meal for students assigned to either of the above noted disciplinary programs rather than offering the full meal item selections that are offered the other students for any given school day.

The meal plan will require that the alternative meal comply with the National School Nutrition Program thus qualifying the district for the normal reimbursement applicable to the student's meal type. The components of the meal must qualify the meal as a Type A Lunch in order that the district may submit the meal(s) for reimbursement and collect the appropriate meal price from the student/parent/guardian.

The option to offer a more restrictive lunch alternative for the ISS or DAEP students shall remain the prerogative of the campus principal, which may vary based on food service operations, student supervision, age/grade levels of the campus, and other conditions. Any meal option selected for use with either ISS or DAEP students shall comply with the component requirements of the Type A Meal. The alternative meal plan for ISS/DAEP has been approved by the board of trustees' approval because it has financial ramifications as well as involving disciplinary issues.

The alternative meal served for students in ISS will generally be the same, while some adjustment may be made for students assigned to the McLennan County Challenge Academy (MCCA), since these students have longer placements/assignments as well as more strenuous physical activity. La Vega ISD DAEP students also serve longer assignments and may receive other alternative items, fewer restrictions, or full food service options etc., as appropriate at the discretion of the principal/director.

The Type A Alternative Meal shall be subject to adjustment as necessary by rule/regulation, but presently it shall include: one entree, two side items, and milk. Adjustments shall be authorized to accommodate food and or beverage allergies, however, any item substituted shall be in compliance with the Type A Alternative Meal requirements as described herein. In the event of a change in the National School Nutrition Program requirements for a Type A meal, this administrative procedure shall be deemed to have changed to comply with the revised Type A meal requirements effective of the date on which the new requirements become applicable.

Any student assigned to ISS or DAEP shall have the option to bring his/her own lunch and drink from home as long as the items brought in are otherwise legal and acceptable; however, the student must consume, retain the items for his/her own use, and may not give away, sell, swap, or otherwise allow any items included in their "brown bag" lunch to be made available to another student.

At the time of approval of this alternative meal plan the meal to be served that complies with the Class A Alternative Meal for ISS students, if selected by the principal, will be a cheese sandwich, fruit, juice, and milk. The meal will be transported to the ISS classroom, and the student (s) will eat their meal in the classroom.

Students assigned to ISS or DAEP shall be provided a meal in the event that the student or parent has not made arrangements for a "brown bag" lunch or meal money. The parent or guardian shall be notified, and the price of the meal shall be collected from the student/parent/guardian at the earliest possible date based upon the meal pricing guideline for which the student is eligible (full price, reduced price, or free). In the event that a parent/guardian refuses to provide for a lunch for the student, appropriate action shall be taken regarding the parent/guardian's refusal to provide for the welfare of the student. No student regardless of assignment will be refused a lunch.

### **REMOVAL BY A TEACHER (DISCRETIONARY - FORMAL)**

Formal removal will be initiated by a teacher for Level 1 Violations marked with an asterisk (\*). Any violation of 1.28 and/or 1.29 requires that the teacher report the offense to the principal or appropriate administrator. The principal or appropriate administrator will then send a copy of the report to the student's parent or guardian within 24 hours of receiving the report.

Within three (3) school days of receiving the Student Code of Conduct Violation Report, the principal will schedule a conference with the student's parent, the teacher, and the student. At the conference, the principal or appropriate administrator will inform the student of the misconduct for which he/she is charged and give the student an opportunity to give his/her version of the incident. The principal or appropriate administrator will notify the student of the consequences of the violation.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom for a 1.28 and/or 1.29 violation and a conference with the student's parent is pending, the principal may place the student in another appropriate classroom, in in-school/on-campus suspension, or the District Alternative Education Program (AEP). When a student has been formally removed from class by a teacher, the principal may not return the student to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent unless the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative available.

### **STUDENT REMOVAL BY A TEACHER**

A teacher may send a student to the principal's office to maintain effective discipline in the classroom. The principal shall respond by employing appropriate disciplinary consequences consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

A teacher may remove from a class a student:

- who has been documented by the teacher to repeatedly interfere with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn; or
- whose behavior the teacher determines is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn.

If a teacher removes a student from class for either of the two reasons above, the principal may place the student into another appropriate classroom, into in-school/on-campus suspension, or into an alternative education program. The principal may not return the student to that teacher's class without the teacher's consent unless the Placement Review Committee comprised of two teachers chosen to serve as members and one other professional staff member chosen by the principal, determines that such placement is the best or only alternative available. The campus faculty shall choose one teacher to serve as an alternate in the event that another member is not able to serve on the Placement Review Committee.

