



# Parent Handbook

Revised August 2017



## **2017-18 Board Members**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to The Varnett Public School, a Texas open-enrollment charter school. We are committed to providing students with a quality educational program, and the success of our students depends a great deal on cooperation between home and school.

This **PARENT HANDBOOK** has been prepared so you will have a better understanding of the philosophy, policies and procedures followed at our school. We encourage you to take the time to review this handbook and discuss the contents with your children. Your involvement in the school and support of the staff will help assure the success of your children in our school.

Our focus this year is on improving student attendance. A student's learning is dramatically enhanced when parents are involved. Consequently, we strongly urge your involvement in any and every way possible to ensure that every student is present every day.

This year will prove to be even more successful as teachers the administrative staff, you and I work together. With a dedicated staff focused on "Excellence in All Things" and your support we will meet our goals:

- To improve academic achievement;
- To recruit and retain highly qualified teachers;
- To provide meaningful parental engagement; and,
- To eliminate achievement gaps between socio-economic groups and children of ethnic diversity

If at any time you have questions, concerns or would like clarification about the policies and procedures contained in this handbook, please feel free to contact me or your school director. Your questions and concerns are always welcome.

Dr. Margaret Stroud  
Superintendent of Schools



## **“EXCELLENCE IS EXPECTED”**

Office Hours:	Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30p.m.
School Hours:	Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 3:15p.m.
After School Tutorials:	Monday – Thursday, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Sat Tutorials:	Saturdays – 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

### **NOTICE TO ALL PARENTS**

Students will NOT be supervised prior to 7:30 a.m. Please do not drop off students prior to this time.

Students will NOT be released between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Subject matter is still being taught during that hour. No parents will be allowed to pick up their students during this time period unless they are called by the school due to an emergency situation involving their children.

All students must be picked up from school no later than 3:15 p.m. Monday-Friday. If you arrive at our campus after 3:15 p.m., and you have not spoken to the campus Director a report may be filed with the Texas Department of Child Protective Services office.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Varnett Public School is to provide a rigorous academic program which meets the needs of our diverse population.

The four principles of our core beliefs are high student achievement, safety, respect and common decency. We are committed to meeting those needs through providing a safe learning environment, a highly qualified dedicated staff, advanced technological tools, involving parents and families and utilizing community resources.

This mission is based on the belief that:

- School choice motivates excellence.
- The overall student-achievement level must be improved.
- There can be no achievement gap between socioeconomic groups and/or children of ethnic diversity.
- Recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers are the keys to excellence and increasing student achievement.
- Meaningful parental engagement must be increased.
- All students, staff, and parents must be treated with common decency.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Varnett Public School is dedicated to excellence in all things.

## PARENTS

### PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Students are best served when a strong partnership exists between home and school. This partnership thrives on communication. Parents are partners with teachers, administrators, and the Board and are asked to:

- Encourage your child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Review the information in the Parent Handbook (and the Student Code of Conduct) with your child, and sign and return the acknowledgment form(s). Parents with questions are
- encouraged to contact the campus director.
- Become familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs offered at the campus by attending annually scheduled meetings.
- Discuss with the teacher or campus director questions you may have about your child or the school. Monitor your child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed.
- Attend board meetings to learn more about district operations, including the procedure for addressing the board when appropriate.

### PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT POLICY

The faculty, parents, staff and community members of The Varnett Public School developed and agreed upon the following written policy for parental involvement during their yearly development and/or review of the District Improvement Plan.

- The Parental Involvement Policy will be included in the Parent Handbook and be distributed during the first six weeks of the school year to all parents.
- It will be the responsibility of campus staff to establish a two-way communication process with parents and families regarding their children's academic progress. This should include, but not be limited to progress reports, report cards, face-to-face conferences, telephone calls, notes, newsletters, etc.
- The district and campus administration will make every effort to communicate with parents in a language that is understandable. Communication with parents may include, but not be limited to, parent homework contact sheets, telephone conference calls, electronic mail,

- newsletters, meetings, etc.
- Each campus will hold an annual meeting with parents and community members during the first six weeks to discuss the Title 1 Part A programs. The meeting will provide a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the campus, the forms of academic assessment to measure student progress and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- A campus parent meeting will be held at least twice a year to share campus activities, and resources of the school served under Title 1 Part A.
- A campus parent meeting will be held annually to evaluate the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the campus Title 1 Part A Program, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities and to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parent involvement policy.
- Parents will be given the opportunity to provide input and make recommendations regarding the Campus Improvement Plan, the Title I program and the Parent Involvement Policy through parent meetings.
- All campuses will provide information and support for parents and offer them an opportunity to be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I Part A programs.
- In order to meet the changing needs of our schools, the Parent Involvement Policy will be reviewed or updated during the annual District and Campus Improvement Plan revision process each year.

In an effort to forge a working partnership between the school and the community it serves, community involvement by local businesses and merchants will be encouraged. The Varnett website ([www.varnett.org](http://www.varnett.org)), a newsletter and other communications will be available to parents and community residents on a regular basis. A copy of the Parent Handbook is available on the Varnett website ([www.varnett.org](http://www.varnett.org)).

To ensure compliance with the current state directives and improvements, The Varnett Public School will also seek to establish a close working relationship with the Region IV Educational ServiceCenter.

## PARENTAL RIGHTS

Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their children's educational program and are entitled to:

- Have access to all written records concerning their child;
- Review all teaching materials, textbooks and other aids used in the classroom;
- Review tests administered (after testing); and,
- Review full information regarding class activities.

Parents with court documents or state-generated documents defining custodial rights must submit a copy of those documents to the campus director at the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment or at the time such documents have become official.

## CHANGE OF HOME ADDRESS, ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESS and/or TELEPHONE NUMBER

Parents/students who change home address, electronic mail address and/or telephone number must complete a change of address form within three (3) school days of the change. Failure on the part of the parents/guardians to notify the school of a change of address and/or telephone number will prevent the school from communicating with parents/guardians.

## VISITORS

Parents are always welcome to visit the school for purposes of observation and to volunteer in the classroom. Any visits during the school day should be for that purpose only unless a conference time with a teacher or administrator has been prearranged [*Conferences must be scheduled through the teacher or campus director.*]. Remember, teachers and students work on a planned schedule and program. Unnecessary interruptions will consume time and hinder the academic program.

For the protection of the students and security in the school, it is required that any person entering the building during the school day obtain a visitor's pass before going to any other part of the school. No student will be permitted to leave the building with a visitor unless this has been approved by the school office. All visitors will be asked to present a driver's license or a school-approved identification document for identification purposes. This process will be repeated for field trips, classroom volunteers and other activities requiring adult/student interaction. Please obey all safety and security signs posted in the school and on school property. These rules will be enforced.

The Varnett Public School uses the V-Soft Raptor visitor management system (commonly called Raptor) to allow schools to produce visitor badges, monitor volunteer hours and electronically check all visitors against registered sexual offender databases. The goal of this system is to better control access to all Varnett schools, thus providing enhanced protection for our students and staff. All visitors are asked to present photo identification when visiting a school for the first time and check in and out through the front office on every visit to the campus. Visitors must wear badges on the campus at all times and will be escorted while visiting campus during school hours. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school before 8:00 a.m.

Students are not allowed to bring unauthorized visitors to school. Parents are always welcome, but we request that they make an appointment to see a teacher or administrator. Classroom visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment. Due to supervision and safety concerns during school hours, please do not bring pets, students' siblings or other young children when visiting the classrooms, on field trips, class parties or other school functions unless specifically invited.

### **RE-ENROLLMENT**

To ensure available space for students seeking readmission to The Varnett Public, a re-enrollment form is distributed to parents each year during late March or April. This form must be filled out and returned to the school as requested. If this form is not returned as requested, a student will be placed in the lottery for the upcoming school year.

### **ENROLLMENT CRITERIA**

Students seeking admission to The Varnett Public School must complete an official registration form. The eligibility criteria for admission of students to the campus as granted under TEC §12.065 (a) will give priority on the basis of geographic considerations. (b) Secondary consideration will be given to the grade level as necessary. The Varnett Public School may exclude a student who has a documented history of criminal offense or juvenile court adjudication. In addition, a student may be excluded who (a) has previously been removed from school, (b) has a documented history of conduct that, under TEC §37.006, warrants removal from class and placement in an alternative education program; or (c) has a documented history of conduct requiring and permitting expulsion under TEC §37.007.

The Varnett Public School seeks to maintain eligibility for federal funds. No early "waiting lists"

are allowed for the upcoming school year. Any student registering for pre-kindergarten or kindergarten must be four or five years of age by September 1 of the current year, satisfying the enrollment eligibility criteria.

### **GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES FOR THE VARNETT PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Houston, Fort Bend, Alief, Pearland, Galena Park, Pasadena, North Forest, Dickinson, Aldine, Sheldon, Channelview, Goose Creek, Lamar Consolidated, Humble, Spring, Crosby, Huffman, Deer Park, Brazosport, Stafford Municipal, Klein, Cypress-Fairbanks, Katy and Needville ISDs.

### **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS LIVING WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**

Parents interested in their child attending The Varnett Public School must complete an official registration form and return it to the school's main office. Registration forms for the upcoming school year are accepted throughout the school year until May 1. On May 15, a lottery drawing will be conducted for each grade level, including all registration forms from students within the school's geographic boundaries. Students whose names are drawn for class openings will be offered admission; the remaining names will be placed with students who submitted registration forms after May 1, in the order of receipt of the registration form. The official registration form containing the student's name, grade level and the assigned lottery number will be placed in a drawing for the desired grade level.

### **ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS**

A student who is at least pre-kindergarten age on or before September 1 must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. is unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
2. is economically disadvantaged. "Economically disadvantaged" pre-kindergarten students are defined by Texas Education Agency as students eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program;
3. is homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11302;
4. is the child of an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the Armed Forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;

5. is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the state Department of Family Protective Services following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code.

### **WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS**

Please notify the school office prior to the day of withdrawal of your child in order for withdrawal papers to be prepared. Parents are responsible for clearing textbooks and library books prior to withdrawal. Withdrawal papers will be processed within 24 hours from the time the withdrawal request has been submitted.

### **SCHOOL-TEACHER-PARENT-STUDENT COMPACT**

**SCHOOL:** The Varnett Public School's mission is to provide all students with skills necessary to be academically and socially successful at every level. Therefore, all students will become productive members of society. Our mission shall be accomplished by providing high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables all children to meet Texas student performance standards.

**TEACHER:** The teacher shall be responsible for sending frequent reports to parents concerning their child's progress, and offering reasonable opportunities for parents to volunteer, observe and participate in classroom activities and participate in conferences.

**PARENT:** The parent shall be responsible for monitoring the child's attendance, homework assignments, video games play time and the amount of television watching. The parent shall attend teacher/parent conferences, parent meetings, school and classroom events and be supportive and involved in the child's education.

