



Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success

2023-24 District Parent-Student Handbook

Board Approved:

PSTEM Academy
Early College STEM Academy
Early College T-STEM Academy
South East Early Childhood STEM Academy
2950 Broadway
Houston, Texas 77017
713-640-3700

BRYSS Academy
BRYSS Early Childhood STEM Academy
2255 North Coria Street
Brownsville, Texas 78520
956-542-2404

Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy
2101 South St.
Houston, TX 77009

North East STEM Academy
10918 Bentley St.
Houston, TX 77093

RYSS STEM Academy at First Friends Pasadena
1062 Fairmont Parkway
Pasadena, TX 77504



Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success is a program of the Tejano Center for Community Concerns

TEJANO CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CONCERNS

President and Chief Executive Officer

Adriana Tamez, Ed.D.

Board of Education

David Corpus, Chair TCCC and RYSS Vice Chair

Anthony Magdaleno, Vice-Chair TCCC and RYSS Chair

Margaret Dunlap, Secretary TCCC and RYSS

Marco Martinez, Treasurer

Gina DeLeon, Member

Sonia Gonzales, Member

Genesis Loera, Member

Joaquin Martinez, Member

Maria Pereyra-Gonzalez,

Member

Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success Administration

Adriana Tamez, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Justin Fuentes, Chief School & Operations Officer

Maria Knosel, Principal, BRYSS Academy

Lillian Sacramento, Director, BRYSS Early Childhood Academy

Denise Martinez, interim Director, Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy

Noelia Longoria, Principal, Early College STEM Academy and Early College T-STEM Academy

Georgina Castilleja, Principal North East STEM Academy

Diana Chavez, Principal, PSTEM Academy

Vacant, Director, South East Early Childhood STEM Academy

A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear RYSS Students and Parents,

On behalf of the RYSS Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff, *welcome to the 2023-24 school year!* Thank you for making RYSS your family's district of choice.

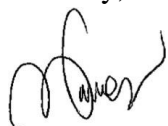
Our commitment is to ensure that every student can excel and thrive, to discover new and exciting ways to learn and grow as a person. We believe this can best take place in an environment that is safe and healthy. We know we can accomplish when we all work together.

The 2023-24 District Student-Parent Handbook is designed to provide guidance for the orderly operation of our district. The district handbook addresses topics that apply to all students, Pre-K through 12th grade. Each campus also has a handbook that addresses topics that specifically apply to the campus. In all areas of dispute, the district handbook will take precedence.

Please refer to the district and campus handbooks whenever you have questions regarding district and school programs, policies, and expectations. If your question persists, please contact your campus principal.

We all want the best for our students. *Making It Happen Together!*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adriana Tamez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adriana Tamez, Ed.D.
CEO, Tejano Center for Community Concerns
Superintendent of Schools, Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success

This page intentionally left blank

A Message from the Chief Academic Officer

August 2023

Dear RYSS Families,

Welcome to the 2023 – 2024 school year! We are excited to welcome all of our new and returning families to RYSS and thank you for trusting us with your child’s education. Our goals are to challenge our students intellectually, grow them socially, and guide them toward independent thinking and problem-solving. This year our three key initiatives include Literacy, STEM, and inclusion of college and career programming in everything our scholars and adults do. In addition, we will strive to promote healthy development in all aspects of students’ lives and instill students with our school values:

INTEGRITY, CITIZENSHIP, ACHIEVEMENT, RESPECT, EMPOWERMENT

We will work together to ensure that our students make good choices and decisions, resulting in successful and healthy outcomes. We encourage students to demonstrate their best demeanor every moment of every day and to make positive contributions to Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success. We will instill within our students a sense of personal RYSS PRIDE in 2023-2024!

Information in this handbook is a combined effort to improve communication and understanding between parents and the school. School Board policies that govern specific areas are discussed in the handbook.

Our faculty and staff are excited to implement our district-wide goals for the 2023 – 2024 school year. Together, with your participation and input, WE will achieve at the highest levels.

Please encourage your child to discuss what he/she has learned throughout the school year. Finally, I want to reiterate the importance of reading and writing every day for at least one (1) hour. You have entrusted us with your precious children, and together we will walk this journey to excellence!

Respectfully,

Justin G. Fuentes
Chief School & Operations Officer
Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success

FORWARD

The *2023-2024 Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success (RYSS) District Student-Parent Handbook* includes information and guidance determined to be essential for creating a safe and healthy environment for all RYSS students, faculty, staff, parents, and visitors. RYSS has established as one of its primary goals the provision of a high-quality education program for each student in a school environment, free of disruptions that interfere with the educational process. The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents and students one comprehensive resource that contains thorough information, guidance, and administrative policies and procedures in all areas related to the operation of RYSS educational programs throughout the district and at each academy.

