TEKOA ACADEMY OF ACCELERATED STUDIES S.T.E.M SCHOOL STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

“Changing the Impossible to Im’Possible”

Please see student code of conduct as a supplement to this book.
Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at www.tekoacharterschool.org Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct for 2016-2017.

I have chosen to:

☐ Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

☐ Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct by visiting the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Code, I should direct those questions to the student services office at 409-985-4738.

Printed name of student: __________________________________________

Signature of student: ________________________________________________

Signature of parent: _________________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________
Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information

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

Certain information about school 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 Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the school in writing within ten school days of your child’s first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the school must give certain personal information (called “directory information”) about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the school in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the school that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific School-sponsored purposes. The school is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues.

For the following school-sponsored purposes, Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Honors and awards
- 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 the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

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

Parent signature __________________________________________ Date ______________________

For all other purposes, Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

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

Parent signature __________________________________________ Date ______________________
Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

Federal law requires that the school release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the school not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. See Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education for more information.

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

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

Parent signature _____________________________ Date ______________
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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2016-2017 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 Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—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 “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as an attachment to this handbook, posted on the school website at or available in the student service office.

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

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.

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

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form
3. Release of Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education Form; and
SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

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

• Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.

• Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.

• Becoming familiar with all of your child’s school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered at the school.

• Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.

• Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.

• Monitoring your child’s academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. See Academic Counseling and Academic Programs.

• Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, student services or principal, please call the school office at (409) 982-5400 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.

• Becoming a school volunteer. For further information, contact the Dean of Student Affairs.

• Participating in campus parent organizations.
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, anti-social, 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.

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

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

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

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.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

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

Displaying a Student’s Artwork and Projects

Teachers may display students’ work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. The school will seek parental consent before displaying students’ artwork,
special projects, photographs taken by students, and the like on the district’s Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

**Accessing Student Records**
You may review your child’s student records. These records include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

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 school 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.
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.

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, please contact the school nurse at 409-982-5400.

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

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

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the school 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 school must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the school receives the written consent. The school must give a copy of the report to the parent.

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Ms. Cindy Garriot.

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 school must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student
records, an “eligible” student are 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.

• School officials who have what federal law refers to as “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the school has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

“Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

• Various governmental agencies.

• Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

• A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

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

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the school will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The school address is: 326 Thomas Blvd, Port Arthur, Texas. Attention Student Services.

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 student services. 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 school denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student’s record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student’s grade in a course is handled through the principal office. 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 Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences and Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns for an overview of the process.

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.

**Directory Information**

The law permits the school 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 request must be made in writing to student services 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.

**Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

The school often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: sports programs, TCSA programs, school website information, and any other school related program.
For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the school would like to use your child’s name, address, photograph, date of birth, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of an athletic team. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at Directory Information.

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

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

The school 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 school not to release their child’s information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you **DO NOT** want the school to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.
SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the Dean of Student Affairs at 409-982-5400.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

Compulsory Attendance

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

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

Students enrolled in Pre-kindergarten or Kindergarten are required to attend school.

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

A student in grades 3–8 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 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; and
• Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.

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

**Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absents 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 from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
• Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the student is over age 18, the student’s parents will not be subject to penalties as a result of their child’s violation of state compulsory attendance law.

**Attendance for Credit**

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

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

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

• All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for 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 school. For a student transferring into the school after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.

• In reaching a decision about a student’s absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.

• The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student’s absences.

• The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student’s parent could exercise any control.

• The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

• The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

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

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

**Parent’s Note after an Absence**

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

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

Upon return to school, a student absents for more than three (3) consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school.

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.

**Driver License Attendance Verification**

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, the Texas Department of Public Safety must be provided written parental consent to access the student’s records for purposes of verifying 90 percent attendance for credit for the semester along with valid liability insurance coverage.

**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The school counselor provides students and parent’s information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.
AWARDS AND HONORS

The National Honor Society
The goals of the National Honor Society are to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and character. To be eligible for membership a student must:

1. Be a second semester sophomore or junior and have been in attendance of Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM for one semester
2. Have a cumulative scholastic average of a 93 or higher
3. Exhibit leadership, service, and character as completed on the application and documented by the faculty

National Honor Society members who fail to maintain the necessary scholastic average or fail to complete the mandatory service hours set may be dismissed from the organization. Suspension and behavior conflicts are grounds for dismissal.