**STUDENT:** The student shall be responsible for doing his or her best work, completing homework assignments, attending school daily, and attending required tutorial programs. Students shall ask their parents and teachers for help when needed.

### **STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The Varnett Public School seeks to provide an exemplary educational program, which addresses

the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of its student population. The core of the needs-based, child-centered curriculum is the acquisition of knowledge and skills that prepare the learner to become a productive member of society.

Varnett's program shall provide for a wide range in rate, timing and potential for learning through a balanced program of experiences. It places emphasis on the development of skills and concepts that establish bases for understanding. All students shall be provided with effective instruction and learning experiences in the following areas:

**1. BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT** – The program shall provide all students with effective instruction in basic skills. Basic skills instruction in literacy shall be designed to enable the student to develop:

- the ability to recognize the interrelations of listening, speaking, reading and writing and to use them effectively to acquire and communicate ideas;
- the appropriate readiness/pre-reading skills as preparation for successful participation in formal reading and writing;
- the ability to use word attack skills such as phonetic analysis, structural analysis, sight recognition, context clues and word association;
- the ability to read for a variety of purposes, including comprehension of information, literature appreciation and pleasure;
- an expanded vocabulary and accurate spelling; legible manuscript and/or cursive writing;
- the ability to communicate ideas effectively in writing and speaking with appropriate word usage, sentence structure and composition development;
- Skills in the use of library/media materials, technology and resources online.

**2. BASIC SKILLS INSTRUCTION IN MATHEMATICS SHALL BE DESIGNED TO ENABLE THE STUDENT TO DEVELOP**

- mathematical concepts through recognizing, dividing, comparing, grouping and ordering properties (color, shape, dimensions);
- Knowledge and understanding of numerical concepts involving varied quantities, representations, symbols and terminology and their applications;
- the ability to compute accurately through the use of basic operations – addition,



subtraction, multiplication, and division as applied to whole numbers, fractions, decimals, signed numbers, mixed numbers and percentages;

- Knowledge and understanding of principles of metric and customary measurement and their applications to problems involving size, mass, volume, weight, time, temperature and money;
- Knowledge and understanding of geometric principles and properties and their applications;
- Knowledge and understanding of place value, expanded notation and composite and prime numbers;
- solutions to verbal and nonverbal problems requiring the use of mathematics; and,
- mathematical skills in practical, real-life situations such as comparison shopping, balancing a checkbook and making a budget.

**3. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT** – The program shall provide all students with meaningful and effective instruction, which stimulates and enhances intellectual and creative development. Instruction shall be designed to enable the student to develop:

- the ability to think rationally through applications of problem-solving skills and use of reasoning;
- Knowledge and understanding of the scientific method of investigation, including its use and applications;
- the ability to use and evaluate knowledge through critical and independent thinking;
- a general wealth of knowledge, including information and concepts in the various subject areas; the ability to make use of various sources of knowledge;
- positive attitudes toward intellectual activities, including intellectual curiosity and a desire for further learning; creative and imaginative abilities through activities such as creative dramatics, role playing, storytelling and puppetry;
- an understanding of the role of computers and other technologies;
- an awareness of and skills needed to utilize outdoor learning places and non-school learning environments;
- skills necessary for fitness and the productive use of leisure time;
- fine and gross motor skills; and,
- imaginative exploration of movement.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum is characterized by following components:

- flexible grouping;
- heterogeneous instructional groups;
- homogeneous interest groups;
- peer mentoring;
- active student participation in the learning process;
- interdisciplinary curriculum; academic objectives in preparation for the State of Texas Assessment and Readiness (STAAR) test;
- thematic units that address Texas Essentials Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and STAAR objectives;
- cooperative learning;
- technology as an instructional aid;
- varied instructional strategies to stimulate student interest; and,
- instructional teaching to address different learning styles.

The child-centered curriculum of The Varnett Public School is built on the ideology that all children can learn.

## DRESS CODE

Students attending The Varnett Public School are expected to conform to the uniform dress code beginning with the **first day of school**. School uniforms can be purchased at a designated school uniform store. A uniform information packet is available to all parents at each campus.

Students are required to wear the school uniform to school daily. **Students will not be allowed to attend school without being in the designated school uniform.** The appropriate shoes must also be worn daily. Tennis shoes must be plain, with no logo or athletic logos, such as Air Jordan's, DKNY, etc. Note: Shirts must be tucked inside and shoestrings must be tied at all times.

### **Monday-Wednesday-Friday:**

**Top:** Green Varnett polo shirt.

**Bottom:** Navy blue pants or shorts.

(Students may wear spirit t-shirts and jeans on designated days.)

**Shoes:** Tennis shoes are permitted.

**Tuesday and Thursday:**

Boys wear white Varnett polo shirts and Navy blue bottoms.

Pre-K through second-grade girls wear plaid Varnett jumpers with white shirts.

Third through fifth-grade girls wear white Varnett polo shirts and Varnett plaid skirts.

**(Solid color leggings may be worn under skirts)**

**Shoes:** Tennis shoes are not permitted.

During the winter months, sweat tops and pants can be worn in place of the P.E. polo shirt and shorts. Make certain the sweat top and pants match the designated color of their regular P.E. attire. Example: green top and navy blue pants. There will be one non-uniform day each month. The first Friday of each month, students may wear their green polo shirt and blue-jean long pants for girls and boys. No denim skirts, shorts, or skorts are allowed. Tennis shoes may be worn on this day as well. **Students violating this policy will be sent or transported home by school personnel.**

Student apparel shall remain within the bounds of common decency. Guidelines to be followed are:

- Students are expected to wear clean, neat and the designated school uniforms at all times.
- Hair shall be neat and well groomed. If it is deemed that any clothing or hair style disrupts the learning environment the parents will be contacted to pick up the student.
- Shorts, dresses and/or skirts must be at least fingertip length when arms are resting at your side.
- A belt must be worn with pants at all times. (This policy applies to boys and girls).
- No student is allowed to have any permanent or temporary tattoos of any kind that are visible on the body.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Flip flops and slippers are "not allowed"

**Students who are out of uniform will not be allowed to attend school until the designated school uniform is acquired.**

Students whose dress or appearance interferes with or disrupts the educational process within the classroom, school building or on school premises shall not be allowed at

school. The following is a list of unacceptable items:

- Excessive jewelry, tattoos or drawing on the skin which advertises, promotes or is identified with alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, satanic rituals, violence, obscenities or vulgarities;
- Gang-related paraphernalia, including bandanas, towels, and beads;
- Any style of hair or grooming which prevents or interrupts the instructional environment;
- Appropriate foundation garments and/or undergarments must be worn at all times; and,
- Undergarments must be worn under clothing and must not be visible.

**The dress code will be strictly enforced.** Violations of the above policy will be dealt with in the following manner:

- The student will be sent to the campus director’s office. Parents/guardians will be notified;
- Parents will be asked to pick up the student or bring a change of acceptable clothing. When a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, it will be the decision of the director to take appropriate action which may include suspension in/out-school and no opportunity to make up missed classroom assignments, tests, and field trips:
- Field trips will not be refunded when the dress code policy is violated.

**MORNING MEETING: PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE, MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Texas law requires students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag each day. Parents may submit a written request to the campus director to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. A minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. The student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity as long as the silent activity does not interfere with or disturb others.

**GRADING POLICIES**

The grading system has been developed to comply with the Texas Administrative Code (Title 19

TAC 75.191: Sub-section a). The following numerical grades are used in reporting academic success:

Pre-Kindergarten		Grades 1-6	
Score	Grade	Point Range	Grade
E	Excellent	100-90	A
S	Satisfactory	89-80	B

N	Needs Improvement	79-74	C
		73-70	D
		69 or below	F

Report card grades are calculated based on the following weighted average:

- 70 percent for classwork;
- 25 percent for test and projects;
- 5 percent for homework.

**Note:** If the final six-week grade average is less than 50, a 50 will be recorded on the progress/report card as a 50.

**CONDUCT GRADES ARE RECORDED AS S (SATISFACTORY), U (UNSATISFACTORY) OR P (PARENT CONFERENCE NEEDED), N (NEEDS IMPROVEMENT)**

A progress report is issued every three weeks. Thereafter, a formal report card will be issued six times per year at the end of each six-week marking period. This report will represent six-week report cards and three-week progress reports of academic performance and can be used for planning and defining academic goals for the remainder of the grading period. The teacher and/or the parent may request a conference to discuss the student’s progress.

Parents may request to see their child’s teacher or meet with an administrator any time during the school year. Teachers are available to meet with parents from 7:30 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. daily. Classroom instruction starts promptly at 8 a.m. and conference time with teachers cannot be scheduled during the instructional day from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. However, conferences can be scheduled with teachers after 3:15 p.m. We encourage you to contact your child’s teacher at any time if you desire a conference or information about your child’s progress.

**HONOR ROLL CRITERIA**

The Varnett Public School has two honor roll designations for grades 1-6: Honor Roll and Director’s Honor Roll. Eligibility for honor roll includes:

***Honor Roll called ‘A/B’ Honor Roll***

*No grade below 80 and a numerical average of 80 or above.  
Conduct grade of S.*

- ***Director’s Honor Roll called ‘A’ Honor Roll***

*No grade below 90 and numerical average of 90 or above.  
Conduct grade of S.*

## ASSESSMENTS

Assessment and evaluation are viewed as required and ongoing processes that validate the learning process. The decisions that have a major impact on a child will be based primarily on information obtained from observations by parents and teachers. Formal and informal assessment of a child's progress and achievement will be used to plan curriculum, identify special needs, communicate with parents and evaluate the program's effectiveness. In addition to student/teacher/parent conference, the following performance-based instruments will be utilized in the effort:

- Scholastic Early Childhood Inventory for Pre-K in the winter and spring;
- SAT (Stanford Achievement Test) for grades K- 2 in the spring;
- STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) for grades 3rd-6th
- The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for grades K-2 occurs throughout the school year;
- TELPAS assessment for grades K-6 (ESL students only);
- District benchmarks
- Teacher-written tests and other instruments;

Tutorials will be provided as needed January through April for students who require additional assistance as well as after-school tutorial Monday through Thursday and Saturdays.

## PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Students are promoted on the basis of academic achievement. All students in grades 1-6 must meet current Texas course- average requirements:

1. Students in grades 1-6 must have an overall average of 70 percent in course grades, including a 70 percent or better grade in reading, language arts, mathematics and either science or social studies.
2. Students in grades 3-6 must earn a passing score on the reading and mathematics sections of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Grade 5 students are also tested in science and grade 4 students tested in writing.
3. All students in grades 1-2 must score no lower than one grade level below grade-level placement in reading and mathematics on the Stanford Achievement Test/Aprenda tests.

**Example:** A first-grade child taking the test in April would need to score at least .8 since the child's actual grade-level placement is first grade, eight months, or .8 for these students to

be promoted.

4. Promotion decisions for students in Special Education will be made by the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee.