To provide a comprehensive and easy-to-use document, the *2023-2024 (RYSS) District Parent-Student Handbook* is divided into several sections. Each section contains information and guidance that applies to all RYSS campuses. Herein, “academy,” “school,” “campus,” and “RYSS” refer to the Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success. In all instances, district protocols and procedures shall take precedence over campus procedures.

The *2023-2024 (RYSS) District Parent-Student Handbook* is distributed to parents and students upon the advice and approval of the RYSS Board of Education, including review and consideration of directives as provided by:

The Texas Education Agency
Texas Administrative Code
Texas Education Code
Local governmental agencies

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success, as an equal opportunity educational provider and employer, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and/or age in educational programs or activities that it operates or in employment decisions. The District is required to do so by Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended. (Not all prohibited categories apply to all programs.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS	3
A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF SCHOOL & OPERATIONS OFFICER	5
1.0 – ABOUT THE RAUL YZAGUIRRE SCHOOLS FOR SUCCESS	11
1.0.1 – SCHOOL NAMESAKE	11
1.0.2 – VISION	12
1.0.3 – MISSION	12
1.0.4 – VALUES	13
1.1 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	14
1.1.1 – CAMPUS RESPONSIBILITIES	14
1.1.2 – STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	14
1.1.3 – PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	15
1.1.4 – INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS	15
1.1.5 – GRADING, ASSESSMENT, PROMOTION, AND RETENTION	15
1.1.6 – CONCERNS	15
1.1.7 – VIOLENT SITUATION ON CAMPUS	15
1.1.8 – STUDENT DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL GROOMING	16
1.1.9 – STUDENTS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY	16
1.1.10 – SEARCH OF PROPERTY AND STUDENTS	16
1.1.11 – EDUCATION DURING SUSPENSION	16
1.1.12 – GANG-FREE SCHOOL ZONE	16
1.1.13 – COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME	16
1.1.14 – CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION	17
1.2 - ACADEMICS	18
1.2.1 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY-RYSS ACADEMIC HONOR CODE	18
1.2.2 REMOTE CONFERENCING	20
<i>School Calendar</i>	20
1.2.3 SPECIAL PROGRAMS	20
1.2.3.1 <i>Special Education</i>	20
1.2.3.2 <i>Section 504</i>	21
1.2.3.3 <i>Response to Intervention (RtI)</i>	21
1.2.3.4 <i>Dyslexia Program</i>	21
1.2.4 EMERGENT BILINGUAL	22
1.2.5 GIFTED AND TALENTED	22
1.2.6 TESTING AND ASSESSMENT	22
1.2.7 STUDENT SERVICES	23
1.2.8 GRADING POLICY / REPORT CARDS	23
1.2.8.1 <i>Student Product Grading Scale</i>	23
1.2.9 TECHNOLOGY USE	24
1.2.10 TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES	24
1.2.11 PROMOTION AND RETENTION	24
1.2.12 REINFORCEMENT	24
1.3 – STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT+	25
1.3.1 – WHEN AND WHERE THESE RULES APPLY	25
1.3.2 – GENERAL DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING PENALTIES	25
1.3.3 - <i>Levels of Offenses—Overview (For details on Levels of Offenses, see Section 1.4.)</i>	26
1.3.4 – GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING SCHOOL PROBLEMS	26
1.3.5 – CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	26
1.4 – LEVELS OF STUDENT MISCONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS	27
1.4.1 – LEVEL I – VIOLATION OF CLASSROOM OR TRANSPORTATION RULES	27