BULLYING

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

If you believe that your child is being bullied at school, please make an appointment with the School Safety Coordinator. All incidents will be investigated.
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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

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

A child who has experienced sexual abuse 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 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, the campus 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_Jefferson/default.asp.

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

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index.aspx?id=2820
http://sapn.nonprofitoffice.com/
http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php
http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml
http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Reports may be made to: The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the Web at http://www.txabusehotline.org).
CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

Resident graduates enrolled at Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School for at least one full semester will be ranked. Transfer students must be enrolled for two full years to be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Grade point averages for class rank (including Valedictorian and Salutatorian) will be determined by dividing grade points earned each semester by the number of courses taken. The class rank used will be computed at the end of the fifth six-week grading period.

Individual honors will be as followed:

- Valedictorian – highest GPA
- Salutatorian – second highest GPA
- Honor Graduate – GPA greater than or equal to 90%

Middle School will use grades from both the 7th and 8th grade years to determine class rank.

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

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

CLASS SCHEDULES

Students have three (3) days from the date that school starts to request a schedule change. Schedule Change Forms can be found in the Attendance Office. Parent, teacher, counselor, and principal must approve the schedule change. See the counselor for more information concerning student schedules.

COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

Students in grades 11 and 12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Enrollment in a Dual Credit Course offered through Lamar State College Port Arthur
• Enrollment in an Advanced Placement Course

Both of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the counselor for more information.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Student/parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or student services. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the school safety coordinator will refer those cases to the principal.

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus school safety coordinator.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

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

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail and other electronic communications using school computers are not private and will be monitored by school staff. For additional information, please contact the school safety office.

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

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

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.
As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

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

**Telecommunications Devices, Electronic Devices and Cellular Telephones**

Students ARE Not permitted to possess items such as cellular phones, pagers, radios, CD players, MP3 players, iPods, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, hand held games, or similar electronic devices while at school, unless prior permission has been obtained by the principal. Without permission, the teacher will collect the item and turn it in to the principal’s office.

For safety purposes, the school permits students to possess cellular telephones ONLY during extracurricular activities. For all extracurricular activities cell phones must be placed in the student services office as soon as the student arrives on campus. Phones may be retrieved once they depart for the activity or when the sponsor/coach deems necessary. Cell phones may not be used before, during, or after school unless approved during the extracurricular activity.

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

A student who uses a telecommunications device during the school day will have the device confiscated.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICE VIOLATIONS**

1st Offense – Device held for 3 school days + $20 fine + parent pick-up

2nd Offense – Device held for 7 school days + $30 fine + parent pick-up

3rd Offense – Device held for 14 school days + $40 fine + parent pick-up

4th Offense – Same as 3rd offense + Mandatory Parent conference to discuss further disciplinary actions
Inappropriate Use of Technology

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules and dress code as students 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 only with a person noted on enrollment documents as a responsible party for picking up the student. Anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

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

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

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The school permits high school students to take correspondence courses—by credit by exam or via the Internet—for credit toward high school graduation. For further information, please see student services or the school counselor.

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

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

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

Student Services is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. Student Services may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with student services should sign in at the Attendance Office. The Student Services Coordinator will schedule an appointment and contact the student.

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.

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

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

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

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

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

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

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction.

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 70 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the counselor and student services within 160 days for the school year ending.
DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The school 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 school employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. School 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.

Dating Violence

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

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

Discrimination

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

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student’s academic performance. A copy of the district’s policy is available in the principal’s office and in the superintendent’s office or on the school website.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.
Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.
Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic or other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and school employees are prohibited, even if consensual.
Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.
Retaliation
Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a school investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.
Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student’s poor academic performance in the classroom.
Reporting Procedures
Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other school employee. The report may be made by the student’s parent.
Investigation of Report
To the extent possible, the school will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The school will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the school.
In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the school will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.
If the district’s investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The school may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.
A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal within 10 days after the investigation completion date.

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DISCRIMINATION
See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

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 principal, student services, 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.

Non-school Materials...from students
Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than ten copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any 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 principal has designated the Main Office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students.

Non-school Materials...from others
Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the school or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any school premises by any school employee or by persons or groups not associated with the school. 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 principal for prior review.