The Language Proficiency Advisory Committee (LPAC) makes promotion decisions for students with limited English proficiency.

If the student was successful on requirements #2 and #3 and completes summer school, Grade Placement Committee will review achievement to determine the student's status for the fall:

- The Varnett Public School will use the following guidelines to determine at the end of the school year whether students in grades 1-6 will be promoted.
- Students who fail to meet state course-average requirements will be retained.
- If the student was successful on requirement # 2 and completes summer school, the Grade Placement Committee will review achievement to determine the student's status for the fall.
- Students who fail to achieve requirement #2 after attending summer school will be subject to an achievement review by Grade Placement Committee to determine the student's status for the fall.

### FIFTH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Students who are in grade 5 will be required to perform satisfactorily on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Test to be promoted to the seventh grade.

Students who fail to demonstrate achievement on requirement #2 but who have met state course-average requirements are to attend summer school at The Varnett Public School. The student will have the opportunity to pass the STAAR requirement at the end of summer school. After the student attends summer school, the Grade Placement Committee will review achievement to determine the student's status for the fall. Students attending summer school at another charter school or school district will not be accepted for review by the Grade Placement Committee to determine the student's status for the fall.

## STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. Under the SSI grade advancement requirements, students are required to pass the STAAR grade 5 reading and mathematics tests to be promoted to sixth grade.

Fifth-grade students have three opportunities to pass the STAAR grade 5 reading test and three opportunities to pass the STAAR grade 5 mathematics test. If a student does not pass one or all tests, the school must give the student additional instruction after each testing opportunity, and the student must participate in that instruction. Parents will be notified if their child does not pass a STAAR test that is required for promotion.

Students who do not satisfy the above promotion guidelines or have been suspended from school will not be allowed to participate in the Promotion ceremony at the end of the school year.

If the student has not passed after the second testing opportunity, a Grade Placement Committee which consists of the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian, is formed. The Grade Placement Committee will create an instructional plan based on the individual needs of the student. Parents may request a waiver of the third testing opportunity if they do not want their child to test. If the waiver is approved, the student is automatically retained, but the parents may still appeal the retention. A student must participate in all additional instruction required by the Grade Placement Committee, even if the third testing opportunity is waived.

## ATTENDANCE

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Excused absences must be supported with documentation to the school explaining the absence and it qualifies as a legitimate reason for the absence (illness, doctor's appointment or death).

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** Students will be unexcused until a written note is received by the school and will not be given an opportunity to make up missed assignments. A "zero" will be recorded for all missed assignments.

The School shall notify a student's parent if the student is tardy or absent from school on 2 or more days or parts of days within a six-week period in the same school year or on three or more



days or parts of days within a four-week period in accordance with TEC § 25.085.

The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school and request a conference between school officials and the parent to discuss the absences.

The fact that a parent did not receive the notices described above is not a defense to prosecution neither for the parent's failure to require a child to attend school nor for the student's failure to attend school. TEC § 25.095.

A student who is required to attend school under the compulsory attendance laws and fails to attend school on **10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period** in the same school year or on three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period may be prosecuted for truancy under TEC § 25.094(a), (b) in:

- The justice court of any precinct in the county in which the student resides;
- The justice court of any precinct in the county in which the school is located;
- The municipal court in the municipality in which the child resides; or
- The municipal court in the municipality in which the school is located.

Conduct indicating a need for supervision includes the absence of a child on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period from school. Family Code § 51.03(b) (2)

It is an affirmative defense to prosecution for truancy or to an allegation of conduct in need of supervision that one or more of the absences required to be proven was excused by a school official or should be excused by the court or that one or more of the absences were involuntary. A decision by the court to excuse an absence for this purpose does not affect the ability of the school to determine whether to excuse the absence for another purpose. TEC § 25.094(f), (g); Family Code § 51.03 (d).

If a student fails to attend school without excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the truant officer at The Varnett Public School shall:

- File a complaint against the student or the student's parent or both in justice or

municipal court for an offense under Education Code 25.093 or 25.094, as appropriate, or refer the student to a juvenile court in a county with a population of less than 100,000; or refer the student to a juvenile court for conduct indicating a need for supervision under Family Code 51.03(b) (2).

Tardiness is when a child arrives at school after 8 a.m. Consistent tardies establish bad habits and are strongly discouraged. Excessive tardiness (3 or more during a 4-week period) will result in a meeting with the student, parent, and administrator and may also result in an investigation by the truant officer at The Varnett Public School. The truant officer will contact the Justice Court in which the campus is located or where the student resides or any precinct within Harris County and file a complaint against the student or the student's parent or both.

Sufficient reason for a tardy or absence shall include but is not limited to:

- Illness
- A funeral of a family member or close friend
- Doctor/dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the school day
- Pre-arranged absences

If a child is admitted to the hospital, parents/guardian are required to notify their campus director on the second day of absence from school. The school will provide instructional support during the period of absence. Medical documentation is required to support a medical absence and must be submitted to the campus director upon request.

### **PERFECT ATTENDANCE AWARDS**

Students who have no absences during each six weeks will be eligible for the perfect attendance award at the end of each six weeks.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL DAY**

When a student leaves the campus before dismissal time, the student must bring a note from a parent/guardian to the classroom teacher stating the reason, the time to be dismissed and a telephone number where a parent may be reached. The parent must sign the child out of school.

Students will not be dismissed from school prior to 10:30 a.m. and after 2 p.m. Students not present

in the classroom when attendance is taken at 10:30 a.m. will be considered absent for the day.

### **AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORIALS**

The Varnett Public School will provide after-school tutoring as needed for students K-6 in reading and math at no cost to parents. Students will be selected to participate in the program based on academic need as recommended by the classroom teacher and approved by the campus director. Attendance is mandatory, and parents must agree to pick up their child at the end of each tutoring session. After-school tutorials are scheduled from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, commencing in January through April. A light snack will be served to all students at 3:15 p.m. in the cafeteria before the tutorial session starts.

### **SATURDAY TUTORIALS**

The Varnett Public School will provide Saturday tutoring for grades 3-6 students in reading and math at no cost to parents. Attendance is mandatory, and parents must agree to drop-off and pick up their child at the end of each tutoring session. The Saturday Tutorial Program is scheduled from 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. every Saturday from January through April when deemed necessary. Attendance is mandatory for all assigned students in grades 3-6.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Pre-kindergarten, English language learners ELL, first-time kindergarten, and some special education students are invited to attend summer school. The campus director will inform parents of eligible students. The campus location and dates of services will be provided. Transportation will not be provided.

Also, students in grades 3-6 who failed the STAAR test in Reading and/or Math are required to attend summer school and be given an opportunity to take a district or state assessment test in Reading and/or Math. Once they have successfully passed the district/state assessment test, they can receive grade level promotion. Summer school attendance and/or result from any other school or district will not be accepted. Students must attend The Varnett Public School to receive promotion considerations.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Make-up work includes work made up due to excused absences and work made up due to extenuating circumstances as determined by the teacher. The acceptance of make-up work and the grade assigned to the make-up work should be done with thoughtful consideration of the value of that grade in relation to the other grades of the quarterly period.

When a student is absent on the day work is assigned, the teacher will assist the student in making up class assignments and tests. If a student is absent for one day, one day will be given to make up the assignments missed. Two days will be given for two days of absence, etc. Under extenuating circumstances such as long-term illness or family emergencies, teachers may choose to give students more than one day for each day missed to make up assignments. For assignments given prior to a student's absence, a shorter time frame may be required at the teacher's discretion. Note: Students who have been suspended from the school bus due to misbehavior or for violating the weapon policy will be permitted to make up work and tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed. However, students are responsible for obtaining and completing all makeup assignments. Students have one day to make up missed assignments for each day they are absent. Long-term projects that have been given deadlines in advance must be turned in on the first day of the student's return to class regardless of the number of days absent. A student who does not make up assigned work or take the test within the time allotted will receive a grade of zero for that assignment/test.

### **STUDENT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS/STUDENTS RIGHTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Texas Open Records Acts govern The Varnett Public School's release of data on students, including: a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially-recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school and most recent previous school attended.

The Varnett Public School does not have an option. Unless parent objects, this information will be released to anyone who follows the established procedure for requests. An objection must be made in writing to the campus director and superintendent within ten (10) school days after being notified.

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the property of The Varnett Public School as per Senate Bill 6 and should be handled carefully by each student. A textbook will be issued to each student by the classroom teacher. As a textbook is issued to the student, the teacher will complete a textbook release form, describing the condition of the textbook, and a unique number will be written by the student's name in the textbook.

Additionally, the teacher will mark out the previous issuance of the textbook, print the student's first and last name, the year used and teacher's name. The student should understand that she/he is responsible for that book and that it should be returned in good condition at the end of the school year.

If a student loses a book, has missing pages, water damage, defaces or marks it unnecessarily, he/she must pay the replacement cost, shipping/handling charges plus a \$25 administrative fee in the school office before the students can receive their report card or be issued another textbook. If a student's textbook has torn pages (that are repairable) he/she will be charged \$10 per page. Teachers are advised to check student's textbooks for condition and book numbers at least once a semester.

## HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is school assignments that are to be completed, reviewed and/or practiced outside of normal school hours. The staff at The Varnett Public School believes there is a direct correlation between student achievement and the amount of time a student spends on a subject. With this in mind, we support the idea that homework on a regular basis can improve achievement. Therefore, we request that parents commit to set aside a time each evening for PK-2 (M-Th) and grades 3-6 (M-F) for school-related activities. We suggest that in grades PK- 2 that a minimum of 30 minutes is appropriate, and grades 3-6 a minimum of one hour.

This time is for completion of schoolwork, studying, spelling, reading, being read to, learning math facts and reviewing for tests. The teacher will remind students daily of their need to study and the importance of completing school-related tasks.

## STUDENT WORK RESPONSIBILITIES

The staff at The Varnett Public School recognizes the importance of good study habits, the need

to complete assignments on time and the value of becoming a responsible person. To this end, we will adhere to the following set of guidelines in every classroom:

- All assignments are to be completed on time. Incomplete or missing assignments shall be finished, but will receive a reduced grade.
- When a student is absent, it is the student's and/or parent's responsibility to meet with his/her teacher(s) to secure missed assignments. Upon the student's return to school, students will have one day to make up missed assignments for each day they are absent.
- Students who do not complete assignments on a regular basis may be retained.
- All written work shall be done in the student's best handwriting or the student may be required to resubmit a readable version.
- The quality of all work should reflect a student's best ability. It is our belief that consistency in following these rules will help all students become responsible. We also take the position that failure to develop good habits could result in students not achieving their potential or not taking advantage of their educational opportunities. Therefore, we need parents' support and cooperation in developing this entire area.