1.4.2 – LEVEL II – ADMINISTRATOR INTERVENTION.....	27
1.4.3 – LEVEL III – OFF-CAMPUS SUSPENSION AND/OR PLACEMENT IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)	29
1.4.4 – LEVEL IV – SUSPENSION AND/OR EXPULSION	31
1.4.5 – LEVEL V – EXPULSION FOR SERIOUS OFFENSES	34
1.4.6 – ZERO TOLERANCE OF CRIMINAL CHARGES	36
1.4.7 – REPORTS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.....	36
1.4.8 – 86 TH LEGISLATION TEC CHAPTER 37	37
1.5 – BULLYING AND HARASSMENT	39
1.5.1 CYBERBULLYING	39
1.5.2 REPORTING OF BULLYING.....	39
1.5.3 BULLYING AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT.....	39
1.5.4 EXAMPLES OF BULLYING.....	40
1.6 – ENROLLMENT	41
1.6.1 NON DISCRIMINATION	41
1.6.2 STUDENT RECORDS.....	41
1.6.3 IMMUNIZATION RECORDS	42
1.7 – ATTENDANCE	43
1.7.1 COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE.....	43
1.7.2 EXCUSED ABSENCES.....	43
1.7.3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES	44
1.7.4 ABSENCES AND DENIAL OF COURSE CREDIT.....	44
1.7.5 ATTENDANCE APPEALS COMMITTEE (COURSE CREDIT APPEAL).....	44
1.8 – STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS	45
1.8.1 MEDICATION.....	45
1.8.2 LICE.....	46
1.8.3 IMMUNIZATIONS	46
1.8.4 CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AND CONDITIONS	46
1.8.5 HEALTH SCREENINGS.....	47
1.8.6 MEDICAL CONDITIONS.....	47
1.9 FOOD SERVICE	48
1.9.1 NUTRITION POLICY	48
1.9.1.1. <i>Nutrition Standards for Foods</i>	48
1.9.1.2 <i>Nutrition Standards for Beverages</i>	48
1.9.1.3 <i>Competitive Food</i>	48
1.9.1.4 <i>Breakfast and Lunch</i>	49
1.9.2 CAFETERIA EXPECTATIONS.....	49
1.9.2.1 <i>Maintaining a Pleasant Dining Environment</i>	49
1.9.3 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES.....	50
1.9.4 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS.....	50
1.9.5 CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS.....	50
1.9.6 OUTSIDE FOOD	50
1.10 TRANSPORTATION.....	52
1.11 VISITORS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT	53
1.11.1 VOLUNTEERS	53
1.11.2 PARENT ORGANIZATIONS.....	53
1.12 PROPERTY: PERSONAL AND SCHOOL	54
1.12.1 RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL AND SCHOOL PROPERTY.....	54
1.12.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY WHILE AT RYSS.....	54
1.12.3 – OTHER ITEMS	54
1.13 – STUDENT COMPLAINTS.....	55

1.13.1 – COMPLAINT PROCEDURE.....	55
1.13.2 – LEVELS OF COMPLAINTS	55
1.14 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (FACE)	57
1.14.1 FRAMEWORK	57
1.14.2 FACE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT CONTACT	57
1.15 TITLE I	58
1.15.1 DISTRICT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY	58
1.16 REQUIRED FORMS.....	59

This page intentionally left blank

1.0 – ABOUT THE RAUL YZAGUIRRE SCHOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Founded in 1996, the Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success (RYSS) was among the first 20 open-enrollment charter school districts in Texas. RYSS was born from a vision of the Tejano Center for Community Concerns' leadership team to provide the highest quality education for children of the center's surrounding neighborhoods. From its beginning, RYSS has continued to remain committed to every student, regardless of his or her life circumstances, to provide true college-preparatory experience. At RYSS, it is our mission to prepare students not only to *enter* college but also to have each one *graduate* from college!

RYSS is comprised of seven campuses. In Houston, Texas, there are five campuses PSTEM Academy (for grades Pre- K-5), the Early College STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) (for grades 6-8), the Early College T-STEM (Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) (for grades 9-12), North East STEM Academy (for grades 6-7), and Leonel Castillo Early Childhood STEM Academy (for PK 3, PK4 and kindergarten). The sixth campus, the BRYSS Academy (for grades PK-8), is located in Brownsville, Texas. The seventh and newest campus, the RYSS STEM Academy at First Friends Pasadena.

As an open-enrollment charter school, RYSS admits students regardless of academic limitation; however, students who enroll at RYSS, along with their parents, are fully aware that students will enter a world of high expectations – academically and socially. RYSS is committed to shaping the minds and hearts of students to help them become valuable and productive members of our community, state, nation, and global community. RYSS students learn not only for school but also for life.

1.0.1 – School Namesake

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success is named in honor of Raul Humberto Yzaguirre, Sr. As does its namesake, RYSS strives to embody the values and ideals to which Mr. Yzaguirre has devoted his life – to empower the Latino community and the United States.

Mr. Yzaguirre was born in San Juan, Texas, a small community in the Rio Grande Valley along the Texas-Mexico border. Beginning at a very young age, he has been an advocate for civil rights. For over 35 years, Mr. Yzaguirre has been internationally recognized as one of the nation's premier leaders and advocates on behalf of civil rights for the Hispanic American community. As the CEO and President of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), he was directly responsible for transforming NCLR into the premier national Hispanic advocacy organization and think-tank in the country.

