BELLS HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

LEARN - WORK - SERVE - RESPECT
School District Information
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High School Principal
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School Board Trustees
E.T. Pettit—President
Gary Payne —Vice President
Terri Sanford—Secretary
Brent Adams
Max Robertson
Charlie Matchett
Russell Clapp
Posting Location of all School Board Meetings:
Administration Office Front Door

Board of Trustees — Monthly Meetings
The Bells ISD Board of Trustees meets at least once a month, generally at the administrative offices. Date, time and location of each meeting are posted on the front door of the administration building. The public is welcome to attend all meetings.

Nondiscrimination
Bells I.S.D. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex:
Name: Joe Moore, superintendent

Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:
Name: Tricia Meek, assistant superintendent

Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, who coordinates services for homeless students:
Name: Yalonda Ivers, elementary principal

Liaison for Foster Care, who coordinates services for students in foster care:
Name: Carla Norris, elementary counselor

Bells ISD does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of District services, programs, or activities. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) interested persons should contact Mr. Joe Moore.

Services for Students with Disabilities
Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time.

Name: Christy Nolen
Position: Director, Grayson County Special Education Coop
Address: 201 E. Lamar, Sherman, TX 75090
Telephone: 903-893-3114
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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2016–17! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Bells High School Student Handbook is designed to provide basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. The handbook is divided into two sections:

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

**Section II**—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS—organized alphabetically by topic, and, where possible, further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels, for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Bells ISD Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found on the district’s website at www.bellsisd.net and is available in hard copy upon request.

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

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

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

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

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a principal or counselor.
Your child’s school will request that you provide contact information, such as your current phone number and email address, in order for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child’s school, or the district. If you consent to receive such information through a landline or wireless phone, please ensure that you notify the school’s administration office immediately upon a change in or disconnection of your phone number. The district or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communication, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial to maintain timely communication with you. Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child’s principal. Please see SAFETY for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following forms provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon the student’s enrollment:

1. Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook Form;
3. Parent’s Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education form, if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities; and

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. The district’s official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at www.bellsisd.net.
SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS
This section of the Bells High School Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

CONSENT, OPT-OUT, AND REFUSAL RIGHTS

Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation
A district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent unless the examination, test, or treatment is required under state or federal law regarding requirements for special education or by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for child abuse investigations and reports.

Consent to Display a Student’s Original Works and Personal Information
Teachers may display students’ work, which may include personally identifiable student information, in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

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

Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if Student is Under Age 14
A child under the age of 14 must have parental permission to receive instruction in the district’s parenting and paternity awareness program; otherwise, the child will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE), is incorporated into the district’s health education classes.

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Otherwise Permitted by Law
State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity;
- When it relates to media coverage of the school; or
- When it relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

The district will seek parental consent through a written request before making any other video or voice recording of your child not otherwise allowed by law.
Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

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

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

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

Please note that if the district is made aware that a student is in temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state, through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements, corporal punishment will not be administered, even when a signed statement prohibiting its use has not been submitted by the student’s caregiver or caseworker.

Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees

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

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

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

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a child’s education records without written consent. “Directory information” is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Examples include a student’s photograph for publication in the school yearbook; a student’s name and grade level for purposes of communicating class and teacher assignment; the name, weight, and height of an athlete for publication in a school athletic program; a list of student birthdays for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition; a student’s name and photograph posted on a district-approved-and-managed social media platform; and the names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading
period. Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

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

The district has identified the following as directory information: A student’s name and their address. If you object to the release of the student information included on the directory information response form, your decision will also apply to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as the honor roll, school newspaper, the yearbook, recognition activities, news releases, and athletic programs.

Also review the information at Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records.

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

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

**Participation in Third-Party Surveys**

**Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation**

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

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.
You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information

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

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

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

REMOVING A STUDENT FROM INSTRUCTION OR EXCUSING A STUDENT FROM A REQUIRED COMPONENT OF INSTRUCTION

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12

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

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence and policy EC(LEGAL).]
Religious or Moral Beliefs
You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation
Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student is in need of additional targeted assistance in order for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible. In accordance with state law and policy EC, the school will not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student’s parent consents to this removal.

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

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

RIGHT OF ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS, CURRICULUM MATERIALS, AND DISTRICT RECORDS / POLICIES

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

You are also entitled to request that the school allow your child to take home any instructional materials used by the student. If the school determines that sufficient availability exists to grant the request, the student must return the materials at the beginning of the next school day if requested to do so by the child’s teacher.

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

Student Records

Accessing Student Records
You may review your child’s student records. These records include:
• Attendance records,
• Test scores,
• Grades,
• Disciplinary records,
• Counseling records,
• Psychological records,
• Applications for admission,
• Health and immunization information,
• Other medical records,
• Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
• Reports of behavioral patterns,
• State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
• Teaching materials and tests used in your child’s classroom.

**Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**

A federal law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**, are:

• The right to inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
• The right to request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA.
• The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
• The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

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

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally
identifiable information from a student’s records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

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

Inspection and release of student records is primarily restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records.

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

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s education records, without written consent of the parent or eligible student, in the following circumstances:

- When district school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. School officials would include board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or district medical staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General’s office, the U.S. Attorney General’s office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, TEA, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture’s office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.

- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

- To another school, school district/system, or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or which the student has received.

- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
• To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.

• To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.

• When the district discloses information it has designated as directory information [see Objecting to the Release of Directory Information for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure].

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

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

A parent or eligible student who wishes to inspect the student’s records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wishes to inspect. Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records.

The address of the principals’ offices is: 1500 Ole Ambrose Rd, Bells, TX 75414.

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

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

The district’s policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal’s or superintendent’s office [or on the district’s website at www.bellsisd.net.]

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

**Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications**

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

**STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Children of Military Families**

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

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

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

Additional information may be found at [http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=7995](http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=7995).

**Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments**

**Safety Transfers/Assignments**

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. See the principal for information.

- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom.

  [See Bullying, policy FDB, and policy FFI.]
• Request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE. The neighboring district must agree to accept a transfer request in this case.

Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students

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

Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)

A student who is currently in the conservatorship (custody) of the state and who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities outside the district’s established testing windows, and the district will grant proportionate course credit by semester (partial credit) when a student only passes one semester of a two-semester course.