A teacher shall remove from class and send to the principal for placement in an alternative education program or for expulsion any student committing a Level 2 or a Level 3 violation. The student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent unless the Placement Review Committee determines that such placement is the best or only alternative available.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension includes both in-school suspension (ISS) and out-of school suspension. State law allows a student to be suspended for as many as three (3) school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

A student who is to be suspended will be given an informal conference by the principal or appropriate administrator advising the student of the conduct with which he/she is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain his/her version of the incident.

The number of days of a student's suspension, which cannot exceed three (3) school days, will be determined by the principal or other appropriate administrator.

Students who are suspended as a result of a Student Code of Conduct violation shall not participate in extracurricular activities or school-related events during the period of suspension and each full day in which a suspension occurs. If the suspension extends to the Monday following a weekend, students may not participate in extracurricular activities or school-related events during the weekend between two days of suspension.

## **VIOLATIONS OF LAW**

**Disruptive Activities** – State law prohibits a student from participation in disruptive activities. That includes acting alone or with others to:

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

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

**Gangs and Other Prohibited Organizations** – Under state law, a student is prohibited from membership or involvement in a public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang.

**Hazing Activities** – State law also prohibits a student from participating in any hazing activities. A student is guilty of hazing when he or she takes direct hazing action; encourages or assists someone else to take action; recklessly permits action; has knowledge of planned action or action that has occurred without reporting that knowledge in writing to a school official.

**Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Weapons** - Under state and federal law, a student is not allowed to possess, sell, give away, or use alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco products, guns, or other weapons on school property or at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property. Having one of these items in a privately owned vehicle that the student may have driven to school and parked on District property is also prohibited.

## **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS**

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

## **COUNSELING**

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission, financial aid, housing, and scholarships as these relate to state colleges and universities. The school counselor can also provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should contact the school counselor. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child’s mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

[Also see **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 74 and **Suicide Awareness** on page 75.]

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

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

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

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

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

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

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

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

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

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement, or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain exams, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2015–16 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district's website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any exams administered by another entity besides the district. In this case, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific exam only once.

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam, a scaled score of 60 or higher on an exam administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each exam in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and

social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [For further information, see policy EHDC.]

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

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office <http://www/lavegaisd.org> [See policy FFH.]

### **Dating Violence**

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

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

### **Discrimination**

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

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an

intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

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

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

### **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Retaliation**

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

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

## **Reporting Procedures**

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

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

The district will promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

## **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

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

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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

## **DISCRIMINATION**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42.]

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

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

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 12.]

### **Non-school Materials...from students**

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

The front office is designated as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

### **Non-school Materials...from others**

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

The front office is designated as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).

- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

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

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The district’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student’s personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

### **Standard Mode of Dress for La Vega Primary, Elementary and Intermediate School**

#### **Items permitted**

Slacks/Pants	Solid Colors – Khaki, Navy Blue, Black, Brown, White Pleated or Flat Front Capri or Cropped pants for females
Shorts	Solid Colors – Khaki, Navy Blue, Black, Brown, White Top of the knee or longer
<i>Skirts/Jumpers/Dresses</i>	<i>Solid Colors – Khaki, Navy Blue, Black, Brown, White</i> Top of the knee or longer, kick pleats or slits hemmed at or below the bend of the knee
Shirts/Blouses	Solid Colors only Must be collared polo dress shirt style Long or short sleeve and must be tucked in No more than two buttons undone Logo must be less than 1 inch high La Vega logo permitted on any day
Belts	If pants/slacks/shorts have belt loops, belt must be worn Must be black or brown or same color as pants/slacks
Foot wear	Shoes, Loafers, boots, dress shoes, closed toe sliders, sandals with a back strap. Athletic shoes as long as shoe laces match
Socks/Hose/Tights/Leggings	Colors – Khaki, Navy Blue, Black, Brown, White Solid single colors or design must match
Outerwear/Jackets/Sweaters	Solid Colors Preferred – approved dress code shirt must be worn

underneath. School letter jackets are acceptable. Must be fingertip length

Sweatshirts/Hoodies

Solid Color Only

Fingertip length or shorter

Hoodies must remain off the head at all times during school

**Each school may select one day a week designated as a Spirit Day where jeans may be worn. On these days, La Vega logo tops or college shirts may be worn as well as any other approved shirt/blouse**