Mr. Yzaguirre's accomplishments and accolades within the political, educational, corporate, and community-service arenas are unparalleled. In 1979, he was the first Hispanic to receive a Rockefeller Public Service Award for Outstanding Public Service from the trustees of Princeton University. From 1989 to 1990, he served as one of the first Hispanic Fellows of the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 1993, Mr. Yzaguirre was the recipient of the Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

In 1998, he was honored with the Charles Evan Hughes Gold Medal Award for courageous leadership in civic and humanitarian affairs by the National Conference for Community and Justice. Mr. Yzaguirre has also been awarded five honorary degrees.

Mr. Yzaguirre is the immediate past Chairperson of the Independent Sector, a nonprofit coalition of over 850 corporates, foundations, and voluntary organizations. He serves on the Board of Directors of numerous organizations, including the Enterprise Foundation, the National Democratic Institute, and the trustees of Dowling College. He was recently elected to the national boards of the Salvation Army and the 4-H Club. He was the first Hispanic to serve on the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. He was Chairperson of President Clinton's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for

Hispanic Americans and is currently the President of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation. Mr. Yzaguirre also serves on the Visiting Committee for the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Yzaguirre has been described by the *Hispanic* magazine as being “at the center of the Hispanic leadership stage.” He is a frequent commentator on Latino issues; he has appeared on NBC Nightly News, ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News, The Today Show, CNN, and National Public Radio and in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The National Journal*.

In 1993, Mr. Yzaguirre received the Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest honor given by the Mexican government to non-citizens. On November 30, 2009, he was nominated by President Barack H. Obama to be United States Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. The Senate confirmed him on September 29, 2010. His service in that post ended on May 29, 2013.

1.0.2 – Vision

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success will be the gold standard for excellence in community-based education by graduating college-bound, civic-oriented leaders.

1.0.3 – Mission

The Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success exists to educate and empower the next generation of leaders by creating a college-bound, culturally relevant environment with a focus on academics, health and social services, and youth and human services to create stronger families and healthier communities.

1.0.4 – Values

Integrity- Doing the right thing by being trustworthy, fair, honest and ethical.

Citizenship –Committing to serve and fulfilling individual and organizational responsibilities through service to others.

Achievement – Recognizing and rewarding personal responsibility, outstanding performance, and setting high expectations.

Respect- Considering the needs of one another, recognizing others’ differences, and always assuming positive intent.

Empowerment – Developing leadership in our faculty, staff, students, and parents and recognize their voices to effect change.

1.1 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RYSS students have a right to the pursuit of high-quality, world-class education in a safe and healthy environment that is free from disruption, harassment, and discrimination. RYSS parents have a right to expect that students' rights will be honored. Additionally, students and parents share the responsibility to ensure that students' rights are upheld.

1.1.1 –Campus Responsibilities

- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Provide an equitable system of student management.
- Provide an educational experience that includes the latest best teaching practices.
- Provide learning and enrichment opportunities outside the school setting.
- Provide open and consistent communication with parents.
- Provide access to the most current educational technology.
- Provide clean and well-maintained facilities.

1.1.2 – Student Responsibilities

- Show respect toward others.
- Take responsibility for one's actions and active commitment to one's learning.
- Attend all classes every day and on time in conformity with RYSS guidelines and the compulsory attendance law of the State of Texas.
- Arrive to class prepared with appropriate learning tools and completed assignments.
- Dress according to the campus dress code.
- Pay required fees and fines for all school activities and requirements, or speak to campus administration for support.
- Know and obey all campus rules.
- Cooperate with all faculty and staff members PK-12.
- Report to an administrator any incident or conduct that suggests a safety risk to others or RYSS property immediately. Not reporting an incident delays the correction of such a situation.
- Use technology solely for school business and appropriate educational purposes.
- Know that the use, possession, and/or sale of illegal and unauthorized drugs, alcohol, and weapons are unlawful and prohibited.
- Know that random searches in accordance with state and federal law are possible in order to assure a safe school environment.
- Know that RYSS campuses have a zero-tolerance policy.

1.1.3 – Parent Responsibilities

- Support and acknowledge school, district, and classroom rules, regulations, and policies to ensure that children conduct themselves according to district standards.
- Provide school uniforms and supplies to meet campus safety and instructional needs.
- Provide the school with the current address of residence, and when available, recent telephone numbers.
- Ensure students' attendance at school. By state law, student attendance is the responsibility of parents and guardians.
- Provide the appropriate school personnel with any student information that will affect the student's ability to learn or the student's behavior.
- Support students by attending parent meetings, covering topics such as academics, extracurricular activities, resources, socialization, community involvement, etc.
- Read, acknowledge, and understand these rules and the rules applicable to their children's conduct while they are at school.