A student who is currently in the conservatorship (custody) of the state and who is moved outside of the district’s or school’s attendance boundaries, or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and who is moved outside the district’s or school’s boundaries, is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. In addition, if a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

[See also Credit by Examination for Advancement / Acceleration, Course Credit, and Students in Foster Care for more information.]

Students Who Are Homeless

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

• Proof of residency requirements;
• Immunization requirements;
• Educational program placement, if the student is unable to provide previous academic records, or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness;
• Credit-by-examination opportunities;
• The award of partial credit (awarding credit proportionately when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course);
• Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
• Graduation requirements.
If a student in grade 11 or 12 is homeless and transfers to another school district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

Federal law also allows a homeless student to remain enrolled in what is called the “school of origin” or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing. [See also Credit by Examination for Advancement / Acceleration, Course Credit, and Homeless Students for more information.]

**Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services**

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

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

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities. Additional information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available from the school district in a companion document, A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process. Both documents may also be found at [http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx](http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx).

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

- Texas Project First, at [http://www.texasprojectfirst.org](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org)
- Partners Resource Network, at [http://www.partnerstx.org](http://www.partnerstx.org)

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Clay Rolen at 903-965-7315.
Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English

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

Students With Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504

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

The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is Clay Rolen at 903-965-7315.

[Also see policy FB.]
SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student’s age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Josh Weger at 903-965-7315.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

Compulsory Attendance

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student age 19 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Between Ages 6 and 19

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

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

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

All Grade Levels

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

- Religious holy days;
• Required court appearances;
• Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
• Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s arrival or return to campus; and
• For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  o An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  o Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.

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

**College Days**

Students in grade 9 and 10 may miss one day of school per year to visit a college campus. Juniors and Seniors are granted two college days per year. College days must be cleared through the counselor a minimum of two days prior to the visit. The student must provide an email or some other type of written notification that the college has been contacted and the student is scheduled to be on the campus on the specified date(s). Most colleges have a link on their websites that allow students to register and sign up for a tour. The student must also obtain a note from the college verifying that he / she was on campus for the specified date. Colleges are used to doing this and most have a form that they will gladly give to students, but you may have to ask. Students must bring the note within three days of returning from the college visit or the absence will be considered unexcused.

**Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

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

**Age 19 and Older**

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district will send the student a letter as required by law explaining that the district may revoke the student’s enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student’s enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.
**Between Ages 6 and 19**

When a student between ages 6 and 19 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student’s parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor his or her child’s attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is Josh Weger. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student’s parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 12 through 18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

**Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

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

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

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
• A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.

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

• The committee will review absences incurred based on the student’s participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.

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

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

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

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

The student or parent may appeal the committee’s decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

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

**Night School**

Students may be assigned Night School as a consequence of failure to meet attendance requirements or excessive tardies. These students may be charged a tuition to cover supervision expenses.

Students will receive a letter if they are required to attend Night School. It is held from 3:45-7:00 pm. Students must report to the High School commons on time, and they are not allowed to talk to other students or use electronic devices. Students must arrange their own transportation after released from Night School. Any student violating these rules will be dismissed with no credit for time served. Dismissal or refusal to attend Night School may result in ISS or loss of credit for the semester.

**Official Attendance-Taking Time**

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.

Official attendance is taken every day during second period.

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

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

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

Doctor’s Note After an Absence for Illness

Within 3 days of returning to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

Unexcused absences

Work missed for unexcused absences may be made up for partial credit. Students shall receive a maximum of a 70 on work made up. If a student makes less than a 70 on the work, he or she shall receive the actual grade made. For unexcused absences, teachers may assign the date missed work is due.

Skipping school may result in In-School-Suspension (ISS).

Driver License Attendance Verification

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student’s attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student’s attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW

Bells ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:
• The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
• A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
• The district’s financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA;
• The performance ratings of the district’s evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and
• Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Information about all of these can be found on the district’s website at www.bellisisd.net. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district’s administration office.

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

AWARDS AND HONORS

Perfect Attendance Guidelines for Students

Students must be enrolled in school on the first day and be present the entire school year. Perfect attendance records may be transferred from other schools when enrolling at Bells High School. Absences for natural disasters or uncontrollable factors should not be counted if officially designated by the superintendent of Bells ISD as being such, e.g., weather conditions, etc. Students must be in attendance each day at 10:00 am for state of Texas ADA purposes.

Honor Roll

Students earning grade averages of 92 or greater with no grade less than a 90, excluding PE / PE equivalent, will be placed on the Superintendent’s Honor Roll.

Students earning a grade average of 90 or greater with no grades less than 80, excluding PE / PE equivalent, will be placed on the Principal’s Honor Roll.

BULLYING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom. [Also see Safety Transfers/Assignments]

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

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

[Also see Safety Transfers/Assignments, Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, Hazing, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS**

The district offers career and technical education programs. Admission to these programs is based on availability.

These programs will be offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. Bells ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs. [Also see Nondiscrimination]
Statement for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.

CELEBRATIONS

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child’s or grandchild’s classroom for his or her birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child’s teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance.

[Also see Food Allergies]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

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

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

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

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

- http://taasa.org/resources-2/

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:
CLASS RANK/HIGHEST-RANKING STUDENT

Selection of Valedictorian and Salutatorian and Graduation Honors

1. Graduating seniors will be ranked within the graduating class on the basis of their weighted grade average (see Guidance Handbook) of classes taken for high school credit or to satisfy state graduation requirements in all subjects except those listed as exempt in item #5.

2. The valedictorian and salutatorian will be the two students graduating on the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) with the highest weighted numerical grade averages. (Average of grades on a percentage of 100.) To be eligible, a student must have been enrolled at Bells High School as a full-time student for his/her entire junior and senior year. Per HB 5, the graduates of 2018 and beyond must meet Foundation plan requirements and earn one or more endorsements to qualify.

3. Students changing from an Honors/Advanced, Regular or Basic class will be awarded the grade weight appropriate for the class they are in at the end of the semester.

4. Dual Credit college courses will be awarded weighted grade points if that subject at the college level is also available as a weighted class at BHS; if a weighted course in not available at BHS, the dual credit course grade will not be weighted. College courses taken concurrently will not count in a student’s GPA. Dual credit courses taken during the second semester of the senior year will not be included in ranking averages.

5. All subjects taken will be used in computed weighted grade average for either award, except: band, physical education, athletics, choir, yearbook, art, theatre arts, or any other course which awards “blanket grades” or “pass fail” credit.