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

• No boy’s hair below the bottom of normal sports collar shirt or below the bottom of the ears on the sides or past the eyebrows in the front. Hair cannot be higher than 2 inches.
• No boy’s hair braided, tied or making a tail on any part of the head
• Sideburns may not extend past the bottom of the ear
• No facial hair
• Unnatural hair color is prohibited (red, blue, green, etc.)
• Hats, caps, or any other head coverings including hoodies are not allowed. There may be announced days that are part of special events when caps and hats are allowed. Overcoats will not be worn in the building.
• Earrings or any other object that holds a pierced ear open is prohibited for boys. Ear stretchers, barbells, spacers, plugs, etc. are not permitted for any student. Pierced eyebrows, tongues, navels,
noses, etc. are not permitted for either boys or girls.

- The wearing of shorts will not be allowed for students in grades 4th-12. Skirts and dresses are to be at a length not above the top of the kneecap.

- Flip-flops will not be allowed due to safety reasons. Students wearing flip-flops will not be admitted to their regular classes. Flip-flops are by design, a shoe that flops when you walk. Beach thongs, house shoes, athletic slippers or any other non-traditional footwear will not be allowed. Any shoe that is deemed unsafe will not be allowed.

- Boots or shoes with heels three (3) inches or higher are not permitted; platform shoes are not allowed.

- Sandals are not acceptable.

- Mouth grills of any kind are strictly prohibited.

- Jeans will not be allowed.

**No clothing not part of a uniform that:**

- Has large armholes, spaghetti straps, see through sections in the body or thigh are (such as a tank-tops or tops that are low-cut or short enough to expose the midriff). Midriff shirts may be worn as long as another full shirt is worn underneath. To keep confusion to a minimum, shirts should be long enough to cover the body. No halter, backless, or strapless tops/dresses are allowed. No low-cut shirts that reveal cleavage. These types of shirts cannot be worn and covered with a jacket.

- Is worn below the waist in a sagging fashion. Oversized pants/jeans will not be allowed. Pants will not drag the floor and belts must be in the belt loops at all times.

- Has chains attached to belt loops.

**No clothing, necklaces, or bracelets with emblems, pictures, symbols, or writing that:**

- Is offensive, vulgar, or obscene

- Advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other prohibited substance

If a student’s dress and grooming is objectionable under these provisions, the principal shall request the student make appropriate corrections. If the student refuses, the principal shall take disciplinary action and notify the student’s parents. If the correction is still not made, the student shall be removed from the regular class setting. Students who violate provisions of the dress code during an extracurricular activity may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period of time determined by the principal. Students are required to adhere to the dress code when they are on school property or in attendance at a school related event. The Principal shall have final discretion on deciding if there is a dress code violation. Anything that is considered a distraction may be deemed inappropriate and a violation.

Student dress code must be adhered to at in and out of school related events.

**Dress Code Consequences for Violations**

1st Offense – Corrective action

2nd Offense – Meeting with the principal

3rd Offense – Parent conference + Suspension

4th Offense-Expulsion

Violations are corrected by changing into school issued clothes; shaving as needed.
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of Texas Charter School Athletic Association—a statewide association overseeing charter school competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by TCSAA, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the organization/

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

• A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

• A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.

• An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.

• The School shall make no distinction between absences for TCSAA activities and absences for other extracurricular activities approved by the Board. The School shall permit unlimited absences for extracurricular activities.

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

Offices and Elections

The Student Council will be elected by the high school. School officers will consist of President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian. In addition, grades 9 -12 will elect a President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Class Representative to serve as officers. A student may hold only one (1) office.

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.

• Graduation Fees
• 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.
• Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

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 student services office.

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 student services and approved by the principal at least 14 days before the event.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits Earned</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grade 10 (Sophomore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Grade 11 (Junior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Grade 12 (Senior)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADING GUIDELINES
In grades, Pre-K–12, achievement is reported to parents as:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GRADUATION**

**Requirements for a Diploma**

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

- Complete the required number of credits;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Pass a statewide exit-level exam.

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

**Graduation Programs**

The school offers the graduation programs listed below.