### **Items NOT permitted**

Denim slacks/pants, shorts, or skirts

Overalls

Painter/Cargo pants, shorts or skirts

Pajama/sweat pants, shorts, skirts

Spandex/low rise/hip hugger pants, shorts, skirts

Gym/Cargo shorts

Cut-offs

Athletic Jerseys

Tank tops

Halter or tube tops

T-shirts – stripes, checks, lettering, wording or design

Chain Belts

Oversized belt buckles

Flip flops

House Shoes

Athletic Sandals

Bedroom Slippers

Shower Sandals

Heels higher than 3"

Mis-matched laces or socks

Leg Warmers

Leggings without an approved dress code dress, jumper or skirt over them

Knee length or longer jackets, dusters

Oversized sweatshirts

Hats/caps/do-rags/bandanas or sunglasses

In addition to the items above unacceptable dress and grooming include:

Tight or revealing clothes

Clothing with slits, tears, or holes

Exposed or frayed edges on clothing

Visible undergarments

Large or distracting jewelry (limited to ears)

Exposed Tattoos

- Chains (i.e on wallets, necklaces and waists)
- Sagging Pants
- Any hairstyle that is not neat, clean or well-groomed
- Any hairstyle that is distracting (Mohawks, stripes, or bright colors)
- Facial hair, goatees, chin whiskers or long side burns
- Skate shoes
- Make up that is distracting (black lipstick, heavy eyeliner)

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones**

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

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The parent/guardian may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 71 and policy FNF.]

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

### **Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices**

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 71 and policy FNF.]

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

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

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

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

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

### **Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

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

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

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

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [Also see **Transportation** on page 76.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at <https://www.uil texas.org/athletics/manuals>; a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of the Texas Education Agency at (512) 463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:curriculum@tea.state.tx.us).

[See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

In addition, the following provisions apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences from any class period during the year in order to participate in school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off campus. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### Standards of Behavior

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the

consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups** on page 71.]

## **Offices and Elections**

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. These groups include:

- Junior Police Academy
- Student Counsel

## **FEES**

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 76.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade

because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

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

## **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the Principal at least 10 days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

## **GANG-FREE ZONES**

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

## **GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42.]

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

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

Also see **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 68 for additional information on grading guidelines.

## **Students with Disabilities**

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

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

[See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed in the Minimum Program, if that program is applicable based on the school year in which the student entered high school, in accordance with state rules.

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

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services and who are subject to the foundation graduation program will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules.

## **HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42.]

## **HAZING**

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

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[Also see **Bullying** on page 18 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

## **HEALTH-ELATED MATTERS**

### **Accident Insurance**

Under state law, the District cannot pay for medical expenses associated with a student's injury. The District does make available, however, optional, low-cost accident insurance program for students to assist parents in meeting medical expenses. A parent who desires coverage for his

or her child will be responsible for paying insurance premiums and for submitting claims. For more information, contact Gail Souders at 799-4963.

### **Student Illness**

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

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

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

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

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

If a student should have 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.

Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies to medications, etc.) up-to-date: having current information will be of critical importance should an accident or injury occur that requires medical attention.

Parents must provide the school with names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least three persons whom the school can contact in case of an emergency when the parent cannot be reached. Should the emergency contact person change, parents should likewise notify the school office immediately.

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

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

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

- What are the symptoms?

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

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

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

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

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

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.\* The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office

to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

\* Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

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

## **Food Allergies**

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

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

Also see policy FFAF and **Celebrations** on page 19.

## **Head Lice**

Students identified with head lice may complete the school day and information addressing lice management and treatment will be sent home for the student and parent or legal guardian. The Texas Department of State Health Services as well as the National Association of School Nurses, the CDC, and other authoritative bodies urge school districts to not cause children to miss school unnecessarily or encourage the embarrassment and/or isolation of students who suffer from repeated head lice. Mass screenings for head lice are not done in school. They impede the educational process are not necessary. No disease is associated with head lice, and in-school transmission is considered to be low. When transmission occurs, it is generally found among young children with increased head-to-head contact. Head lice occurs worldwide and among all socioeconomic groups.