1.1.4 – Instructional Programs

RYSS shall be responsible for providing a well-balanced curriculum and delivering effective instruction to all students. Students are responsible for academic growth by participating in the appropriate educational program to the best of their ability.

1.1.5 – Grading, Assessment, Promotion, and Retention

Students shall be assessed continuously in the most effective manner to determine the extent of their progress. In addition, students are responsible for maintaining reasonable academic performance standards commensurate with their ability.

1.1.6 – Concerns

Student concerns are paramount and are not taken lightly. Students who wish to have concerns addressed may do so in person, email, or in writing to the campus principal.

1.1.7 – Violent Situation on Campus

At RYSS, the highest priority is the safety of students and staff, and the district is committed to providing students and staff with a secure environment. As a prevention action, in addition to having Constables or armed security on secondary campuses at all times to safeguard our students, key RYSS personnel have undergone Prevention Training to respond to critical incidents in the form of violent disasters, such as active shooter, violent intruder, mass shooting, terrorism, workplace violence, and other unexpected crises.

In the event of a violent disaster or any abnormal situation, the campus principal, in collaboration with the campuses local Police Department, will alert parents/guardians via text message and/or voice call, to keep them updated as the situation progresses, and will contact them once the situation has been contained.

To keep everyone on our campus safe, we would also like to encourage parents/guardians to keep their contact information as updated as possible. This may be done by visiting the school secretary located at the main office for each campus.

1.1.8 – Student Dress Code and Personal Grooming

Each school shall adopt a specific dress code. All parents and students are responsible for becoming familiar with the school’s dress code and grooming standards and adhering to them. There are three fundamental reasons for a school dress code: 1) to ensure the health and safety of everyone on campus, 2) to avoid any unacceptable disruptions to the learning environment, 3) to encourage students to have appropriate dress habits, and 4) to ensure the safety of all RYSS students and staff.

1.1.9 – Students and School Property

Students are expected to show proper respect for others and property. Therefore, students are responsible for their actions directed toward school property and any damage caused to it. Damage to school property will result in disciplinary action and restitution. (See Section 1.12).

1.1.10 – Search of Property and Students

Students are entitled to the guarantees of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and are subject to reasonable search and seizures by any authorized school personnel.

Students are prohibited from carrying on their person or having on school property or at school-sponsored events items such as drugs, e-cigarettes or vaping products, weapons, alcohol, or other contraband materials in violation of school policy or state law.

School officials are empowered to conduct reasonable searches of students and school property when there is reasonable cause to believe that students may be in possession of drugs, weapons, contraband, or other materials, in violation of RYSS policies or state law.

Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of school lockers or school desks.

RYSS administration may utilize dogs and metal detectors to conduct searches of property and students. They may be used at random times and locations by RYSS administrative and law enforcement personnel.

1.1.11 – Education During Suspension

Student absences while suspended shall be considered excused absences. However, excused absences notwithstanding, students are responsible for making up all schoolwork missed while suspended within five school days after they return to school from suspension to receive credit for the work.

1.1.12 – Gang-Free School Zone

HB 2086 of the 81st Texas Legislative Session establishes gang-free school zones and provides enhanced punishment for gang-related criminal activity occurring in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property owned, rented, or leased by a school or a school board. In addition, under the statute, the punishment for certain offenses is increased to the punishment prescribed for the next-highest category of offense if the actor is 17 years of age or older and it is shown, beyond a reasonable doubt after the trial of the offense, that the actor committed the offense at a location that was owned, rented, or leased by a school or school board.

1.1.13 – Communication between School and Home

Communication between home and school is essential for the student to make the most of the opportunities provided. School communication starts with information documents such as handbooks, newsletters, progress reports, report cards, and student work. This communication continues with messages and phone calls between parents and school staff, information on campus web pages, home visits by school staff, and

school open houses.

Communication might also include requests for conferences initiated by the school or the parent. Phone communication and conferences are encouraged when school staff members or parents are concerned about a student's academic or behavioral progress. Parents are asked to report any phone, email address, or residential address changes to the school office as soon as possible.

In addition to regular home and school communication, the most current home contact information is essential in an emergency.