### **LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES BILINGUAL/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**

The bilingual and ESL services are designed to help English language learners become proficient in English. Students are served in classes taught by teachers with bilingual and/or ESL certifications. Spanish and Vietnamese speaking students who are in the bilingual program are instructed in their native language and English, as appropriate for the individual student. The Varnett Public School model of instruction is used throughout the district at bilingual campuses to encourage, bicultural and bilingual students. English language learners, not in a bilingual program are immersed in an all English curriculum with specialized instruction in the acquisition of English.

The service your child needs may be at a school other than the one for which he/she is now registered. Should your child be required to attend another school to receive this service, bus transportation will be provided if your child meets the district's eligibility requirements. Please contact your child's school if you want more information about either the bilingual or ESL program.

### **DYSLEXIA/504**

Students identified as having characteristics of dyslexia/504 and who meet The Varnett Public School's criteria for dyslexia are eligible for services. These services will be provided by an interventionist trained in dyslexia or related disorders, utilizing an instructional program targeted to meet the student's needs.

### **FAMILIES IN TRANSITION PROGRAM**

The Families in Transition Program (FiT) supports the McKinney-Vento Act. This act protects the rights of homeless children and youth to receive a free and appropriate public education. Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Eligible students may qualify for help with enrollment, free meals, and transportation to and from their school of origin. Unaccompanied youth are also protected by this right and include youth in homeless situations who are not in physical custody of a parent or guardian. This right is protected even though the student may lack a permanent address, does not live with a parent or guardian, does not have a previous address in another town/state or does not have school records.

A student or parent with questions regarding homelessness should contact their campus director.

### **MIGRANT EDUCATION**

The term "migratory child" means a child who is or whose parents obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or related fields. The District assures that high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children exist to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves. The programs ensure that migratory children are provided appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner so that they may successfully meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet. For more information, please contact your campus director.

### **PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Research confirms the value of early education for young children. A high-quality early childhood education is key to children's school readiness and success. Pursuant to this goal, The Varnett Public School provides a pre-kindergarten program for young students to ensure that they have a successful early start in preparing them to enter kindergarten on or above grade level and

ready to benefit from the full array of public education services to keep them at grade level in kindergarten and beyond. The program is a full-day program and attendance is mandatory. Students who are not potty trained or wear Pampers or pull-ups or who are unable to independently use the restroom without adult assistance may be dropped from the program after three (3) incidences. Students who spit, bite or exert bodily harm to another student or staff member, participate in inappropriate touching to another student or staff member, or three (3) incidences of fighting another student or staff member may be dropped from the program. Additionally, students who are absent from school three (3) or more days without a documented medical certificate or whose behavior posed a threat to other students and adults may also be dropped from the program.

A parent/teacher conference will be held on the first offense. On the second offense, a parent/teacher conference will be held with the campus director. On the third offense, a parent, teacher and campus director conference will be held with the Superintendent to determine if the student will continue enrollment in the school. Once a student has been dropped, re-enrollment is required to re-enter the pre-kindergarten program. Parents are encouraged to keep the campus director informed of all absences and to work with the classroom teacher to manage disciplinary problems. NOTE: Students who require a change of clothing for whatever reason must be picked up from the school when parents are contacted.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

School-age students currently enrolled in the district may need special education services in order to make educational progress. If so, they may be referred for assessment. As with all other aspects of the provision of special education services, “safeguards” are built into the referral process to assure that students will be educated in the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). It is important to know that the referral process is primarily a general education process.

### **ACCELERATED BRIDGE PROGRAM**

The Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP) is an individualized instructional plan designed to address the educational needs of kindergarten through fifth-grade students performing at least one above grade level. The program provides both accelerated instruction and mentoring to bridge gaps in weaker subjects. Students are identified based on teacher recommendation and performance on Stanford 10 and STAAR assessments. ABP teachers use a differentiated curriculum that ensures the individual academic needs of each student is met and that their academic skills and potentials are optimized. Students who are selected



will have an opportunity to advance at least one grade level based on their academic performance, standardized test scores and results from grade placement examination.

### **REQUEST FOR TESTING**

When a disability is suspected a request that a student be assessed to determine the need for special education services may be initiated by parents, teacher, the campus support team or 504 committee, or other interested parties. Prior to referral for special education assessment all appropriate supports through general education have been attempted over time without success.

**Within a reasonable amount of time, the school or district must decide if an evaluation is needed.**

Appropriate reasons for referral include repeated student failure, lack of student success that may not yet have resulted in failure, student age or circumstances that create unique situations, or referral from a committee. Please note that failure to pass the STAAR is not a valid reason for testing unless other concerns are present. If an evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for evaluation. The school or district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the school or district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district or school determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district or 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 parents of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform parents how to obtain a copy of the procedural safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disability.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extracurricular activities at The Varnett Public School shall be an integral part of the educational program. The activities shall provide experiences that enhance the opportunity to develop increasing responsibility, initiative, leadership competencies, cooperation, and self-direction while providing experiences that will have both immediate and carry-over values. Extracurricular activities will occur provided parent volunteers are available to assist school staff with the program.

### **NO PASS/NO PLAY**

Open-enrollment charter schools in Texas are required to apply TEC §33.081, more commonly

known as “No Pass/No Play” in every extracurricular activity for all students. This law requires the suspension of a student from extracurricular activities when, at the end of any six-week grading period, the student has a grade below 70. (Extracurricular activities include field trips and end-of-year travel trips.) The suspension from the extracurricular activity is reviewed after three weeks. If the student has improved the grade to 70 or above, the suspension may be removed, allowing the student to participate in extracurricular activities. This process is followed in each of the six-week grading periods throughout the school year.

### FIELD TRIPS

Varnett will also provide transportation for students attending co-curricular field trips. A nominal fee for field trips will be charged to cover the cost of admission fees. Transportation on Varnett school buses will be free, except when the field trip is to areas outside Houston city limits. A fee for transportation will be based on actual cost of transportation services rendered. **Field trip fees will not be refunded or transferred regardless of the situation or circumstance.**

### PARENT CHAPERONES

Parents who volunteer to chaperone field trips shall abide by the following guidelines:

- Accept responsibility to chaperone students other than their own child.
- Accept responsibility to share overnight accommodations with an assigned parent and/or students.
- Do not assume financial responsibility for other students.
- Do not smoke or consume alcoholic beverages.
- Agree to a criminal background check as required to participate in a field trip activity.
- Accept and agree that you must ride school-sponsored transportation to and from the field trip.

State law prohibits students from attending field trips without written permission from parents or guardians. An activity release form must be signed and returned to the school office as part of the enrollment process upon entry into the school. Students will not be allowed to call home on the day of the field trip to receive parental permission. Please note that teachers can deny students participation on field trips unless supervised by a parent or guardian, due to inappropriate behavior.

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are recognized in each classroom. Parents may bring fruit, fruit snacks or healthy snacks for the birthday child to share with his/her classmates during the lunch period.

No party decorations, cakes, cupcakes or favors are allowed. Birthday party invitations may be distributed by parents at the close of the school day only. No teacher, student or any other school personnel is permitted to distribute party invitations.

### **MEDIA RELEASE NOTIFICATION**

The Varnett Public School from time to time will have opportunities to showcase the school and our students by having them appear on television, radio, or in the print media such as newspapers or magazines. Every student attending the school may have an opportunity for his/her picture to be taken or participate in a student interview.

If you do not grant permission to the school for your child or children to appear on television, radio or in print media such as newspapers or magazines, please write a letter addressed to the campus director with a copy sent to the superintendent indicating that you do not grant permission for your child or children (please list the correct name of each child and his/her classroom teacher) to participate. Your letter will be on file for the entire current school year.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Any valuable items turned in are kept in the office. The school is not responsible for any lost/found items. All unclaimed items will be donated to a charity periodically throughout the year.

### **INTERNET SAFETY POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is the policy of Varnett Public School to (a) prevent user access over its computer network for transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

#### **DEFINITIONS**

Key terms are as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act.\*

### **ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

To the extent, practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be used to block or filter the Internet, or other forms of electronic communications and access to inappropriate information.

Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

### **INAPPROPRIATE NETWORK USAGE**

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Varnett Public School online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called ‘hacking,’ and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

### **EDUCATION, SUPERVISION, AND MONITORING**

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Varnett Public School staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children’s Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the technology director or designated representatives.

The technology director or designated representatives will provide an appropriate training for students who use the Varnett Public School’s Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed

to promote the Varnett Public School's commitment to:

- a. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Varnett Public School's Internet Safety Policy;
- b. Student safety with regard to:
  - i. safety on the Internet;
  - ii. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms; and
  - a) iii. Cyberbullying awareness and response.
- c. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the district's acceptable use policies.

## HEALTH SERVICES

### IMMUNIZATIONS

It is imperative that you maintain your child's immunizations required by the state of Texas. If your child's immunizations are incomplete, your child **WILL NOT** be able to remain in school until immunizations are current. For a complete list of required immunizations, please contact your child's doctor.

### MEDICATIONS

A request form for administering of medication must be signed and completed by the parent and doctor and returned to the nurse's office before medication can be given to your child. **We do not administer over-the-counter medications. All medications must be prescribed by a physician and must be brought to school by an adult in its original box and labeled container.** If your child has allergies, please have it documented in writing by the doctor.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

- An authorization of Medication Request Form must be completed by the parent/guardian prior to the administration of each medication to a student.
- The nurse (or designee) must hold a signature bearing Medication Request Form for each medication and before the prescribed medication can be administered to the student.
- All medication must be in a container appropriately labeled by a pharmacy or physician.

- Parents/guardians should administer all required medications in the home whenever possible.
- Medications will be destroyed one week after the termination date or one week after the close of school if not picked up by parent/guardian.
- Non-prescription medications (i.e. aspirin, cough syrup, ointments, etc.) must not be sent to school with students.
- Parents/guardians may administer medication(s) to their child (ren) at the school, if arrangements to do so are made with the campus director and school nurse or designee.

The parent/guardian shall be responsible for notifying the campus director and the school nurse in writing of any change in the medication or its administration.

### FOOD ALLERGIES

If your child has allergies to certain foods, a doctor's note informing the school is required.

### HEAD LICE

Hundreds of days are missed each school year because of head lice infestation. A child found to have eggs (nits) or lice must be excluded from school until treated with an effective pediculicide shampoo. The bed sheets, blankets, pillows, and the entire home environment should be treated as well. If you should notice head lice in your child's hair, please inform the nurse as soon as possible.

**The entire class will be screened for lice as a precaution.** Follow-up screening will be done upon returning to school. Parents must bring the child to the nurse's office to be rechecked for clearance. Lastly, teach your child not to share combs, brushes, hats or scarves with anyone.

### WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Texas Department of State Health Services and The Varnett Public School recommend that students be kept home from school if any of the following conditions exist:

- Signs of severe illness, including fever, irritability, difficulty breathing, crying that doesn't stop with the usual comforting or extreme sleepiness.
- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus.
- Vomiting two or more times in 24 hours, unless a physician feels the cause of vomiting is not an infectious disease, writes a note to that effect and the student is in no danger of

becoming dehydrated.