Children found or suspected of having head lice may remain in class, but are discouraged from close direct head contact with others. Children with suspected head lice are sent to the nurse for screening and nursing assessment in the privacy of the clinic. The nursing assessment includes

observation and inspection for signs or symptoms. If live lice are found, the nurse will contact the student's parent or guardian. Though a student may remain in class, students are required to be treated with an approved pediculocide shampoo (i.e. Rid or equivalent) as soon as possible. Untreated and/or repeated cases of severe lice infestations *may* result in exclusion, and determinations are at the discretion of the school nurse and campus administrators. Any student who is required to miss school due to untreated or severe lice infestations will receive an unexcused absence. It is important to treat students and infected family members as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary absences. It is important to follow the suggested guidelines as indicated below to help manage the instances of lice infestations.

- Remove as many nits as possible with a nit comb. Treat the child's hair with recommended pediculocide. Parents or legal guardian may choose to consult with their doctor or local pharmacist in choosing what product to use.
- After treatment has been administered, soak combs and brushes in the pediculocide for 1 hour or in 120 degree water for 5-10 minutes.
- Bedding should be washed in 120 degree water.
- Non-washable items may be dry cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks to kill any lice that are present or may hatch from nits present on the items.
- Furniture, carpets and mattresses should be vacuumed thoroughly and dispose of vacuum cleaner bag.
- Hair treatment should be repeated in 7 days or according to manufacturer's recommendation to ensure nits hatching later are killed before they lay eggs.

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

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

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

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

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the district website. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

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

[See **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 6 for additional information.]

## **Other Health-Related Matters**

### **Physical Fitness Assessment**

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

### **Vending Machines**

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

### **Tobacco Prohibited**

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

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

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district’s Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent’s office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district’s plan in more detail, please contact Mr. Lynn Roberts the district’s designated asbestos coordinator, at the maintenance building.

### **Pest Management Plan**

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

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application

inside their child's school assignment area may contact Mr. Lynn Roberts, the district's IPM coordinator, at the maintenance building.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Dr. Valerie Baxter at Central Administration Building.

## **HOMEWORK**

La Vega ISD supports the assignment of homework based on the following principles:

- Homework is a necessary part of the instructional process that begins in the classroom, extends into the home, and provides a way for parents to become aware of the instructional program and their child's educational program.
- Homework enriches and strengthens classroom experiences. New concepts are introduced in class -- not in homework assignments.
- Homework improves students' ability to work independently and become self-directed in the learning process.
- Homework provides opportunities for students to make independent and stimulating discoveries.
- Homework is not used as a disciplinary measure.
- Homework assignments can be completed in a reasonable time, taking into consideration other courses and activities.

## **IDENTIFICATION BADGES**

All students and employees of La Vega ISD shall be required to carry an identification badge daily at school. Students in grades pre-kindergarten through six will leave their badges at school and will be required to wear them as requested by their teacher, with the exception of students in grades four – six on Fridays to attend home football games. Students in grades six and under will not be permitted to attend school-sponsored or school-related activities that occur after regular school hours without an accompanying adult.

The first identification badge will be issued to students and employees at no cost. If the badge is lost or damaged, the replacement cost is \$1.00 for the first replacement and \$5.00 for each additional replacement.

## **ILLNESS**

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

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch,

can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

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

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

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

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the TDSHS website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **Questioning of Students**

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

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

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.

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

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

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

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

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

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

### **LEAVING CAMPUS**

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

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

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

### **During Lunch**

Students are not allowed to leave during the day for lunch.

### **At Any Other Time During the School Day**

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

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

### **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an English language learner (ELL) in certain state statutes and state rules, is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language

Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

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

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 75 may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I and II end-of-course (EOC) assessments. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

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

## **LOST AND FOUND**

A "lost and found" collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. The district discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **Makeup Work Because of Absence**

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

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws

surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 16.]

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

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

### **DAEP Makeup Work**

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

### **In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

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

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

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

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

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is capable of doing so.

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

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

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

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

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

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

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

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

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment:
  - Assistant Superintendent , 400 Loop 340, 799-4963
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Assistant Superintendent, 400 Loop 340, 799-4963
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the Superintendent

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

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS**

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district's athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program.

This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During the alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

Also see policy FFAA.

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 7.]

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

[See policy EC for more information.]

## **PRAYER**

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

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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

Kindergarten students shall be promoted to first grade if they have an average of N or above in language arts and mathematics, *and* have reached the level of —developed on six of the eight tasks assessed on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI).