1.1.14 – Co-curricular and Extracurricular Participation

RYSS provides numerous enrichment, celebration, and extracurricular opportunities for the students. Such opportunities as field trips, banquets, proms, class outings, etc., are provided to enrich and celebrate the student; however, **STUDENTS MUST BE IN GOOD ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL STANDING to PARTICIPATE IN ANY SUCH OPPORTUNITY.**

For a student to be considered in *good academic standing*, the student must be passing all courses. For a student to be considered in good behavioral standing, the student must not have committed a Level I, II, III, IV, or V violation in the three weeks preceding any event.

In situations where additional or conflicting information is present, the University Interscholastic League (UIL) guidelines shall prevail.

1.2 - ACADEMICS

RYSS is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for all students. RYSS promotes students' higher-order thinking skills and their capacity to be well-informed and responsible global citizens. Each campus maintains its course of study, designed to meet state standards, and provides a uniquely enriched educational opportunity for its students. Central to fulfilling its academic purpose, RYSS has identified certain areas of note.

1.2.1 Academic Integrity-RYSS Academic Honor Code

RYSS expects all students to demonstrate intellectual honesty: honesty in the use of information and in completing class work, assignments, tests, and products. The world of learning in the 21st century offers amazing access to information. All available information is to be used to stimulate thinking and creativity; however, how information is used in the RYSS environment shall always be used with respect to the original authors and others. Academic integrity is not only about conforming to rules; it is about the pursuit of learning and developing one's higher order thinking without taking credit for someone else's work.

Violating standards of academic conduct is a severe matter subject to discipline. Examples of violations of academic integrity and honesty include:

1. Plagiarism
2. Inappropriate collaboration
3. Dishonesty in examination (cheating on tests)
4. Dishonesty in papers i.e. (compositions, thesis, research papers, etc.)

Truth and **Integrity** are the basic precepts of the RYSS Academic Honor Code.

Truth: This principle is maintained through each student's understanding of their responsibility to tell the truth and make sure it is known. This precludes lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarizing, and evading; there is no fundamental distinction among them.

Integrity: This principle stresses the obligation of all students to demonstrate uprightness of character. Students should commit themselves to academic excellence and complete acceptance of responsibility for their actions.

The following examples will help students understand what kinds of behavior are dishonest:

- Cheating
 - Looking at someone else's paper during a test or quiz
 - Removing a test from a classroom or other location without teacher consent
 - Giving or getting information about a test or examination before or while taking it
 - Looking in a book or at notes during a closed-book test or quiz
 - Collaborating with someone on an assignment or project unless such work has been specifically cleared with the teacher in advance
 - Getting information from someone under pretenses
- Plagiarism copying sentences or parts of sentences manually or electronically from someone else's writing without proper credit and/or writing someone else's idea(s) without giving the source credit from the original idea(s)

Any student aware of another student's violation of the honor code is obligated to report the incident to the teacher. Actions or attempted actions that run counter to these principles are violations of the RYSS Academic Honor Code and the Student Code of Conduct.

The teacher will handle violations in accordance with the following:

- A zero will be given on the assignment.
- Contact will be made with the parents.
- A "P" will be given for conduct on the progress report.
- A "P" will be given for conduct on the report card for those six weeks.
- Submit discipline referral to the principal, assistant principal, or designee(s)

It is the student's responsibility in cases that seem unclear to check with the appropriate teacher. Ignorance of the honor code is not an excuse for a violation. Students are expected to adhere to the RYSS Academic Honor Code

I pledge to uphold the RYSS Academic Honor Code. I will NOT:

- Cheat, lie, steal, deceive or participate in plagiarism.
- Collaborate or participate in any inappropriate acts or events.
- Participate in any acts of violence, threats, harassment, or cyberbullying.
- Engage in bribes, favors, and threats.
- Participate in copyright violations of any sort.

I will collaborate as a member of this learning community. I am expected to report violations of this code as I know them to occur.

1.2.2 Remote Conferencing

Regular Education Students: RYSS provides instruction through remote conferencing to a regular education student; RYSS may count that instruction as classroom time for FSP funding purposes and count the student in attendance for FSP funding purposes, provided the following requirements are met:

- The student is unable to attend school because of a temporary medical condition.
- The total amount of remote conferencing instruction does not exceed more than 20 instructional days over the entirety of the school year. In addition, one of the following must be met:
 - The student’s temporary medical condition is documented by a licensed physician in the United States. The documentation must include a statement from the physician that the student is to remain confined to their home or a hospital.
 - The student is being excluded from on-campus attendance because of a test result, formal diagnosis, or suspicion of having a communicable condition, as outlined in 25 TAC §97.7, and the conditions for readmission outlined therein have not yet been met.