- Mouth sores and drooling until a physician or the health authority does not feel the condition is infectious.
- Fever or rash or a change in behavior until a physician has determined that the problem is not caused by an infectious disease.

### **FEVER**

Students with a temperature of 100° or above (orally) will be sent home. To prevent the spread of a contagious disease, ill students must be symptom free and fever free without the use of temperature reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **NUISANCE DISEASES**

“Nuisance Diseases,” such as scabies, head lice (pediculosis), ringworm of the body or scalp and pinworms are highly contagious and can cause problems in the school setting. Children and adults with these conditions will be excluded until proof of treatment is established.

### **VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES**

Many diseases are preventable by vaccine. Schools are required to have an immunization record on file for each child enrolled to ensure that each child has received age-appropriate immunizations. See Immunization Requirements. For immunization information, contact your campus nurse or the local health department.

### **DIARRHEAL DISEASE**

Many different viral and bacterial agents may cause diarrhea. The child must be excluded from attendance until the diarrheal illness has resolved or until the child’s physician or the local health department has cleared, in writing, the child to return to school.

### **HEALTH SCREENING**

Schools are required to screen for the following:

- Vision and hearing: All four-year-olds, all students new to Texas schools, K-3 and grade 5.
- Spinal: Grade 5.
- Acanthosis Nigricans: Grades 1-3 and grades 5-6.

If a parent does not want the child screened at school, he/she must notify the campus nurse in writing before the day of the screening procedure. It is necessary to provide the campus nurse with an affidavit stating the objections to the screening and a physician's verification that the child has been evaluated for and is receiving treatment if needed.

## **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES EXCLUSION AND RE-ADMISSION**

It is requested that parents notify the campus nurse/administrator if a student is diagnosed with a contagious disease. The school administrator requires a note from a parent or health care worker (physician, local health authority, advanced practice nurse or physician's assistant) for re-admission to school when a student is excluded from attendance for a contagious disease.

### **WHEN A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE IS DIAGNOSED OR SUSPECTED:**

If a student becomes ill at school, there are facilities and personnel to accommodate the student until the parent can be reached to take home the student. School district personnel will adhere to the exclusion and re-admission recommendations provided by the Texas State Department of Health Services.

- Students or adults with fever will not be re-admitted until the fever subsides
- Students or adults with diarrhea will not be re-admitted until diarrhea subsides
- Students or adults with conjunctivitis, bacterial meningitis, or tuberculosis will not be re-admitted without a note from the health care worker.

## **BACTERIAL MENINGITIS**

Bacterial 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 type of meningitis. 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.

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 one-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. Bacterial meningitis is serious. 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.

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, or utensils). The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks or even months. Usually, the body's immune system controls the bacteria and prevents meningitis or another serious illness from developing. Bacterial meningitis can be prevented by **not** sharing food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes and by limiting the number of persons kissed.

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 for some students. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90% of the time).

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 (10) days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five (5) years.

If you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis, seek prompt medical attention. For more information contact your campus nurse, family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office. They are excellent sources for information on all contagious diseases. You may also call your local health department or regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about the meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the Texas Department of State Health

Services: [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us).

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

In accordance with Board Policy EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that students engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day or 135 minutes per week. The District will annually assess each grade 3-6 student using documents posted at [www.fitnessgram.net](http://www.fitnessgram.net). For additional information on the District's requirements and programs regarding elementary school student physical activity requirements, please see the 3rd-6th-grade student's physical fitness requirement by order of the Commissioner of Education rules included in 19TAC, Chapter 103. The Texas Education Agency has mandated the use of FitnessGram® at [www.fitnessgram.net](http://www.fitnessgram.net).

### EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation, staff and students will promptly walk at least **500 feet** away from the building.

- **Administration and Southwest** K-2 students and staff will gather at the **northwest corner** of the **back** parking lot.
- **Southwest Campus** 3-6 students and staff will gather at the **northwest corner** of the **front** parking lot.
- **East Campus** students and staff will gather at the **east corner** of the parking lot facing Maxey Road.
- **Northeast Campus** students and staff will gather at the **east corner** of the parking lot by the buses facing Mesa Road.

The receptionists at each campus should make sure that he/she carries a floor plan of the building before evacuating the building. During the evacuation, security guards will lead teachers' aides in managing traffic and keeping vehicles away from the evacuation gathering places. The plant manager at each campus will check the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, restrooms and other areas to ensure that everyone has evacuated the building.

All teachers will have a roster or grade book to gather an accurate count of students who have evacuated the building. The evacuees will remain at the gathering spot until the campus directors declare that it is safe for students to return to the building. The campus directors will be in contact with Mr. Russell, general manager of Facilities, Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation, before any decision is made to return to the building.

## TRANSPORTATION

### ELIGIBILITY

The Varnett Public School is responsible for providing transportation for all students living within the campus residential ISD's geographic area, two or more miles from the school. The distance students live from their assigned school is determined by measuring from the curb at the front of the school to the curb in front of their home using the closed paved street. Students residing within two miles of their assigned school may have transportation available if their neighborhood qualifies as hazardous under the district's hazardous transportation rating system.

Students living outside our geographic transportation area can attend our school, but the parent/guardian must provide transportation.

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BUS RIDERS

The following list of rules for student conduct on school buses is posted on all buses:

- Observe same conduct as in the classroom;
- Be courteous. Use no profane language;
- Do not eat or drink on the bus;
- Keep the bus clean;
- Cooperate with the driver;
- Do not use tobacco;
- Do not be destructive;
- Stay in your seat;
- Keep head, hands, and feet inside bus; and,
- Bus driver is authorized to assign seats.

Students failing to obey the posted bus conduct rules will be subject to progressive discipline by the driver, the transportation coordinator, operations manager and/or the campus director. The driver will remind the student of the infraction and ask for the student to obey the rules. If the student refuses to obey the rules the driver will either move the student to another seat in the bus and/or write the student a referral. Student discipline generated by a referral is handled by the transportation coordinator, operations manager and/or the campus director. Students whose behavior is persistent may be suspended from riding the school bus for a period up to three (3)

weeks or suspension for the remainder of the current school year. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child(ren) obey the code of conduct when they ride the school bus.

### **PICK-UP TIME CRITERIA**

The school bus attempts to arrive at every bus stop on time. Due to the variances between individual clocks, students are asked to arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses will load students and depart. The school bus will not wait for late students. Bus drivers are instructed not to stop or open the door for late students due to safety concerns having students too close to moving bus wheels. Parents who fail to pick up students in grades prek-2 will be brought back to the school campus at the end of the route. Parents will then have 30 minutes to pick up their child, after which the option to transport to Children's Protective Services will be considered at the discretion of the transportation coordinator and the campus director. Students in grades 3-6 will be dropped off at their designated stops and will not be returned to the school.

### **DAILY SERVICE CRITERIA**

Regular transportation is scheduled to provide service to student riders. Bus stops that do not have riders for three (3) days may be suspended temporarily for lack of ridership to conserve district resources. Riders cannot change their pick up and drop off location. The pick-up and drop-off location must be the same bus stop throughout the school year, unless the student's home address has changed. Infrequent riders should contact the transportation coordinator stating their wish to ride when service is needed if their bus stop has historically low ridership to verify stop time and location.

### **BUS RIDERSHIP CAPACITIES**

School buses are rated by manufacturers to have a capacity based on (3) three riders per seat. The Varnett Public School has adopted maximum ridership per bus at three (3) riders per seat.

### **STUDENT SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**

Student safety is the primary concern of the Transportation Coordinator. Statistics show that the most dangerous time for students is before and/or after they are on the bus. The transportation coordinator considers the environment and age of the students when placing bus stops. We attempt to place every bus stop at a location with reasonable safety assurances for students. Parents must assume the responsibility for their students traveling back and forth from home to the stop.

### **BUS STOP LOCATION**

The Varnett Public School creates bus stops using the following criteria:

- Eliminate students crossing busy streets.
- Provide students with the ability to stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Locate the stops to maximize visibility for both students and traffic (100 feet minimum visibility).
- Avoid locations that expose students to traffic hazards and reduce the number of hazards for students crossing the street.
- Place the stops in locations away from non-traffic hazards such as railroad tracks, commercial areas, or areas with dangerous dogs.
- Place the stops at least 100 feet away from corners if possible to better control traffic in the area immediately around the bus.
- Avoid stops in cul-de-sacs to minimize accident risks caused by buses backing up to turn around.
- Place stops on streets with as little traffic as possible.

Create a buffer zone between students and the bus both in the neighborhoods and at school to keep students from being struck by the bus.

### **SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONES**

The most dangerous time for a student riding the school bus is the loading and unloading process. It is critical that students are visible to the driver and out of the bus danger zones when the bus is in motion. This rule applies to loading and unloading both in the neighborhoods and at school. If students are crossing the street, they should move immediately out of the danger zone and proceed at least 15 feet in front of the bus before crossing the street.

### **CAFETERIA SERVICES**

The Varnett Public School serves nutritious meals each school day in accordance with the Texas Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture. Students may purchase breakfast, lunches, and a la carte snacks at prices that are set by the board of trustees. The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers free and reduced-priced

meals at both breakfast and lunch, based on the income of the household. A student's prior year status will remain with them for a temporary period of 30 days into the next school year. Once a new application is submitted, the food service is given ten days to process the application. If the student has a full price status, the student will be responsible for meal payment until the application has been processed.

All students will receive a free/reduced application on the first day of school. If you have any questions or need help in completing the application form, please contact the food service manager at (713) 723- 4699. Option 1.

- No food is to be taken from the cafeteria and students cannot eat in the classrooms.
- Parents should submit a physician statement identifying food allergies to the cafeteria manager and school nurse at the beginning of each school year or upon your child's enrollment in the school.

### **MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER**

1. The media resource center is a fundamental part of the total instructional program. A wide variety of printed and non-printed materials, audiovisual equipment, computers with Internet access and services are available to parents, students and teachers.
2. The media resource coordinator administers the library/media program at our schools.
3. Parents, students and teachers are provided assistance in media selection, given instruction in library skills, aided in research and encouraged to make reading an enjoyable part of their lives.
4. Parents, students and teachers are encouraged to participate in the ongoing development of the media program and collection. The media resource center exists to serve the needs of the students and provide instructional support for the classroom teacher and parents.

### **BULLYING POLICY**

HB 1942 defines bullying as engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district and that has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. Varnett considers

conduct bullying if that conduct exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct and interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

HB 1942 allows The Varnett Public School board of directors, its superintendent and/or campus director to transfer the student who engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred; or a campus in the district other than the campus to which the victim was assigned at the time the bullying occurred, in consultation with the parent or another person with authority to act on behalf of the student who engaged in bullying.

HB 1942 provides that the statutory requirements regarding an admission, review and dismissal committee apply to a transfer of a student with a disability who receives special education services.