Graduation Program Options to be Implemented Beginning in 2014-2015 3/1/2014 Discipline Foundation HSP *MHSP *RHSP *DAP

English Language Arts Four credits: • English I • English II • English III • An advanced English course Four credits: • English I • English II • English III • English IV or approved alternate course Four credits: • English I • English II • English III • English IV Four credits: • English I • English II • English IV Four credits: • English I • English II • English III • English IV

Mathematics Three credits: • Algebra I • Geometry • An advanced math course Three credits: • Algebra I • Geometry • SBOE approved math course Four credits: • Algebra I • Algebra II • Geometry • An additional math credit Four credits: • Algebra I • Algebra II • Geometry • An additional math credit

Science Three credits: • Biology • IPC or an advanced science course • An advanced science course Two credits: • Biology • IPC or Chemistry and Physics (one of the two serves as an academic elective) Four credits: • Biology • Chemistry • Physics • An additional science credit Four credits: • Biology • Chemistry • Physics • An additional science credit

Social Studies Three credits • U.S. History • U.S. Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit) • World History or World Geography Three credits: • U.S. History (one credit) • U.S.
Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit) • World History (one credit) or World Geography (one credit) Four credits: • U.S. History (one credit) • U.S. Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit) • World History (one credit) • World Geography (one credit) Four credits: • U.S. History (one credit) • U.S. Government (one-half credit) • Economics (one-half credit) • World History (one credit) • World Geography (one credit)

Physical Education One credit

Languages Other Than English Two credits in the same language Two credits from Computer Science I, II, and III (other substitutions) None Two credits in the same language Three credits in the same language

Fine Arts One credit

Speech Demonstrated proficiency in speech skills One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications • Professional Communications (CTE) One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications • Professional Communications (CTE) One-half credit from either of the following: • Communication Applications • Professional Communications (CTE) Electives Five credits Seven and one half credits (one must be an academic elective) Five and one-half credits Four and one-half credits

Total Credits Foundation

HSP 22
MHSP 22
RHSP 26
DAP 26

Certificates of Coursework Completion
A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

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

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

**Graduation Activities**

Graduation activities will include:

- Senior Trip
- Graduation/Commencement Ceremony

**Graduation Speakers**

Graduating students will be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Only those students who have been pre-approved by the principal will be eligible to give these remarks; however, if the student was assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester, he or she will not be eligible to speak at graduation.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered will be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks.

**Graduation Expenses**

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

**State Scholarships and Grants**

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

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

**HARASSMENT**

See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.

**HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

**Bacterial Meningitis**
State law specifically requires the school to provide the following information:

- **What is meningitis?**

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

- **What are the symptoms?**

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

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

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

- **How serious is bacterial meningitis?**

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

- **How is bacterial meningitis spread?**

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

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

- **How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

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

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

- **What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?**
You should seek prompt medical attention.

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

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School

The school will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

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

For additional information on the school requirements and programs regarding elementary, middle, and junior high school student physical activity requirements, please the curriculum coordinator.

Other Health-Related Matters

Physical Fitness Assessment

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

Vending Machines

The school has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines.

Tobacco Prohibited

The school and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities.

Asbestos Management Plan

The schools Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the main office. If you have any questions, please contact the school principal.

Pest Management Plan

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

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, at 409-985-4738.
HOMEWORK

All homework or class work must be turned in to the teacher. Students are responsible for obtaining all work and for seeing that the teacher receives the completed work. If the student does not return the assigned work the student will receive a zero.

IMMUNIZATION

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

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubella (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (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 Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

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

INTENSIVE CHARACTER UNIT

The Intensive Character Unit (ICU) is a program that will promote an increase in student behavioral management self-analysis. Students will continue to complete classroom assignments and must in addition, complete the program guidelines of behavior modification. Students will receive counseling from a mentor educator and will develop action steps that will change their negative classroom behavior. Prior to student assignment to the unit, the educator must have developed a classroom behavior management plan for the student and been unsuccessful with its implementation. The educator must also have collaborated with colleagues to develop the behavior management plan.

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 and school safety coordinator 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 school safety coordinator 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 school safety coordinator ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer rises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The school safety coordinator will be present unless the interviewer rises what the school safety coordinator considers to be a valid objection.

**Students Taken into Custody**

State law requires the school 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 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 rises 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 school is required by state law to notify:

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

**MAKEUP WORK**

If a student has an absence from school, that student will be allowed one day for each day absent to complete missed assignments. Example: if a student misses two days of school he/she will be allowed two days, from the day that they return, to complete the assignments.

Teachers may assign Academic Saturday School for make-up work at their discretion on a case-by-case basis.

Students failing to makeup unexcused days and assignments may endanger themselves of being promoted to the next grade.

**MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

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

- Only authorized employees 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 school employee from the original, properly labeled container.
  - Non-prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student’s individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

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

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

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

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

**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 school 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 school employee who is a licensed practical nurse registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional.

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

**Nontraditional Academic Programs**
See Requirements for a Diploma.

**Physical Examinations / Health Screenings**
See the school nurse for more information.

**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.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

**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. In grades 1 - 8 promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas, and a grade of 70 or above in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness STAAR or the STAAR/ E.O.C, 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, and/or STAAR E.O.C.

- 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 assessments in English.
- 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 assessments in English.

Parents of a student in grades 3–8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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, 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.

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 schools grading policy. See

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.

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 7 days.

RETTALIATION

See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.

SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the school. Although the school has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:
• Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or 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 school employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

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

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

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

**Emergency School-Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency.

Information can be seen on Channel 4, 6, and 12, and/or radio broadcast 102.5, 94.1. When possible, parents will receive a phone call via the automated phone system.

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

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

Use by Students Before and After School

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

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:15 a.m.

- Cafeteria – open to all students

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

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

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on school premises and at school-sponsored events off school 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 school participates in the 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. Contact the Food Service Coordinator at 409-985-4738.

The school follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day.

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 following times with a teacher permit:

- Monday – Friday 1:00pm-4:05pm
SEARCHES

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

Students’ Desks

Students’ desks 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.

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

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

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School
officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or
without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security
and content of his or her vehicle

and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others.

Trained Dogs

The school 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.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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

STEROIDS

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

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

Students participating in athletic competition may be subject to random steroid
testing.
STUDENT SPEAKERS
All student speakers must have prior approval from the principal.

SUMMER SCHOOL
Credit Recovery
At times there may be a student who did not successfully complete the required course during the school year. When this happens, the school will notify the parent so that plans can be made for recovering the needed credit(s).

New Credit
A student wishing to enroll in summer school, or any additional program, to earn new credit must receive prior approval from the principal.

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

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–11
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)
Beginning in spring 2014, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR program at grades 3–8 will assess the same subjects and grades that are currently assessed on TAKS. At high school, however, grade-specific assessments will be replaced with 12 end-of-course (EOC) assessments: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

The resources on this website provide information and sample test questions to familiarize Texas educators and the public with the design and format of the STAAR assessments. The information is intended to help educators understand how the new STAAR program measures the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards. These resources are intended to support, not narrow or replace, the teaching of the TEKS curriculum.
TARDINESS
A student who is tardy to class by more than 10 minutes will be assigned to detention hall. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT
State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. 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 paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks and equipment for use at school during the school day.

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

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

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent’s residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the school at (409) 982-5400

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

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

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

**VANDALISM**

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

**VIDEO CAMERAS**

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

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

**VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

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

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

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

**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 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.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Consequences Employee Use of Social Media

Then Board recognizes the importance of incorporating current technology tools, including new methods of electronic communication, into the classroom to enhance student learning. It further recognizes the importance of employees, students and parent engaging, learning, collaborating and sharing in digital environments as part of the 21st Century learning. The Board strives to ensure the electronic communication tools incorporated into the school curriculum are used responsibly and safely. As practicable, the Board will provide access to secure social media tools and Board approved technologies for use during instructional time and for school-sponsored activities in accordance the Tekoa Academy of Accelerated Studies STEM School policy.

The Board acknowledges that school employees may engage in the use of social media during their personal time. School employees who use social media for personal purposes must be mindful that they are responsible for their public conduct even when not acting in their capacities as SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYEES. All school employees, including student teachers and independent contractors shall comply with the requirements of this policy when using electronic social media for personal purposes.

For the purposes of this policy, “social media” includes, but is not limited to; electronic text communications, personal websites, web logs (blogs), wikis, social network sites, online forums, virtual worlds, video-sharing websites and any other social media generally available to the public or consumers that does not fall within the Board’s technologies network (e.g. Web2.0 tools, MySpace, Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube). In addition, this policy applies to any form of instant or direct messaging available through social media. Other forms of one-to-one electronic communications with students including voice, email, and text messaging are subject to the terms of this policy.