6. In determining the valedictorian and salutatorian, weighted course grades taken for high school credit, except those as noted as exceptions, will be averaged from the student’s grades through the end of the third grading period of the twelfth grade, inclusive, with the student having achieved the highest average being declared the valedictorian and the student having the second highest average being declared the salutatorian.

7. In case of a tie for either of these honors, when carried to four decimal places, both students will share the honor. In case of a tie for the valedictorian, both students will share the honor, in order to determine which student will receive the state scholarship the average will be carried to whatever decimal place breaks the tie.

8. Students with an overall weighted average of 90 or above will be designated as Honor Graduates.

[For further information, see policy EIC.]

CLASS SCHEDULES

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus
principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day’s schedule.

[See Schedule Changes for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.] Bells High School will follow the bell schedule below:

Tutoring (if needed) - 7:30-7:55
1st period - 8:00-8:45
2nd period - 8:49-9:34
Break - 9:34-9:41
Advisory - 9:44-10:04
3rd period - 10:08-10:53
4th period - 10:57-11:42
5th (A) period - 11:46-12:31 (Lunch 12:35-1:05)
5th (B) period - 12:20-1:05 (Lunch 11:46-12:16)
6th period - 1:09-1:55
7th period - 1:59-2:45
8th period - 2:49-3:35

**Senior Release**

If a student has met all credit requirements during their 9th, 10th, and 11th grades, and is in good academic standing during their senior year, then those students may be released at the end of 6th period with the principal’s permission. Students must maintain a passing grade in all classes during their senior year to qualify for this privilege.

**CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

Students should be in their seats when the bell rings
Students should be prepared for class; bring materials: paper, pencil, pen and required binders and books
Students should be polite to everyone
Students should respect the rights and property of others
Students should follow all teacher directives the first time they are given
Students should wait to be dismissed from class by the teachers

**COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS**

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent, of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program*; or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.
*Beginning with ninth graders in the 2014–15 school year, to be eligible for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must be on track to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program. This means that a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college to which the student submits an application.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University’s enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2016 term, the University will be admitting the top eight percent of the high school’s graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

[See also Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student’s rank in class, and requirements for Graduation for information associated with the foundation graduation program].

**COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES**

Students in grades 9–12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit or Advanced Placement (AP)
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with Grayson County Community College, which may be offered on or off campus;
- Certain CTE courses.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student’s grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student’s desired degree plan.
Articulated Courses

Students at Bells High School may earn college credit while completing high school courses through an agreement with Grayson College. This means that when a student earns a B or higher in a designated course, he or she may complete a credit petition after completing 6 hours at Grayson College. This petition must be completed by the student. If the petition is approved, the student will receive college credit on his or her college transcript. A complete list of current courses which are eligible for tech prep credit may be obtained in the counselor’s office.

Concurrent Enrollment

Qualified students may be enrolled simultaneously with Bells ISD and Grayson College. High school students will receive college credit only. No high school credit will be awarded. Students must obtain permission from the principal prior to Grayson College admission.

Dual Credit Courses

Students must earn a passing grade of 70 or above for the first semester in order to take the second semester. If the student does not have a grade of at least a 70, the parent must submit a written request for the student to enroll in the second semester. The principal must approve this request. If a student drops a dual credit course, he or she will enter an equivalent high school course with an average of 70 up to the drop date.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

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

Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, the student or parent should submit the written complaint form to the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty is not acceptable. When students cheat to gain an advantage, or to try to overcome a lack of proper preparation, it frustrates everyone – teachers, students, and parents. We want students at Bells High School to act in a fair and respectful way and to be open to the challenges of learning.

Examples of academic dishonesty include having a cell phone out during a test, using a cell phone to take a picture of a test, looking at another student’s paper during testing, copying another student’s answers or answers from another source, plagiarism of another student’s work, or plagiarism of another author’s work.

In order to deter cheating during tests or major assignments, teachers may use a variety of strategies, such as:

- requiring students to place backpacks in the front of the classroom
- having students silence their cell phones and place them in a common holding area within the classroom
- requiring the use of cover sheets to shield answers
- separating students to provide as much room as possible between each other
- actively monitoring students

Students engaging in academic dishonesty will face disciplinary penalties as determined by the teacher and principal.

**Campus Behavior Coordinator**

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The campus behavior coordinator at Bells High School is Josh Weger.

**Disruptions of School Operations**

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

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

- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

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

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

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

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

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

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

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

[Also see Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention and Suicide Awareness.]

COURSE CREDIT
A student in grades 9–12, or in a lower grade when a student is enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course, will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-
semester (1 credit) course, the student’s grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student’s combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subj ect

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam approved by the district’s board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as “credit recovery.” The school counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

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

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

CREDIT BY EXAM FOR ADVANCEMENT/ACCELERATION—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subj ect

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by the district are approved by the district’s board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain exams, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2016–17 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district’s website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any exams administered by another entity besides the district or if a request is made outside of these time frames by a student experiencing homelessness or by a student involved in the foster care system. When another entity administers an exam, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific exam only once.

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

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an exam administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the
course according to the school’s high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

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

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

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

**Dating Violence**

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

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

**Discrimination**

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

**Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student’s academic performance.

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

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

**Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

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

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

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

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

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

**Retaliation**

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

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

**Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student’s parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]
Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

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

**Investigation of Report**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**DISCRIMINATION**

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.]

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), as described below, in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to
enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

**Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN)**

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [Also see Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations.] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

**DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS**

**School Materials**

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

The school newsletter, Panther Tracks, and the yearbook are available to students.

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

**Nonschool Materials**

**From Students**

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

The principal has designated the high school commons as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

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

**From Others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support
organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any
district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by
policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the
limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or
organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or
reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor
may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies
at DGBA or GF.]
The principal has designated high school offices as the location for approved nonschool materials
to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.
Prior review will not be required for:
  • Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting
    intended for adults and held after school hours.
  • Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting
    held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-
    related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
  • Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as
    a polling place, in accordance with state law.