School Calendar

Each Texas charter holder must have an annual school calendar approved by its governing board for every currently operating campus. 19 Texas Administrative Code §100.1211(g) states that “a charter holder shall adopt a school year for the charter school, with a fixed beginning and ending dates. The charter school shall submit a copy of the charter school’s campus calendars to the TEA division responsible for charter school administration before the first day of August of each year.

The decision-making process to develop the 2023-2024 academic calendars involved data collected from DAC (District Advisory Committee), Faculty, and Staff. We also reviewed other surrounding school district calendars for alignment and consistency. As a result, the proposed calendar surpasses the TEA 75,600-minute requirement.

- All RYSS students will attend an estimated number of 85,440 minutes

Please find the Instructional School Calendar on our website: www.RYSS.org

1.2.3 Special Programs

The district provides special programs for Special Education, 504, Emergent Bilinguals, Gifted and Talented, Dyslexia and Response to Intervention (RtI). The district and/or campus coordinator for each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as program services offered in the district.

1.2.3.1 Special Education

Pursuant to state and federal law, RYSS has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate and, if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students. If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the school to learn about RYSS’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links the students to various support options, including a referral for a special education evaluation. At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services.

The parent may make the request either verbally or in writing, notifying a school official including teacher or administrator of their interest in having their child evaluated for Special Education.

Within 15 school days, RYSS 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. RYSS must complete the evaluation and the report within the timeline prescribed by law. RYSS must give a copy of the report to the parent.

In a parental request for an evaluation, if RYSS determines that the evaluation is not needed, the school will give the parent a written notice explaining 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 RYSS. Additionally, the school will give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities.

1.2.3.2 Section 504

A student 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 designated 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 support under Section 504 to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law.

1.2.3.3 Response to Intervention (RtI)

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). Response to Intervention provides high quality instruction and interventions corresponding to a student's needs. Student progress is consistently monitored in order to make decisions about changes in instruction. The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students. If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the district or campus to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

1.2.3.4 Dyslexia Program

The objective of the Dyslexia program is to assess students suspected of having dyslexia and provide dyslexia intervention to those students with dyslexia. All students in Kindergarten through 1st will be administered a screener to help identify if the student shows characteristics of Dyslexia. Parents will be notified of the results, and if necessary, the school will request written parent consent for additional testing to confirm eligibility to receive Dyslexia services.

The Dyslexia Program provides explicit, direct instruction organized in a systematic, sequential, and cumulative way to meet the specific learning needs of students with dyslexia. This intervention program fulfills the requirements of the Texas Dyslexia Law to utilize individualized, intensive, and multisensory methods to deliver the components of instruction, which include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Dyslexia specialists are trained to deliver an appropriate instructional program to students eligible for these services.

1.2.4 Emergent Bilingual

Raul Yzaguirre School for Success is committed to successfully meeting the linguistic needs of its emergent bilingual (EB) students by ensuring premier bilingual or ESL programs. It is the district's belief that bilingualism in children far from impedes the child's overall cognitive or linguistic development. It is our belief that bilingualism leads to positive growth in all areas and that English Learners who develop their native-language proficiency do not compromise their acquisition of English.

The RYSS District's Primary Academies presently use the early reclassification Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP). The early transition TBP program model is designed for emergent bilinguals to receive primary language instruction for concept development while acquiring English. English instruction increases annually. Students who meet reclassification requirements anytime between third through twelfth grade are reclassified as non-ELs and must be mainstreamed into the General Education Program.

The District's Secondary Schools focus on intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction through the ESL Content Program Model. Intensive English instruction is provided in the different content areas to develop the student's proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Progression takes EL students through a sequence of ESL objectives/Texas Education Language Proficiency Standards (TELPs) based on their assessment ESL instructional level.

1.2.5 Gifted and Talented

The Gifted and Talented (G/T) program recognizes that students identified as gifted and talented have special needs and require opportunities that expand beyond their classroom. The Gifted and Talented pull-out program at RYSS provides identified students with academic services and support that emphasize problem solving, leadership, conceptual thinking, and in-depth learning. Students in the program are pulled by the campus GT Coordinator to engage in project/problem-based learning across multiple grade-levels.

The G/T identification process occurs in the fall for grades 1-11 and in the spring for kindergarten students. Students in grades 1-11 may be nominated by parents, self, or school staff with parent permission to be formally evaluated for services. All students in kindergarten are tested without the need for nomination. Decisions for grades 1-11 are made in the fall with instructional services beginning in the spring semester and evaluation decisions for kindergarten are made in the spring with instructional services beginning in grade 1.