Therefore, The Varnett Public School board of directors has adopted HB 1942 as the official policy concerning bullying, including any necessary procedures that prohibits the bullying of a student; prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying; has established a procedure for providing notice of an incident of bullying to a parent or guardian of the victim and a parent or guardian of a bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident has been reported; has established the actions a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying.

### **PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING**

The Varnett Public School is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteer and patrons, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student's property; or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; or
- Is severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or,

- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Nothing in this policy requires the affected student to possess a characteristic that is a perceived basis for harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or other distinguishing characteristic.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. "Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the education environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other district policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

Counseling, corrective discipline, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim. This includes appropriate intervention(s), restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy. The superintendent is authorized to direct the development and implementation of procedures addressing the elements of this policy.

### **INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS**

Anyone may use informal procedures to report and resolve complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying. At the campus level, programs may be established for receiving anonymous complaints. Such complaints must be appropriately investigated and handled consistent with due process requirements.

Informal reports may be made to any staff member, although staff shall always inform complainants of their right to do so, and the process for, filing a formal complaint. Staff shall also direct potential complaints to an appropriate staff member who can explain the informal and formal complaint process and what a complaint can expect. Staff shall also inform an appropriate supervisor or designated staff person when they receive complaints of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, especially when the complaint is beyond their training to resolve or alleges serious misconduct.



Informal remedies include an opportunity for the complainant(s) to explain to the alleged perpetrator that the conduct is unwelcome, disruptive, or inappropriate either in writing or face-to-face; a statement from a staff member to the alleged perpetrator that the alleged conduct is not appropriate and could lead to discipline if proven or repeated; or a general public statement from an administrator at a campus reviewing the district harassment, intimidation and bullying policy without identifying the complainant, parent, guardian, or because the district believes the complaint needs to be more thoroughly investigated.

### FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

Anyone may initiate a formal complaint of harassment, intimidation or bullying, even if the informal complaint process is being utilized. Complainant(s) should not be promised confidentiality at the onset of an investigation. It cannot be predicted what will be discovered or what kind of hearing may result. Efforts should be made to increase the confidence and trust of the person making the complaint. The district will fully implement the anti-retaliation provisions of this policy to protect complainant(s) and witness(es). Student complainants and witnesses may have a parent or trusted adult with them, if requested, during any district initiated investigatory activities. The superintendent or designated compliance officer (hereinafter referred to as the compliance officer) may conclude that the district needs to conduct an investigation based on information in its possession regardless of the complainant's interest in filing a formal complaint. The following process shall be followed:

1. All informal complaints shall be in writing. Formal complaints shall set forth the specific acts, conditions or circumstances alleged to have occurred that may constitute harassment, intimidation or bullying. The compliance officer may draft the complaint based on the report of the complainant, for the complainant to review and sign.
2. Regardless of the complainant's interest in filing a formal complaint, the compliance officer may conclude that the district needs to draft a formal complaint based on the information in the officer's possession.
3. The compliance officer shall investigate all formal, written complaints of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and other information in the compliance officer's possession that the officer believes requires further investigation.
4. When the investigation is completed the compliance officer shall compile a full written report of the complaint and the result of the investigation. If the matter has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the superintendent shall take further action on the report.
5. The superintendent or designee, who is not the compliance officer, shall respond in writing to

6. the complainant and the accused within thirty (30) days, stating that:
  - The district intends to take corrective action; or
  - The investigation is incomplete to date and will be continuing; or
  - The district does not have adequate evidence to conclude that bullying, harassment or intimidation occurred.
7. Corrective measures deemed necessary will be instituted as quickly as possible, but in no event more than thirty (30) days after the superintendent's written response, unless the accused is appealing the imposition of discipline and the district is barred by due process considerations or a lawful order from imposing the discipline until the appeal process is concluded.

If a student remains aggrieved by the superintendent's designee's response, the student may pursue the complaint as one of discrimination. Students will be provided with age-appropriate information on the recognition and prevention of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and their rights and responsibilities under this and other district policies and rule at student orientation sessions and on other appropriate occasions, which may include parents.

## WEAPONS POLICY

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF NO TOLERANCE

The Varnett Public School also has no tolerance for weapons or weapon facsimiles off school grounds where the carrying, bringing, using, or possessing of a weapon or weapon facsimile creates a threat of physical harm to or physically harms a student or school personnel, is detrimental to the welfare or safety of a student or school personnel, adversely affects the discipline in our school, or adversely affects the educational program in our school. A student who violates this policy may be suspended for three (3) weeks, and/or expelled from the school, depending on the nature of the violation. **A student who carries, brings, uses, or possesses any dangerous weapon or firearm facsimile in or on school property shall also be referred for mandatory suspension or expulsion, respectively.**

### DEFINITIONS

1. **DANGEROUS WEAPON**, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as;

- A firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, or a firearm facsimile;
- Any pellet or "bee-bee" gun or other device, whether operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air;
- A fixed blade knife with a blade that measures longer than three inches in length or a spring-loaded knife or a pocket knife with a blade longer than three and one-half inches; or
- Any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that is:
  - used or intended to be used by the student to inflict death or serious bodily injury; or,
  - designed to inflict serious bodily injury or death, regardless of the student's intent.

For purposes of this subsection, a dangerous weapon includes, but is not

- limited to: bludgeons, brass knuckles, artificial knuckles, bows and arrows, blow guns, sling shots, poisons, mace, explosive devices, and any other object, device, instrument, material, or substance defined as an unlawful weapon pursuant to city ordinance, state statute, or as otherwise provided by law.

2. **STANDARD WEAPON**, for purposes of this policy, is defined as any object, device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate, that is:

- Used or intended to be used by the student to inflict bodily injury of a lesser degree than serious bodily injury; or,
- Designed to inflict bodily injury of a lesser degree than serious bodily injury, regardless of the student's intent.

For purposes of this subsection, a standard weapon includes, but is not limited to, all knives that do not meet the definition of a dangerous weapon under this policy.

- Weapon facsimile: any facsimile of a weapon; a weapon facsimile is any object, device, instrument, material or substance that substantially mimics a weapon (note: a weapon facsimile may also be considered a weapon under this policy, based, among other things, on its use or intended use.);
- School property: as used in this policy, school property includes, but is not limited to, any school building, any school grounds, any school property, any school grounds, any school or school vehicle, and any school or school-sponsored activity regardless of where the

activity occurs;

- School personnel: as used in this policy, school personnel means any school officer, director, employee, volunteer, representative, agent, or visitor.

### **GROUND FORS SUSPENSION /EXPULSION**

Under applicable laws, the grounds for disciplining a student for a weapons violation depend upon where the violation has occurred and the kind of weapon or weapon facsimile involved. More than one ground may apply to each violation.

#### **1. IN OR ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

- Expulsion: The carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon or firearm facsimile by any student in or on school property without the authorization of the superintendent or the board of directors is prohibited and shall be grounds for termination as a serious violation of the conduct and discipline code.
- Optional Suspension: The inadvertent or accidental carrying, bringing, or possessing of a standard weapon or standard weapon facsimile by any student in or on school property is prohibited and shall be grounds for suspension as conduct which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of students or other school personnel, except that repeated or flagrant violations shall be grounds for expulsion as serious violations of the conduct and discipline code and as conduct which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of pupils or other school personnel.

#### **2. OFF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

- Expulsion: The carrying, bringing, using, or possessing of any weapon or weapon facsimile by any student off school property without the authorization of the superintendent or the board of directors where such conduct creates a threat of physical harm to or physically harms a student or school personnel, is detrimental to the welfare or safety of a student or of school personnel, adversely affects the discipline in a school, or adversely affects the educational program in a school, is prohibited and shall be considered grounds for expulsion as conduct which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of pupils or other school personnel.
- a. Weapons violations by parents or persons on field trips or end-of-school travel trips:
- Any individual other than a student or employee who carries, brings, uses, or possesses weapon or weapon facsimile while on school property in violation of board policy may be removed from school property and activities by school officials and may face criminal charges.
- b. Application of this policy.
- This policy shall apply whether or not a weapon or weapon facsimile is

operational.

- For purposes of determining a student's, parent's or visitor's intent in section B(2)(d)(1) of this policy, there shall be a presumption that the primary purpose of carrying, bringing, using, or possessing the object, device, instrument, material or substance is to inflict death or serious bodily injury.
- For purposes of determining a student's parent's or visitor's intent in section B(3)(a), there shall be a presumption that the primary purpose of carrying, bringing, using, or possessing the object, device, instrument, material, or;
- For purposes of determining a student's, parent's or visitor's intent with respect to weapons facsimiles, there shall be a presumption that the primary purpose of carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a weapon facsimile is to engage in conduct that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of a student or of school personnel, to adversely affect the discipline in our school, and, to adversely affect the educational program in our school.
- It shall be no defense or excuse that an employee carried, brought, used, or possessed a weapon or weapon facsimile for the purpose of self-defense or the defense of another person. Permanent employment termination will be determined for the employee who brought a firearm to school.
- An exception to this policy may be made for employees participating in an authorized extracurricular activity or team involving the use of weapons such as firearms.

### WEAPONS POSSESSION

Weapons appearing at schools have been an increased concern among school administrations, faculty, parents and students. Due to the increased violence in schools across the country, The Varnett Public School has extended its weapons policy, which will be strictly enforced with no exceptions.

**Any student who brings a weapon or a weapon facsimile to school can be expelled from school for the remainder of the current school term. Any student who threatens to bring a weapon(s) or any student who threatens to use a weapon and cause bodily harm to another student or staff member will be suspended for a period no less than three (3) weeks without an opportunity to make up missed classroom assignments, tests or to attend**

**upcoming field trips.**

After a student has been suspended, the student must meet the following criteria before being readmitted:

1. A parent conference with the superintendent, director and teacher must occur prior to re-admittance. During the meeting the parent must agree to and sign a consent form stating:
  - Student must return to school with clear backpacks only (no exceptions).
  - Student can be searched every day by security if the student is suspected of carrying another weapon or a weapon facsimile in the backpacks. The parent will be notified and invited to come to the school to witness the search process.
  - Student must remain in class without exhibiting inappropriate behavior.
2. If the parent does not agree to these conditions, the student will be expelled from the school.

If a student violates this policy a second time, the student will be expelled from the school without an opportunity to re-enroll.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM**

Education programs dealing with substance abuse will be conducted with students by the classroom teacher on a consistent and coordinated basis. Additional information and services are available to both the school and parents by other agencies. Age-appropriate, development-based drug and alcohol education programs are provided in The Varnett Public School's health education program.

**CELL PHONE POLICY**

The Varnett Public School understands that your children may need to contact you at the end of the day and/or after their departure from the school bus to let you know that they have arrived home safely. However, we are experiencing students using cell phones during class to communicate with other students, parents or outsiders via a phone call (making or receiving the call), text messaging, videotaping fights or other student conflicts (physical and verbal), and/or the teacher/school staff members. The information is then being transferred to Facebook or other social media without the consent and knowledge of the individuals affected.