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

DRESS AND GROOMING (All Grade Levels)
The district’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and
minimize safety hazards. Bells High School has high expectations for our students in the areas of
grooming and dress. The principals will make the final decision and use their discretion in
questionable situations.
From time to time, “fads” show up on campuses. We are not listing these, nor are we trying to
make a regulation to cover all problems that may arise. If a fad becomes distracting, it will be
eliminated.
The following guidelines for dress apply to all students:
  • Students are not allowed to wear sunglasses or head apparel (hats, caps, bandanas, hoods,
    etc...) Hats and caps are not to be brought inside the building.
  • Shirts must cover the top of the bottom garment so that skin is not visible at the waist.
  • Male students are not allowed to wear sleeveless shirts. Tank tops for female students
    must have a shoulder strap at least 3 inches in width. They may not wear see-through,
    low cut, or revealing clothing.
  • Students are not allowed to wear clothing that contains pictures or writing that is
    provocative, suggestive, obscene, advertises alcohol or drugs, or is distracting to normal
    school activities.
  • Shorts and skirts must be finger-tip length. Running shorts are not allowed.
• Pants and shorts must be in good repair with no skin showing above the knee.
• No excessively sagging clothing will be allowed (pants and shorts may not be worn below the waist line.)
• Excessively tight fitting clothes are not allowed. Tights / leggings may be worn only if another garment covers and meets the finger-tip length requirement.
• Female students may have pierced ears, but no other piercings are allowed. No ear gauging is allowed.
• Tattoos must be covered at all times.
• No chains, dog collars, or spiked collars will be allowed.
• Shoes must be worn at all times. House shoes or shoes with roller skates built in are not allowed.
• Sleep wear is not to be worn at school.
• No facial hair is allowed.
• No extreme haircuts (spikes, mohawks, etc..), inappropriate or unnatural hair coloring, or distracting styles will be allowed. Male students are to wear their hair above the shirt collar, ears lobes, and eyes.

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

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

Students are permitted to possess electronic devices at school. While students are permitted to have these devices at school, they are not allowed to have them out in the classroom without teacher permission. If a student uses an electronic device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. On the first offense, the student’s property will be made available for pickup at the end of the day. On the second offense, the student’s property will be returned at the end of the day for a fee of $10 or 5 days of ISS.

Note: Students using their personal electronic devices inappropriately will be subject to losing the use of their devices during the school day including having them confiscated or being required to check them in with administration on a daily basis for a period of time to be determined.

The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.
Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student’s parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

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

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

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

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

**Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

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

**Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

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

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

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district’s computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.
**END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS**

[See Graduation and Standardized Testing.]

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

A student who is an English language learner is entitled to receive special services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student’s parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for an English language learner. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

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

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

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

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

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at https://www.uitexas.org/athletics/manuals; a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

[See http://www.uitexas.org for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

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

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or a dual credit course—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
• An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.

• A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

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

**Incomplete Grades and Eligibility**

Students with an “incomplete” grade (I) are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities until the “I” is replaced with a passing grade.

**Standards of Behavior**

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

Students who are assigned ISS, DAEP, or OSS are prohibited from attending or participating in a school-sponsored activity during the disciplinary assignment.

**Offices and Elections**

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

**FEES**

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

• Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.

• Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.

• Security deposits.

• Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.

• Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.

• Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.

• Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.

• Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
• Parking permits - $5.
• Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
• Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
• Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
• A fee not to exceed $100 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
• In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

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

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

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

GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT
[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.]

GRADE-LEVEL CLASSIFICATION (Grades 9–12 Only)
After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits Earned</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Grade 10 (Sophomore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grade 11 (Junior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grade 12 (Senior)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GRADING GUIDELINES

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

At Bells High School, achievement is reported as number grades. The grading system is based on a 100 point scale. In order to gain credit for a class, students must maintain an average score of at least 70. Transfer students with grade reports using letter grades are converted using the following scale:
A=95, B=85, C=77, D=72, F=65

[Also see Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences for additional information on grading guidelines.]

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are given for a student who has not turned in assigned work by the close of the grading period. If the grade is not made up within a two-week time frame, the teacher will confer with the principal and the student may receive a zero for the assignments he or she has not made up. Students cannot compete in extracurricular activities until the “I” is replaced with a passing grade.

Exemptions

Bells High School has final exams at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Students may earn exemptions from final exams by having EXCEPTIONAL attendance each semester. In order to earn exemptions, students cannot be absent from school more than TWO times during that particular semester. It does not matter if an absence is excused or unexcused. The following will not count against a student’s exemptions:

- Missing a partial school day with a medical or dental note
- Missing a partial school day for the DMV (only allowed one time per year)
- Missing for a funeral (1 day per semester only)

Note that all of the above absences require proof returned to the office within 3 days. Any full day absence OR partial absence, other than those listed above, will count against the student’s exemptions.

Students will not be exempt from any class in which they have a failing grade for the semester. Students will also lose exemption privileges if they are assigned ISS due to an excessive number of tardies. [Also see Tardies for more information].
GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma for a Student Enrolled in High School Prior to the 2014–15 School Year

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student who was enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–15 school year must successfully:

- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law.

[Also see Standardized Testing for more information.]

Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–15 School Year

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year, as well as any currently enrolled high school student who decides to graduate under the foundation graduation program, a student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state;
- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law; and
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment, should a student choose this option. See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.
In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

[Also see Standardized Testing for more information.]

Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Graduation Programs

Programs

For students who were enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–15 school year, the district offers the graduation programs listed in this section. Students enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–15 school year also have the option to pursue the foundation graduation program as described below. Note that permission to enroll in the Minimum Program as described in this section will be granted only if a written agreement is reached among the student, the student’s parent or person standing in parental relation, and the school counselor or appropriate administrator. In order for a student to take courses under the Minimum Program, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English language arts, math, science, and social studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed grade 9 one or more times. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

All students who were enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–15 school year must meet the following credit and course requirements for graduation under the programs listed or may choose to pursue the foundation graduation program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Number of Credits: Recommended Program</th>
<th>Number of Credits: Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies, including Economics</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>Number of Credits: Recommended Program</td>
<td>Number of Credits: Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally required courses</td>
<td>.5 credit in Economics</td>
<td>.5 credit in Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 credit in Technology Applications</td>
<td>1 credit in Technology Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives**</td>
<td>4.5 credits</td>
<td>3.5 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Completion of 4 Advanced Measures***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26 credits</td>
<td>26 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student’s ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

** State rules prohibit a student from combining a half-credit of a course for which there is an EOC assessment with another half-credit of an elective credit course to satisfy an elective credit requirement. However, the district will allow a student to satisfy a graduation requirement for which there are multiple options with one-half credit of one allowable option and one-half credit of another allowable option, if neither course has an EOC assessment.