A. Social Media Communications Involving Students

Employees are to maintain professional relationships with students at all times in accordance with the Tekoa policy on use of social media. Staff in the school system must be school-related and within the scope of the employees’ professional responsibilities, unless otherwise authorized by this policy. School personnel may use only school-controlled technological resources and social media tools to communicate directly with students or to comment on student matters through use of the Internet. An employee seeking to utilize and/or establish a non-school-controlled social media website for instructional or other school-related purposes must have prior written approval from the superintendent or designees and principal.
and meet any applicable requirements of the social media policy.

The use of electronic media for communicating with students and parents is an extension of the employee’s workplace responsibilities. Accordingly, the Board expects employees to use professional judgment when using social media or other electronic communications.

Employees are prohibited from knowingly communicating with current students through a personal social network page. An Internet posting on a personal social media website intended for a particular student will be considered a form of direct communication with that student in violation of this policy. However; an employee may communicate with a student using social media networks to the extent the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee’s child, or member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, sport or religious organization.

B. Employee Personal Use of Social Media
The Board respects the right of the employees to use social media as a member of self-expression on their personal time. As a role models for the school system’s students however, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not performing their duties as employees of the school system. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of social media and other electronic communications as they are for any public conduct. Further, school employees remain subject to applicable state and federal laws, Board policies, administrative regulations and the Code of Ethics for Texas Educators, even if communicating with others concerning personal and private matters. If an employee’s use of social media interferes with the employee’s ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are responsible for the content of their social media sites, including content added by the employee, the employee’s friends or members of the public who can access the employee’s site, and for Web links on the employee’s site. Employees shall take reasonable precautions, such as using available security settings, to restrict students from viewing their personal information on social media websites and to prevent students from accessing materials that are not age-appropriate.

C. Any use of electronic social media by Employees during the school day must be limited and must not interfere with job duties. Any use of school system technological resources (including computers and cell phones) must be accordance with the Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Posting to Social Media Sites Employees who use social media for personal purposes must be aware that the content they post may be viewed by anyone, including student, parents, and community members. Employees shall observe the following principles when communicating through social media:
1. Employees shall not post confidential information about students, employees or school system business.

2. Employees shall not accept current students as “friends” of “followers” or otherwise connect with students on social media sites, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.

3. Employees shall not knowingly allow students access to their personal social media sites that discuss or portray sex, nudity, alcohol, or drug use or other behaviors associated with the employees’ private lives that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school.

4. Employees may not knowingly grant students access to any portions of their personal social media sites that are not accessible to the general public, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.

5. Employees shall be professional in all internet postings related to or referencing the school system, students and other employees.

6. Employees shall not use profane, pornographic, obscene, indecent, lewd, vulgar or sexually offensive language, pictures or graphics or other communication that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a substantial disruption to the school environment.

7. Employees shall not use the school system’s logo or other copyright material of the system without the express, written consent from the Board.

8. Employees shall not post identifiable images of a student or student’s family without permission from the student and the student’s parent or legal guardian.

9. Employees shall not use Internet Postings to libel or defame the Board, individual Board members, students or other school employees.

10. Employees shall not use Internet postings to harass, bully, or intimidate other employees or students in violation of Tekoa Academy’s Social Media Policy, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying, or state and federal laws.

11. Employees shall not post inappropriate content that negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs.
12. Employees shall not use Internet postings to engage in any other conduct that violates Board policy and administrative procedures or state and federal laws.

School system personnel shall monitor online activities of employees who access the Internet using school technological resources. Additionally, the superintendent or designee may periodically conduct public Internet searches to determine if an employee has engaged in conduct that violates this policy. Any employee who has been found by the superintendent to have violated this policy. Any employee who has been found by the Deputy Chief/Principal or designee to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to including dismissal.

The Chief Deputy/Principal/CEO & Founder shall establish and communicate to employee’s guidelines that are consistent with this policy.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STAAR- the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

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 the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student’s violation of one of its provisions.

TCSAA- Texas Charter School Athletic /Academic Association

Non-Negotiables

1. Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education.

2. Students ARE Not permitted to possess items such as cellular phones, pagers, radios,
CD players, MP3 players, iPods, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, hand held games, or similar electronic devices while at school, unless prior permission has been obtained by the principal.

3. The district’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student’s personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply.

4. All homework or class work must be turned in to the teacher. Students are responsible for obtaining all work and for seeing that the teacher receives the completed work. If the student does not return the assigned work the student will receive a zero.

5. Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on school premises and at school-sponsored events off school 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.