Effectively immediately, students must have their cell phones turned off and put away by the time they get on a school bus in the morning until they are dropped off at their bus stop in the afternoon. If a student's cell phone goes off while he or she is on the school bus or during school hours, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher and a parent must or guardian must pick it up at the end of the schoolday.

This policy will be strictly enforced and any student caught with a cell phone turned on or in use in his or her possession during school hours (7:30 am – 5:00 pm) will be suspended and the parent will be charged a fine of \$25 to retrieve the cell phone from the campus director.

### **CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

School is a place where students come to learn. At The Varnett Public School, we believe they should be able to learn in a school that is safe and orderly. We insist on this because we want the best for your child. Open, honest communication with you is the best way we know to achieve this goal.

Students, parents and the school must share the responsibility for creating the best possible educational setting. The school must provide a quality staff and programs to help children learn to take responsibility for their actions. Students must respect themselves, the school, staff members and their classmates. The ultimate goal of the discipline program is to encourage cooperation and ensure students:

- Make good choices;
- Act positively and productively;
- Take responsibility for their own behavior;
- Help others to be successful;
- Work toward continuous improvement at home, at school and in the community.

### **CARE OF SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

At The Varnett School, we try to instill in students to take pride in the appearance of their school. Students must not mark on school furniture, walls, ceiling, floor or equipment with pens, pencils, markers or any other instrument. Students must not tamper with fire alarms, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads, plants, trees or any electrical system in the school. Anyone who destroys or damages school property while playing, fighting, being mischievous, or through vandalism, arson or larceny or who creates a hazard to the safety of other students, will be charged a fee to repair



the damages or replace the damaged item(s). The student may also be suspended for a period of time determined by the campus director or superintendent or expelled from the school for the remainder of the school year without the opportunity to re-enroll.

Students and parents are also asked not to bring food into the school building before, during or after-school hours. All food should be eaten in the cafeteria only. Violators may be charged a minimum \$50 or the cost of the janitorial fee to cover the cost of cleaning the carpet and/or upholstery. A fee charged greater than \$50 will be based on actual cost.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

In order for people to learn, live and work together in a productive, safe, and comfortable environment, appropriate behavior is necessary. The Varnett Public School and each class have established realistic and reasonable guidelines for students to follow, so learning can take place without disruption. Minor problems are handled by the classroom teacher through discussions with the students. Repeated disruptive incidents will be referred to the Campus Director. When a student is referred to the campus director, the course of action will be taken:

- 1<sup>st</sup>** Visit: Discussion with student about the problem
- 2<sup>nd</sup>** Visit: Call to parents
- 3<sup>rd</sup>** Visit: In/out of school suspension for maximum three (3) days
- 4<sup>th</sup>** Visit: Expulsion for serious offenses violation only

Following is a brief summary of the reasons for suspension/expulsion established by the board of directors.

### VARNETT PUBLIC SCHOOL

- Steals or attempts to steal school or private property.
- Causes, attempts to cause, or threatens damage or harm to school, school property, or another person.
- Threatens the use of any look alike, incendiary device or pretend weapon.
- Possession, exhibit or the use of any real or dangerous objects.
- Possesses, uses, sells or otherwise furnishes or is under the influence of any controlled substance.

- Possesses, or uses tobacco, tobacco products or illegal drugs.
- Commits an obscene act, indecent exposure or engages in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Frequent or flagrant willful disobedience, defiance of proper authority or disruptive behavior.

### **SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION/DUE PROCESS**

The board of directors has established policies and standards of behavior in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of students. When these policies and standards are violated, it may be necessary to suspend a student to an alternative classroom setting or expel from the school entirely.

Suspended or expelled students shall be denied the privilege of participation in all school sponsored extracurricular activities during the period of suspension or expulsion, or for a designated time which may extend beyond the period of suspension or expulsion.

Except where suspension for a first offense is warranted in accordance with law, a suspension shall be imposed only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct.

Expulsion is an action taken by the board for a serious offense. (Sec. 37.007) "A student shall be expelled from a school if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school related activity on/off school property commits, uses, exhibits, or possesses:

- A firearm
- An illegal knife
- A club
- A weapon listed as prohibited
- Aggravated assault
- Arson
- Murder
- Indecency with a child
- Aggravated robbery
- Aggravated kidnapping
- Manslaughter

- Criminally negligent homicide
- Continuous sexual abuse of a child

The grounds for suspension or expulsion, and the procedures for considering, recommending, and/or implementing suspension or expulsion shall be those specified in law and/or the administrative regulation.

### **DUE PROCESS**

The board of directors shall provide for the fair and equitable treatment of students facing suspension and expulsion by affording them their due process rights under the law. The Due Process Clause serves two basic goals. One is to produce, through the use of fair procedures, more accurate results: to prevent the wrongful deprivation of interest. The other goal is to make people feel that they are treated fairly by listening to their side of the story. This process is essentially a guarantee of basic fairness. For students facing suspension or expulsion from school because of their alleged violations of school code of conduct, they must be afforded an informal hearing with school administrators before such a suspension or expulsion is finalized.

The superintendent or designee shall comply with procedures for notices and appeals as specified in the administrative regulation and/or law.

### **SUPERVISED SUSPENSION**

The board of directors recognizes that students who are suspended from school often have no supervision or guidance during the school hours when they are off campus and may fall behind in their class work. The board of directors believes that, in many cases, it would be better to manage the student's behavior by keeping the student at school and providing him/her with supervision that is separated from the regular classroom.

The superintendent or designee shall establish a supervised suspension program which meets the requirement of law for students suspended from a classroom for any reason outlined in the discipline policy and who poses no imminent danger or threat to the school, staff or students, and for whose infraction is not a serious offense. The superintendent or designee shall examine options other than the alternatives classroom setting and may establish a suspension program which may involve a progressive discipline plan during the school day in their regular classroom; use of

conferences among staff, parent/guardians, and students; detention and other assessment – related teams.

The board of directors believes that parental involvement plays an important role in the resolution of classroom behavior problems. The Board of Directors expects teachers and administrators to communicate with parents when a behavior problem arises.

### **DECISION NOT TO ENFORCE EXPULSION ORDER**

On a case-by-case basis, the enforcement of an expulsion order may be suspended by the board of directors pursuant to the requirements of law.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Listed below are the disciplinary actions to be taken when a student's behavior warrants consequences. The listing of recommended minimum /maximum action does not imply or require that a "step-by-step" progression of increasing severity be employed by an administrator in dealing with a violation. An incident may warrant the minimum or maximum consequence, dependent upon the situation and the previous record of the student. In the case of a student who commits a serious offense, no school interventions will be applicable and the student will be offered a due process hearing.

In a behavioral intervention involving a child who is under the age of six (6) years, the school administrator may exercise judgment in the implementation of disciplinary actions. In a behavioral implementation involving a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, the school administrator must follow the guidelines that pertain to those students. For guidance, the school administrator should refer to the appropriate violation classification. In all other cases, all administrators shall follow the specified consequences for violations. In a behavioral intervention that will involve a police arrest at the school, the administrator must contact the superintendent and/or security coordinator for guidance.

When a student commits an offense on the school bus, the campus director must follow the appropriate consequences for the offense. For serious offenses, discipline will include at least the minimum appropriate consequences for the code violation. Campus directors must exercise caution

in allowing students who have been suspended from the school bus and/or school to ride the bus home. A parent/guardian shall be contacted to transport the student home when there is a concern that the student may be a danger to himself/herself or others if the student transported to their home on the school bus.

**VIOLATIONS: CLASSIFICATION I**

**SCHOOL BUS MISBEHAVIOR**

Standing, distracting the driver, running on bus, eating on bus, too loud or boisterous, sitting in the wrong seat, throwing or shooting objects, or using foul or abusive language. For more serious offenses, discipline will include at least the appropriate minimum consequences for the code violation.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – Student warned notification to parents	Maximum – 3 days suspension of school bus privileges
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of suspension of school bus privileges	Maximum – 5 days suspension of school bus privileges
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 5 days suspension of school bus privileges	Maximum – 10 days suspension of school bus privileges

Campus director or designee must telephone the superintendent within two (2) days of the alleged offense to request an expulsion conference for school bus privileges.

**CLASSROOM DISRUPTION**

Behavior which interferes with the learning of others in a classroom or other learning environment.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 1 day in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference

**DISRESPECT**

Inappropriate comments or physical gestures to teachers or staff members or others.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 1 day in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school suspension	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference

**FIGHTING**

A physical confrontation involving two (2) or more students.

Each incident is to be investigated. Administrators will need to make a final decision. If the police are to be involved, they are to be called in a timely manner (preferably in a 24 hour period). The following guidelines are to be used with discretion in making the decision to contact the police.

- Student has obvious injury that may require medical attention
- Student refuses to respond to authority and escalates aggressive behavior upon initial separation.
- Student turns anger on staff with words or physically assaults staff during the fight.
- Student uses an object that has the potential to cause harm during the fight.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents.	Maximum – 1-3 days in schoolsuspension/out of school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school suspension	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension.
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference or Alternative placement to another Varnett campus.

**INDECENT EXPOSURE**

Exposure to sight of the private parts of the body in a lewd or indecent manner in a public place.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension

**INSUBORDINATION**

Refusing to follow directions of teachers, staff, or administration.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 1-3 days in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school suspension	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference

**REFUSAL TO OBEY SCHOOL POLICIES**

Failure to comply with school rules, regulations, policies, and/or procedures.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 1-3 days in school suspension.
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in suspension	Maximum – 1-3 days suspension
<b>Third Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference or Alternative placement to another Varnett campus

**SALE OR DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED (UNAUTHORIZED)**

Unapproved sale or distribution of items not otherwise defined.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 3 days suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1-3 days of in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension

**VANDALISM (DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL/BUS PROPERTY)**

Damage, destruction or defacement of property belonging to school or others. Restitution is to be made. The restitution may be in the form of monetary restitution not to exceed the lesser of the fair market value of the property or \$2,500 or the student’s assignment to a school work project or both. (Each incident of this nature must be reported to the superintendent who will take any further actions).

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1 day in-school	Maximum – 3 days suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	

Minimum – 1-2 days in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension
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**VIOLATIONS: CLASSIFICATION II**

**ALCOHOL (POSSESSION/MISREPRESENTATION AND/OR USE OF)**

Possession, misrepresentation, use, or showing evidence of use, sale or distribution of any alcoholic substances. (Each incident of this level must be reported to the Superintendent who will take any necessary action(s).)