*** A student graduating under the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program must also achieve a combination of four of the following advanced measures:

1. An original research project or other project that is related to the required curriculum. These projects must be judged by a panel of professionals or conducted under the direction of a mentor and reported to an appropriate audience. Please note that no more than two of the four advanced measures may be received from this option.

2. Test data where a student receives:
   a. A score of three or above on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam;
   b. A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam; or
   c. A score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that qualifies the student for recognition as a commended scholar or higher by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, as part of the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) of the College Board, or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT/NMSQT score will count
as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.

3. College academic courses, including those taken for dual credit, and advanced technical courses, including locally articulated courses, provided the student scores the equivalent of a 3.0 or higher.

**Foundation Graduation Program**

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation graduation program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. A personal graduation plan will be completed for each high school student.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB exam, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance exams, or for earning a state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–15 school year has the option of graduating under the foundation graduation program rather than the programs identified above that would otherwise be applicable to that student. See the school counselor for additional information.

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Area</th>
<th>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program</th>
<th>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English/Language Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies, including Economics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English***</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally required courses</td>
<td>1 credit in technology applications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>26 credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In order to obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be denoted on a student’s transcript and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission purposes to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the four mathematics credits.

** A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student’s ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

*** Students are required to earn two credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

**** A student must specify upon entering grade 9 the endorsement he or she wishes to pursue.

**Personal Graduation Plans for Students Under the Foundation Graduation Program**

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student who is subject to the requirements of the foundation graduation program. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to
graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student’s personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student’s choice of endorsement.

Please also review TEA’s Graduation Toolkit, available here: 

A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

**Available Course Options for all Graduation Programs**

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year. Note that the district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

**Certificates of Coursework Completion**

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

**Students With Disabilities**

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

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

[See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

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

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student’s ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student’s
achievement and progress and, if so, whether successful performance is required for graduation, or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Alternate 2 is the alternative assessment currently allowed by the state. [See Standardized Testing for additional information.]

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services and who are subject to the foundation graduation program will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. In order to earn an endorsement under the foundation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the EOC assessments and receive no modified curriculum in the student’s chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

**Graduation Activities**

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments and have not been declared eligible to graduate by an individual graduation committee, if applicable, will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student’s completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

**Graduation Speakers**

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer.

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see Student Speakers.]

**Graduation Expenses**

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

**Scholarships and Grants**

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program, for as long as those programs are in place, or who complete the foundation graduation program, may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.
Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

**HARASSMENT**

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.]

**HAZING**

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

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

[Also see Bullying and policies FFI and FNCC.]

**HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

**Student Illness**

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

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

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

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

**Bacterial Meningitis**

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

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

- What are the symptoms?
  Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.
  Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.
  The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?
  Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).
  The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body’s immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?
  Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It’s a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.
  There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.* The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?
  You should seek prompt medical attention.
• Where can you get more information?

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

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

[Also refer to Immunization for more information.]

Food Allergies

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

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student’s parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS website at http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)

During the preceding school year, the district’s School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 4 meetings. Additional information regarding the district’s SHAC is available from the assistant superintendent.

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

[See policies at BDF and EHAA. See Human Sexuality Instruction for additional information.]

**Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan**

Bells ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy.

**Other Health-Related Matters**

**Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3–12)**

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

**Vending Machines**

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

**Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)**

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

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

**Asbestos Management Plan**

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

**Pest Management Plan**

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

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

HOMELESS STUDENTS
You are encouraged to inform the district if you or your child are experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources with you that may be able to assist you and your family.

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district’s homeless education liaison, Yalonda Ivers.

[See also Students Who Are Homeless.]

HOMEWORK
Greater learning occurs with short intermittent practice activities rather than massive amounts of practice. Homework will be limited in length and will be checked allowing credit to be gained, thus giving credibility to the assignment. The expectation for students at Bells High School is that all work assigned is turned in on time. While students are expected to turn in all assignments, there may be occasions where students do not have their homework completed. In this situation, the teacher will follow the grading guidelines established by their department and approved by the principal. Students may be assigned to a mandatory tutorial before or after school or during the advisory period. Failure to attend tutorials will likely result in disciplinary action.

From time to time, teachers will assign outside of school projects. Generally, the teacher will provide in-school time for some of the preparation and will allow plenty of time outside of school to meet the due date for the project. If students or parents have any questions about time tables or rubrics, they should contact the teacher directly.

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

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

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

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

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

**LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

**Questioning of Students**

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

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

**Students Taken Into Custody**

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

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

• To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

**Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

• All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

• All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

• All appropriate district personnel in regards to a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

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

**LEAVING CAMPUS**

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

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

• If the student’s parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student’s need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the
student’s parent consents to the student leaving campus, the student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student’s parent and document the parent’s wishes regarding release from school. If the parent wishes to release the student unaccompanied, the parent must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student’s parent, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released.

**During Lunch**

Bells High School is a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave the campus during lunch without following the procedures outlined above.

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

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

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

**LOST AND FOUND**

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

**MAKEUP WORK**

**Makeup Work Because of Absence**

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

When a student returns to class after an absence, it will be his or her responsibility to remind the teacher of the class that was missed and to request any missed work at that time. Students will have one day for every day absent to make up the assignment.

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

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

**DAEP Makeup Work**

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

**In-School Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

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

**MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the high school office and administered by the nurse or high school secretary, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

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

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

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

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

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

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

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

**Psychotropic Drugs**

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

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

**PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

**Working Together**

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

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

- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
• Becoming familiar with all of your child’s school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.

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

• Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.

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

• Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 903-965-7315 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences on page.]

• Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and Volunteers.]

• Participating in campus parent organizations such as the athletic, band, and FFA booster clubs.

• Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement.

• Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at School Health Advisory Council.]

• Serving on a committee to determine criteria to be used to evaluate the overall performance of the district and each campus in community and student engagement. For further information, please contact the campus principal.

• Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.

• Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.

• Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS/HEALTH SCREENINGS

Athletics’ Participation

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district’s athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program.
This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During the alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

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

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

[See policy EC for more information.]

PRAYER

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

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

High School Grade Levels

Bells ISD currently requires students to earn 26 credits and meet state testing requirements in order to earn a diploma. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards. Students have the opportunity to earn 8 credits per school year. Students must earn:

- 7 credits to be considered a sophomore
- 14 credits to be considered a junior
- 20 credits to be considered a senior

[Also see Grade Level Classification.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See Graduation on page and Standardized Testing or more information about EOC assessments.]

REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student’s grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every 9 weeks.
During the fourth week of a nine-week grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child’s performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent may be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See Working Together.]

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

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

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

The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes, but you are entitled to request a handwritten report instead.

RETAIATION
[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.]

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

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

Accident Insurance
Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.
Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

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

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

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

Emergency School-Closing Information

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

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child’s school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will alert the community in the following ways: district call-out system, remind 101 text service, local news stations (93.1 FM or Channel 12, KXII TV), and the district website.

SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

Registration for these tests is online. To register for the ACT, visit www.actstudent.org. To register for the SAT, visit www.sat.college.org/register. Bells High School administers both the Aspire (practice ACT) and the PSAT (practice SAT) to students prior to taking the ACT and SAT.

[See Standardized Testing.]

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Students may request a schedule change at the beginning of each semester during the first week of each term. Schedule change requests must be submitted in the office to the principal or assistant principal. Whether or not the request is granted is based on availability.
SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

Cafeteria Services
The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need or household situation. Information about a student’s participation is confidential; however, disclosure of a student’s eligibility may be made without prior notice or consent to programs, activities, and individuals that are specifically authorized access under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), which is the law that sets forth the disclosure limits for the district’s child nutrition programs. A student’s name, eligibility status, and other information may be disclosed to certain agencies as authorized under the NSLA to facilitate the enrollment of eligible children in Medicaid or the state children’s health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student’s parent notifies the district that a student’s information should not be disclosed. A parent’s decision will not affect the child’s eligibility for free and reduced price meals or free milk. See Shannon Gamble to apply for free or reduced price meal services.

Parents are strongly encouraged to continually monitor their child’s meal account balance. When a student’s meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student will be
allowed to continue purchasing meals for up to $7, and the district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance. If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student’s parent on replenishment of the student’s meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive an alternate meal.

Library
The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the school day. Unless assigned to the library for an online course, students must have written permission from a teacher in order to be in the library during instructional hours.

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

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

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

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students may provide their own locks if they wish, but a key or combination must be provided to the High School office.

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

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

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

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

[See policy FNF(LEGAL) and Electronic Devices and Technology Resources for more information.]
Vehicles on Campus

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

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

Parking Permits

Vehicles must have a parking permit. These can be purchased from the office at the beginning of the year for $5.

Bells ISD provides the opportunity for students, who have a valid driver’s license, to obtain a parking permit from the campus front office. This should be viewed as a privilege, which carries additional expectations for the students involved and the parking permit can be revoked for irresponsible and inappropriate behavior involving the student’s vehicle. The parking permit must hang on the rear view mirror at all times students are in the BHS parking lot.

To receive a parking permit, the student and parent must sign a consent and voluntary agreement form to be a part of the DISTRICT RANDOM DRUG TESTING POLICY. All students who park a vehicle on campus must fill this form out and return to the front office to obtain a parking permit. The testing process and procedures are listed in the policy (which is included at the back of the student handbook).

Consequences for Positive Results

The following consequences apply for student parking permit holders for offenses under the Bells ISD Random Drug Testing Program:

First Offense:

1. Student loses the privilege to drive on campus and must forfeit parking permit
2. Student will not be allowed to regain parking permit and park on campus until the student has produced a clean test administered by the district. The student will be included in each future sampling until the student produces 6 consecutive clean tests and at that time the student will return to the random pool.

Second Offense:

1. Student loses the privilege to drive on campus and must forfeit parking permit. The student will not be allowed to regain the parking permit and right to park on campus until 6 consecutive clean tests. Upon completion of 6 clean tests, the student will then be allowed to regain the parking permit but the student will continue to be tested in all drug test administrations.

Third Offense:
1. Student loses the privilege to drive on campus and must forfeit parking permit until the student graduates or withdraws from Bells High School.

**Trained Dogs**

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

**Drug Testing**

All University Interscholastic League participants, any student wishing to drive to campus during the upcoming school year, and any student in any extracurricular activities in grades 9-12, to be eligible to participate, shall be subject to random testing throughout the school year for the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs. More information on the Bells ISD random drug testing policy may be found at the back of this handbook.

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see Steroids.]

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

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

**Identification Procedures for Gifted and Talented Program**

Any teacher, parent, student, counselor or other appropriate person may refer a student for assessment/screening. Screening for the GT program is conducted twice annually: in September and May.

**Referral Process**

- Referral form sent to director of special programs
- File created and student assigned an identification number
- Letter sent to parents requesting permission to conduct screening
- Appropriate data gathered:
  1. Mental ability score
  2. MA T-SF score
  3. Watson-Glaser Thinking Appraisal
  4. Achievement test score
  5. Parent rating instrument
6. Teacher rating instrument
7. Academic performance
   • Data entered on identification matrix
   • Selection committee receives matrix for review/consideration
   • Committee meets to make placement determination
   • Parents notified of placement/non-placement
   • Appropriate teachers/principals notified of placement/non-placement
   • Parents may make appointment to review student's assessment data

Appeals process outlined in district policy

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Secondary Grade Levels

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

Note that participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

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

High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments
STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:
   • Algebra I
   • English I and English II
Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR A will be available for an eligible student with a Section 504 accommodation plan who has been identified with dyslexia or a related disorder, as well as for a student receiving special education services, if the student meets state-established criteria and requires certain instructional and assessment accommodations on a routine basis.

STAAR Alternate 2, for students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student’s ARD committee.

A student’s ARD committee for students receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student’s personal graduation plan.

STAAR L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for English Language Learners who require this type of testing accommodation.

[Also see Graduation for additional information.]

**STEROIDS**

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

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

**STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

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

Please contact Carla Norris, who has been designated as the district’s foster care liaison, at 903-965-7725 with any questions.

[See also Students in the Conservatorship of the State for more information.]

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

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

SUICIDE AWARENESS

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access http://www.texassuicideprevention.org or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school classes may be taken to regain credit for a class that was failed during the school year. The maximum grade that can be earned through the summer school program is a 70.

A tuition fee of $100 is charged to students attending summer school to cover costs of instruction. A discounted rate may be available to students receiving free-and-reduced lunch. Contact the principal for details.

TARDIES

Unsupervised time lends the greatest potential for disruptions and other major discipline infractions to occur. As a measure to ensure a safe, orderly, and secure school environment, Bells High School enforces a strict tardy policy. Students must be in class on time.