At the request of a kindergarten student's parents or at the request of the school administrator, a grade placement committee shall be convened to consider extenuating factors and/or other data related to the promotion/retention of a student. The grade placement committee shall consist of the principal or designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the student's teacher.

In grades 1-6, promotion is based on student is promoted from one grade to the next on the basis of academic achievement. Students should have an overall average of 70 or above which is derived by averaging the final numerical grades for language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. In addition, a student should attain an average of 70 or above in the language arts and mathematics subject areas.

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

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

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

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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 73.]

Parents of a student at any grade level at or above grade 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams will be notified that their child will participate in special

instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

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

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

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

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

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

## **REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 2 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was

arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 53.]

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

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

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 3 days.

## **RETALIATION**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42.]

## **SAFETY**

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

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

### **Accident Insurance**

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

### **Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

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

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods,

insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

## **Emergency School-Closing Information**

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

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

- KCEN TV - Channel 6
- KWTX - TV - Channel 10, Radio 97.5 FM KXXV-
- TV - Channel 25
- WACO 100 FM Radio/1460 AM The
- Bear - Radio 102.5
- FM KCKR - Radio
- 95.7 FM
- School Messenger Notification by campus

## **SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS**

See **Standardized Testing** on page 73

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

#### **Use by Students Before and After School**

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

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

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

## **Conduct Before and After School**

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

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

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

## **Cafeteria Services**

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

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

## **Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the school day with a teacher permit.

## **Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups**

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

## **SEARCHES**

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

## **Students' Desks and Lockers**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

### **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

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

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

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

### **Vehicles on Campus**

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

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

### **Trained Dogs**

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

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 42]

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as

programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the campus principal.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

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

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Plan are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT. Beginning in April 2014, the ACT-Plan has been replaced by the ACT-Aspire, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the school counselor.

Note that participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her diploma and transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances.

### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)**

#### ***Grades 3–8***

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

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

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

STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services who meet certain state-established criteria, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

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

## **TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

## **STEROIDS**

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

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

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing.

More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL website at

<http://www.uil texas.org/health/steroid-information>.

## **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

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

A student who is placed in foster care and who is moved outside of the district's attendance boundaries is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. In addition, if a student in grade 11 or 12 is transferred to another district and does not meet the graduation requirements of the transferring district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

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

## **SUICIDE AWARENESS**

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access

<http://www.texasuicideprevention.org> or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

A student who attends an extended-year program must attend at least 90 percent of the program days and meet the academic proficiency standards of the course or grade level in order to be promoted. Information regarding the District's extended-year program can be obtained from your campus principal

## **TARDINESS**

Students are encouraged to plan and prepare so that they can avoid being tardy to class. Classroom instruction begins at

- 7:30 a.m. at La Vega Primary School
- 7:45 a.m. at La Vega Elementary School
- 7:50 a.m. at La Vega Intermediate School H.P. Miles Campus

Students shall be considered tardy at the following times 7:45 a.m. at La Vega Primary School and 8:00 a.m. at La Vega Elementary and Intermediate schools.

Parents of students who are repeatedly tardy for school will be contacted by the school.

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd tardy – parent contact by teacher
- 4th, 5th, 6th tardy – letter home from campus administrator
- 7th tardy – lunch detention

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

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

## **TRANSFERS**

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

[See **School Safety Transfers**, on page 8' **Bullying**, on page 18, and **Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services**, on page 9, for other transfer options.]

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

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

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

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

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Durham School Services at 799-1453

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

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

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

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

## **VANDALISM**

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

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

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

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

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

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

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

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

## **VOLUNTEERS**

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

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

The La Vega ISD Wellness Policy is available online at <http://www.lavegaisd.org>.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

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

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

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

## Glossary

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

**ACT-Aspire** refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

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

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

**Attendance review committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

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

**EOC assessments** are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These exams will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History.

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

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

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

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

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the

district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**PSAT** is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT.

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

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TSI assessment** is the Texas Success Initiative assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

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

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

## **APPENDIX I: Freedom From Bullying Policy**

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index861>. Below is the text of La Vega's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date that this handbook was finalized for this school year.

### **STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING FFI(LOCAL)**

Adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> of August, 2015.

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

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

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.  
Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

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

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee. A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form. The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct. The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying. If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action. The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying. 101

The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions. The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL). This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's Web site, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

**APPENDIX II: Acknowledgment Form—Amendment**

My child and I have received a copy of the La Vega ISD Student Handbook  
Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_.

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

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

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

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