<b>First Offense:</b>
Minimum – 3 days suspension

**BULLYING** – Intentional negative actions on the part of one or more students, repeatedly and over time, that interfere with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational program.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 3 days in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference or alternative placement to another Varnett campus

**DEFAMATION**

False or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identified group of individual that harms the reputation of the person or the identified group by demeaning him/her or them in the estimation of the community or deterring others from associating or dealing with the individual group. This includes false accusations of sexual harassment

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Notification to parents	Maximum – 3 days in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension/parent conference or alternative placement to another Varnett campus

**FIREARMS**

Bringing or possessing any weapons, such as a rifle, gun, handgun, shotgun, loaded or unloaded, operable or inoperable, including any object which is a look-alike; or any implement which would cause or is intended to cause bodily harm. (Incident of a firearm on campus must be reported to the Harris County Sheriff’s Office.

<b>First Offense:</b>
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Minimum – 3 days suspension. School administrator or designee must contact the school’s superintendent	Maximum – Expulsion in accordance with TEC SEC 37.007
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**FIREWORKS OR EXPLOSIVES (POSSESSION, USE AND/OR THREAT TO USE)**

Possession, sale, distribution, detonation of an incendiary or explosive material or device including firecrackers, smoke bomb, flares, or any combustible or explosive substance or combination of substances or articles.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1 day in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension

**HARASSMENT**

Unwanted and inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct, other than sexual harassment, directed towards others.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – Notification to parents and apology to the victim.	Maximum – 1 day in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days in school suspension.	Maximum – 3 days suspension

**PHYSICAL ATTACK ON A COMMUNITY MEMBER**

Physically pushing, hitting, or otherwise attacking a member of the community while on school grounds or at a school sponsored event.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	

**PHYSICAL ATTACK ON A STUDENT**

Physically pushing, hitting, or otherwise attacking another student

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	

**PHYSICAL ATTACK ON A TEACHER/STAFF**

Physically attacking an employee of the school system, including striking a staff member who is intervening in a fight or other disruptive activity.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and/or other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed towards others. Also included is any non-consensual touching of a sexual nature that does not rise to a level of sexual assault.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – Notification to parents and apology to the victim	Maximum – 1-3 day in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 1 day in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension or Alternative placement to another Varnett campus

**STUDENT THREATS**

Student’s threats must be taken seriously. Administrators must investigate the nature and extent and determine whether the violation of the Student Discipline Regulation. Parental Contact shall be made following the investigation. As appropriate the administrator will notify the police department.

**THREAT TO STUDENT (VERBAL OR PHYSICAL)**

Threatening or aggressive language or gestures directed towards another student.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – Notification to parents and apology to the victim	Maximum – 1 day in school suspension or 3 days suspension and apology to the victim

**THREAT TO TEACHER, STAFF, OR OTHERS (VERBAL OR PHYSICAL)**

Threatening or aggressive language or gestures directed toward a staff member or others.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 days suspension	

**THEFT**

Taking or obtaining property of another without permission and knowledge. (Full restitution is to be made.)

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum – Notification to parents/1 day in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days suspension

**Tobacco or Tobacco Products (Possession and/or Use of)** – Possession, use, sale, or distribution of tobacco, tobacco products, cigarette lighters, and matches.

<b>First Offense:</b>	
Minimum - Parent conference /1 day in school suspension	Maximum – 3 days in school suspension
<b>Second Offense:</b>	
Minimum – 3 day in school suspension and parent conference	Maximum - 3 days suspension

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER**

**SCHOOL CLOSING WHILE CLASSES NOT IN SESSION**

In the event of bad weather or emergency conditions necessitating the closing of schools before or after the school day, the district will submit the information to the media for broadcast; parents and students should tune to local radio and television stations to receive this information. Channel 2, Channel 11, Channel 13 or MAJIC 102 FM will be notified by 6:30 a.m. The information will also be placed on the district’s website, [www.varnett.org](http://www.varnett.org).

Since school personnel usually receive emergency closing information from the media and the district’s website at the same time as everyone else, parents and students should not call the schools, administrators, or teachers as such calls can tie up these telephones and hinder school personnel from receiving important closing information. During inclement weather conditions, parents may call the Varnett administration at 713-667-4051 to hear an updated message regarding school closings or delays. If the district must cancel school for a day, the first (in calendar year order) “bad weather day” designated on the Varnett School year calendar will become an instructional day. If the district must subsequently cancel school for another day, the second “bad weather day” designated on the calendar will also become an instructional day. If school is canceled for more than two days, the district will either add days at the end of the school year or follow directives from the Texas Education Agency.

**SCHOOL CLOSING WHILE CLASSES IN SESSION**

If schools are closed during emergency situations while students are at school, the announcement of the closing will be made to the media as quickly as possible; instructions will be provided as to what arrangements parents should make to pick up their students or provide for their students’

security when buses reach home. The information will also be placed on the district's website, [www.varnett.org](http://www.varnett.org). Additionally, an attempt will be made to send a recorded phone message to the emergency phone number provided by the parent/guardian to update emergency situation information and instructions.

### **IN CASE OF EVACUATION**

- Sound alarm.
- Students will be moved to designated evacuation areas.
- The administrator or office personnel will call the proper fire department and the Superintendent's office.
- All students and school personnel will remain outside the building.
- The all-clear signal will sound when appropriate.

### **TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER**

- Sound alarm – Administrator or designee announces severe weather alarm over the school public address system or through another appropriate method established by the school.
- Students will be moved to designated safety zone.
- Students will sit facing the interior wall. When danger is imminent, they will assume a protective posture, kneeling with head down to protect the back of the head and neck.
- Students will not leave the area until instructed to move.
- All students in portable buildings will be sheltered in the main building.
- The all-clear signal will sound when appropriate.

### **LOCK DOWN SITUATION**

- Sound alarm – Administrator or designee will announce lock-down situation over the public address system or through another appropriate method established by the school.
- Students will be moved to classrooms and other secured areas.
- Exterior and interior doors will be locked.
- Non-emergency personnel will not be allowed in or out of the building until the all-clear signal is given.

### REVERSE EVACUATION

- Students who are outside will be moved into a building.
- Lock-down procedures will be followed until emergency responders determine conditions are safe to resume normal operations.

# APPENDIX A

# Standardized Test Assessment Policy Grades K-6

## THE VARNETT PUBLIC SCHOOL STANDARDIZED TESTING PROGRAM

The Varnett Public School will administer standardized testing to all students in grades K-6 in accordance with this local policy and state law.

The Varnett Public School may adopt and administer criterion-referenced or norm-referenced assessment instruments, or both, at any grade level. A norm-referenced assessment instrument adopted by The Varnett Public School must be economical, nationally recognized, and state- approved. TEX. EDUC. CODE § 39.026. VPS has adopted the Stanford Achievement Test for administration to students enrolled in grades K-2. Students in grades K-2 are required to take the **Stanford Achievement** Test annually.

### STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC READINESS (“STAAR”) – GRADES 3-6

Every student receiving instruction in the essential knowledge and skills shall take the appropriate criterion-referenced assessments, as required by Tex. Educ. Code Chapter 39, Subchapter B TEX. EDUC. CODE § 39.023. Unless exempt, students enrolled in grades 3-6 will complete the STAAR annually in core subject areas in accordance with the following:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3-6;
- Reading, annually in grades 3-6;
- Writing, in grade 4;
- Science in grade 5; and
- Any other subject and grade required by state or federal law.

### TESTING SCHEDULE AND ADMINISTRATIONS

The school will administer achievement tests to students in grades K-2 in accordance with the locally developed testing schedule. All other grade- level state assessments shall be administered in accordance with the schedule established by the Commissioner of Education. The school shall follow the test administration procedures established by the Texas Education Agency in the applicable test administration materials. 19 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 101.25.



### MAKE-UP EXAMS

Students who are absent on a date on which a required assessment is administered will be required to make up the missed assessment during the testing window or on make-up testing days designated by the state testing calendar.

### GRADE LEVEL ADVANCEMENT/PROMOTION

Students are required to complete the applicable grade-level assessment(s) annually. Refusal or failure to complete the grade-level assessment annually will result in the student being retained in the current grade level. A student's score on an applicable assessment must be considered as a factor in promotion, even if a passing score is not required by state law for advancement to the next grade level. TEX. EDUC. CODE § 28.021(c).

#### Chapter 101. Assessment

##### Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Grade Advancement and Accelerated Instruction

**Statutory Authority:** The provisions of this Subchapter BB issued under the Texas Education Code, §§28.021, 28.0211, 28.0213, 28.0217, 29.081(b-1), 39.023, and 39.025(b-1), unless otherwise noted.

#### §101.2001. Policy.

School districts shall implement grade advancement requirements in accordance with this subchapter and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) procedures outlined in the official Student Success Initiative manual, published annually by the TEA. As specified in §101.2009 of this title (relating to Notice to Parents or Guardians), school districts will make public at the beginning of the school year grade advancement requirements as determined by the school district.

- (a) In addition to local policy relating to grade advancement, except in cases where a student is testing above grade level as specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §28.0211(o), a student in Grade 5 or Grade 8 shall demonstrate proficiency in reading and mathematics as required by the TEC, §28.0211(a), in order to advance to the next grade. The assessment grade promotion requirements of the TEC, §28.0211(a), shall be in effect beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Demonstrated proficiency is defined under this section as meeting the satisfactory passing standard on the appropriate assessment

instruments specified by §101.2003(a) of this title (relating to Grade Advancement Testing Requirements) or on a state- approved alternate assessment authorized in §101.2011 of this title (relating to Alternate Assessment). The standard in place when a student first takes a Grade 5 or Grade 8 mathematics or reading assessment is the standard that will be maintained for all subsequent retest opportunities for that student. A student who does not demonstrate proficiency as described in this section may advance to the next grade only if:

- (1) The student has completed the required accelerated instruction under §101.2006 of this title (relating to Accelerated Instruction);
- (2) The student's Grade Placement Committee (GPC), as specified in §101.2007 of this title (relating to Role of Grade Placement Committee), determines by unanimous decision, in accordance with the standards for promotion established by the local school board, that the student is likely to perform at grade level at the end of the next year given additional accelerated instruction. In accordance with the TEC, §28.021, to determine grade promotion, a school district is required to consider the recommendation of the student's teacher, the student's grades, the student's assessment scores, and any other necessary academic information; and,
- (3) In accordance with the TEC, §28.0211(n), the school district will ensure that a student who is promoted by a GPC under §101.2007 of this title shall be assigned in each subject in which the student failed to perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument specified under the TEC, §28.0211(a), to a teacher who meets all state and federal qualifications to teach that subject and grade.
  - Students shall be provided accelerated instruction required by the TEC, §28.0211 and §39.025(b-1), as specified in §101.2006 of this title.
  - A student in grade 5 or grade 8 may not be denied promotion to the next grade on the basis of failure to perform satisfactorily on a reading or mathematics assessment instrument intended for use above the student's grade level.

**Source: The provisions of this §101.2001 adopted to be effective May 26, 2002, 27 TexReg 4337; amended to be effective April 19, 2010, 35 TexReg 3030; amended to be effective June 4, 2012, 37 TexReg 4040; amended to be effective February 26, 2014, 39 TexReg 1149.**