A student not in the room when the tardy bell rings will be sent to the office for a tardy slip. The following consequences will be used when students are tardy:

1st and 2nd tardy - Warning
3rd and 4th tardy - Lunch Detention
5th and 6th tardy - After School Detention
7th tardy - ISS and loss of exemptions

Records will be kept per nine weeks. Students who persist in being tardy may receive additional consequences including Night School, Summer School, or loss of credit.

Students who are more than 20 minutes late will be counted absent.

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

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

TRANSFERS

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

[See Safety Transfers/Assignments, Bullying, and Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services, for other transfer options.]

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

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

Buses and Other School Vehicles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VANDALISM

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

VIDEO CAMERAS

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

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

Upon written request by a parent, trustee, or staff member for the sole purpose of promoting student safety, the District must provide video surveillance in self-contained classrooms or other special education settings.

The video cameras will be operated at all times during the instructional day when students are in the self-contained or other special education setting. At the discretion of the District, signs will be posted outside of special education classrooms that contain video surveillance. Video cameras will record both video and audio of all areas of the classroom except bathrooms or other areas where toileting occurs, or any areas in which a student’s clothes are changed.

The cameras will not be monitored continuously or used for any purpose other than the promotion of student safety. Video will be maintained for at least six (6) months and the cameras will continue to record as long as the classroom serves as a self-contained classroom or other special education setting. All video recordings are confidential, except in limited cases as provided in Bells ISD Board Policy EHBAF (LEGAL). Allegations of violations of Section 29.022 of the Texas Education Code may be filed in accordance with Bells ISD Board Policies FNG (LEGAL), FNG (LOCAL), and FNG (EXHIBIT). Additionally, if would like to report an incident of abuse or neglect in a special education classroom or would like more information on the policies and procedures regarding cameras in the special education setting, please contact Christy Nolen, Director of Special Education at 903-696-0015 or cnolen@texoma.net.
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification. Visitors during lunch must be approved at least 3 days in advance and are limited to one visit per six weeks.

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

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

VOLUNTEERS

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

VOTER REGISTRATION

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

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ESSA** is the Every Student Succeeds Act passed by the federal government in December 2015.

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

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

**IGC** is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student’s eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.
PGP stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is required for high school students beginning with ninth graders in the 2014–15 school year, and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

PSAT is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT.

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

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

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

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

STAAR A is an accommodated version of the STAAR that is available for certain students who receive special education services or students who have been identified as dyslexic.

STAAR Alternate 2 is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student’s ARD committee.

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

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

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

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.
**TSI assessment** is the Texas Success Initiative assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

**TxVSN** is the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.
BELLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT RANDOM DRUG TESTING POLICY

Bells ISD [“District”] provides opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities. This participation should be viewed as a privilege, which carries additional expectations for the students involved. An important goal of extracurricular activities is to give students direction in developing healthful living habits, self-discipline, leadership, teamwork, and respect for authority, rules, and regulations. Bells ISD has determined that it has a substantial interest in student participation in these extracurricular activities because of the discipline, health and safety of all students participating in extracurricular activities. This determination is based on a variety of health risks associated with drug and alcohol use. Therefore, Bells ISD has taken the following measures to maintain the discipline, health, and safety of the students by instituting the Mandatory Drug Testing (“Program”)

Drug Testing Objectives:
All University Interscholastic League participants and any student in any extracurricular activities in grades 9-12, to be eligible to participate, shall be subject to random testing throughout the school year for the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The District shall employ a drug testing program with the following objectives:

1. Provide a deterrent to drug/alcohol use for Bells ISD students.
2. Ensure the health and safety of students representing Bells ISD in any extracurricular activity.
3. Provide a drug education program for students who test positive for drug/alcohol use and for those students who are at risk of drug use; those student’s parents/guardians will be included in the counseling program.

Definitions “Alcohol” is defined as ethyl alcohol. Alcohol, as used herein, includes any beverage, mixture or preparation containing ethyl alcohol.

“Controlled Substance” means a drug or substance which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of it is illegal under any federal, state or local law or regulation and includes, but is not limited to inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, narcotics, opiates, opium derivatives, phencyclidine, hallucinogens and any other substances having either a stimulant or depressant effect on the central nervous system such as amphetamines or barbiturates, methadone, methaqualone, propoxyphene, steroids, or other metabolites. Also included in this definition are prescription drugs used for any reason other than a legitimate, prescribed medical reason and inhalants used illegally. All references to “drugs” throughout this Program mean the same as “controlled substances”.

“Reasonable Suspicion” is defined as an evaluation by the drug testing coordinator or extracurricular sponsor of a student’s conduct that would lead a reasonably prudent person to suspect that the student is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol (see definition of “under the influence”). A conclusion can be based on personal observation and/or information received from third parties. Such indications may include, but are not limited to, a drop in the student’s performance level, impaired judgment or reasoning, decreased level of attention, or behavioral change. Characteristics indicating reasonable suspicion may include, but are not limited to:

* A pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior;
* Physical symptoms such as glassy or bloodshot eyes, slurred speech unsteady gait, poor coordination or reflexes;
* Odor of alcoholic beverages or marijuana;
* Unexcused absenteeism or tardiness; or
* Direct observation of drug or alcohol use of possession.

“Under the influence” means not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties; however, the student need not be legally intoxicated.

“Use” means a student has voluntarily introduced into his or her body by any means a prohibited substance recently enough that it is detectable by the student’s physical appearance, actions, breath, or speech.

**Parental Consent**

Parental consent for a student to submit to biological testing by urine shall be a required condition for participation in the District’s extracurricular programs. A parent’s refusal to consent shall result in denial of the student’s participation in any extracurricular activity.

Each student in grades 9-12 who wishes to participate in extracurricular activities must sign a consent form agreeing to submit to the Program. Prior to testing, the student’s parent must also sign the consent form. Once signed, a consent form shall remain in effect for the duration of the student’s participation in any UIL and extracurricular activities in the District.

**Initial Testing**

For the 2015-2016 school year all student participating in extracurricular activities will be tested for illegal drugs prior to participation.

**Testing Procedures/Laboratory**

The District shall contract with a nationally-certified drug testing company, which shall conduct all drug testing authorized by this Program. The laboratory shall provide qualified persons to oversee the collection of all specimens and shall provide medical review officer services for interpretation and verification of results. The medical review officer shall report all drug test results to the designated District official.

**Reasonable Suspicion Testing**

When the drug testing coordinator or any extracurricular sponsor has a reasonable suspicion that a student subject to this Program is currently using illegal drugs, the drug testing coordinator may require the student to submit to a drug test. Any extracurricular sponsor or District staff member having a reasonable suspicion that a student subject to this Program is currently using illegal drugs should immediately report his/her suspicion to the designated District official.

**Drugs Tested**

The substances for which tests shall search shall include: 1. Alcohol as defined herein; 2. Drugs or controlled substances, as defined herein; 3. Performance-enhancing drugs, including steroids and their metabolites; 4. All prescription drugs, upon reasonable suspicion that they were obtained without proper authorization and; 5. All prescription and over-the-counter drugs, upon reasonable suspicion that they are being used in a manner inconsistent with the written prescription or written instructions.

**Refusal to Test**
If a student refuses to submit to any test as required or authorized by this Program, the student shall be subject to the same consequences as if he or she tested positive for drugs or alcohol.

**Testing**

Any student involved in UIL and extracurricular activities in grades 9 – 12 in the Bells ISD, shall be subject to the random testing program. Testing shall be done in accordance with the established practices and procedures as established by the drug-testing laboratory affiliated with the District.

The following procedures will be used for the testing:

*Each sponsor of an extracurricular activity shall submit a list of students to be consolidated into a master list of participants.

*The master list shall be submitted to the company employed by Bells ISD to conduct the testing.

*The testing company shall computerize the master list, generating a random list of participants to be tested.

*All students planning to participate in any UIL and extracurricular activity in Bells ISD shall be tested at the beginning of the school year or upon entrance to the activity; additionally, 10% of the students who are involved in UIL and extracurricular activities will be randomly selected to be tested every 30 days.

*A certified/licensed drug-testing vendor that has been approved by the Board will conduct testing by the use of a urinalysis test.

*The test shall occur at a time, place (a facility that provides reasonable privacy for the student), and date scheduled by the Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with the testing agency, without prior announcement to the students.

*A number will identify the students to the testing agency,

*The drug-testing administrator shall inform the designated campus administrator of the results. The campus administrator shall notify the parents and staff members responsible for implementation of the consequences as outlined in this policy.

*A student who refuses to submit a sample shall be given one hour to change his or her mind without leaving the testing area. If the student still refuses, he or she shall be subjected to the consequences associated with a positive test result.

*If after agreement to submit to testing, a student is unable to produce a sample within one hour, he or she shall be subjected to the consequences associated with a positive test result.

*Tampering with or assisting others in tampering with any sample shall subject the student to the consequences associated with a positive test result.

*In the case of questions about the effects of prescription or other medications, a school designated physician, or a medical review officer from the testing laboratory will make a determination about the outcome of the test.
Records
All records relating to the Program, including consent forms, test results, and intervention actions, shall be maintained in a separate file from the student’s cumulative folder and academic records. Access to the records shall occur only in compliance with District policies and procedures, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, or other applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Consequences for Positive Results
The following consequences apply for offenses under the Bells ISD Mandatory Drug Testing Program:

First Offense
A campus administrator shall hold a confidential meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and sponsor/coach. At the meeting, the administrator shall explain the drug testing procedures and the policy of the district. The consequences shall be as follows:

1. The student must go through 6 hours of an approved assessment by an approved counselor. (see Assessment/Counselor Guidelines on the following page) Attendance of these sessions will be monitored and attendance problems will result in ineligibility until the program is complete. He/She will have two weeks to begin the Counseling. If they fail to begin their counseling then he/she will be ineligible from athletics until they start the counseling.

2. The student will be included in each future sampling until the student has produced six clean tests. At that time, the student will return to the random pool. Students who test positive but choose not to go through the six subsequent tests will be excluded from participation in extracurricular activities until they satisfy the terms of the policy consistent with the offense.

Second Offense
A campus administrator shall hold a confidential meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and sponsor/coach. At the meeting, the administrator shall explain the drug testing procedures and the policy of the district regarding a second offense. The consequences shall be as follows:

1. The student will be ineligible for any and all extra-curricular activities for 45 calendar days beginning the day of the test. 2. The student shall remain ineligible until he/she has gone through 6 hours of an approved assessment by an approved counselor. (see Assessment/Counselor Guidelines on the following page) Attendance of these sessions will be monitored and attendance problems will result in ineligibility until the program is complete. 3. The student will be included in each future sampling until the student has produced six clean tests. At that time, the student will return to the random pool. Students who test positive but choose not to go through the six subsequent tests will be excluded from participation in extracurricular activities until they satisfy the terms of the policy consistent with the offense.

Third Offense
A campus administrator shall hold a confidential meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and sponsor/coach. At the meeting, the administrator shall explain the drug testing procedures and
the policy of the district regarding a third offense. The consequences shall be as follows:

1. The student will be ineligible for any and all extra-curricular activities for one calendar year beginning the day of the test. He/She may remain in the class but will not be allowed to participate in any afterschool activities. 2. The student shall remain ineligible until he/she has gone through 6 hours of an approved assessment by an approved counselor. (see Assessment/Counselor Guidelines below) Attendance of these sessions will be monitored and attendance problems will result in ineligibility until the program is complete.

3. The student will be included in each future sampling until the student has produced six clean tests. At that time, the student will return to the random pool. Students who test positive but choose not to go through the six subsequent tests will be excluded from participation in extracurricular activities until they satisfy the terms of the policy consistent with the offense.

All Other Offenses

Any further offenses will result in the same consequences as the third offense.

Assessment/Counselor Guidelines

In order for a counselor to be approved, he/she must minimally be a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor. The assessment must include a written recommendation for treatment that is presented to the parents. The parents must present a copy of that recommendation to the school administrator. Any cost for the assessment or any treatment shall be the responsibility of the parents and/or the student. The district may provide free or low cost counseling for those who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program for those students who must be assessed per this agreement.

Refusal to Test

Each time a student refuses a drug test, he or she shall be subject to the consequences of a positive test at the appropriate step.

Request for a Re-Test

At his/her expense, a parent/guardian may have a re-analysis of the original specimen performed by a certified drug-testing laboratory of his/her choice. The request for re-test must be made in writing and returned to the appropriate campus administrator indicating which laboratory no later than 10 days following receipt of the notification of a positive result.