1.2.6 Testing and Assessment

RYSS considers testing and assessment essential to maintaining pertinent educational programs. RYSS utilizes various assessment means and instruments to fulfill its purpose. Assessment means and instruments include quizzes, tests, benchmark tests, essays, projects, and other paper and online tools. Additionally, RYSS adheres to the administration of all state-mandated assessments, as well as the administration of a norm-referenced test. Technology protocols must be aligned to assessment standard policy.

RYSS adheres to the Texas Education Agency's guidelines regarding all State assessments.

It was determined and notified to all public schools in Texas on August 8th, 2019, that changes in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) must be implemented in the instruction of Reading Language Arts and the related assessment (STAAR). Changes in STAAR assessments for grades 3-8 and End of Course (EOC) exams took effect in the 21-22SY.

For more detailed information, please see the campus principal or visit TEA’s website.

(Ref. House Bill 3906 of the 86th Legislative Session)

1.2.7 Student Services

1. Troubleshoot Problems – Tech Support

- If a student has a school-issued device or a hotspot and needs assistance with technical support, please reach out to the main office of the respective campus.
- If students have any other technical issues accessing the online instructional materials or platforms, students will contact the teacher during office hours to ensure learning is on track.

2. Support Ongoing Operations – Safety

The plans 2023-2024 school year will continue to remain fluid with respect to COVID 19. Changes in guidelines and policy will be updated as needed and with guidance from TEA, the CDC, and local health authorities.

3. Student Academic Support

Teachers and Staff will be proactive in connecting daily with students to ensure that their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Teachers will work together to discuss student concerns in order to quickly mitigate areas of need.

Students and parents are encouraged to proactively connect with their child’s teacher should concerns arise.

4. Social-Emotional Support

In addition to academic support, RYSS prides itself on being able to provide students with social-emotional support when challenges arise beyond the scope of instruction. RYSS has a team of professionals designated to assist our student body. To find information about the services available, please contact the campus administrative team. Valuable information can also be found on the district website www.ryss.org.

1.2.8 Grading Policy / Report Cards

RYSS has uniformly adopted a grading policy. The grading policy may be subject to change in accordance with government and state policy; therefore, a grading policy will be distributed and communicated to students and parents at all campuses each year. RYSS is on a six-week grading cycle; therefore, report cards will be sent out every six weeks. Any student that withdraws prior to the six-week grading cycle will not receive a report card for the cycle before withdrawing. The report card dates are listed on the RYSS Academic Calendar and may be accessed by parents on The Tejano Center/RYSS website: www.ryss.org

1.2.8.1 Student Product Grading Scale

The following is the grading scale for each campus with the exception of Pre-K.

90-100 =A	Excellent quality of work through mastery of the subject
80-89 =B	Good quality of work, above average with consistent effort
75-79 =C	Satisfactory quality of work, average achievement
70-74= D	Below-quality of work, poor average achievement

69 or below = F Unsatisfactory quality of work, poor work, failing

1.2.9 Technology Use

RYSS makes various forms of technology and media available for use by its students. Every state of technology is to enhance learning according to each academy's approved academic program. Students shall exercise caution in the use of any technology and not knowingly access content that RYSS determines to be defamatory, inaccurate, potentially offensive, and possibly illegal; such use is a violation of the RYSS acceptable use policy, with consequences according to the RYSS Student Code of Conduct section of this handbook.

1.2.10 Textbooks and Supplies

Textbooks issued to students remain the property of RYSS. In most cases, textbooks are the property of the State of Texas. Textbooks are distributed to students on loan for their use while enrolled at RYSS. Additionally, students are held responsible for respecting school-owned supplies and materials. Students who lose or deface school-owned textbooks, supplies, or materials shall be responsible for their replacement costs. RYSS shall not distribute report cards, transcripts, or complete any other requested non-RYSS documentation until all outstanding replacement costs have been paid.

1.2.11 Promotion and Retention

RYSS has established specific guidelines related to student retention or promotion to the next grade level. These guidelines are parallel to district and state guidelines and will be distributed in the spring of each academic year and posted on the district and academy websites. Decisions regarding promotion are finalized through each campus's Grade Placement Committee.

1.2.12 Reinforcement

RYSS provides all students with a variety of intervention opportunities to receive additional academic assistance and reinforcement. Such intervention opportunities include:

- Extended-day (after school) tutorials
- Saturday STAAR tutorials
- Enrichment activities
- Peer tutoring
- High school mentors/tutors
- Response to Intervention (RtI)

1.3 – STUDENT CODE OF Conduct

This section describes a broad range of behaviors considered to be student misconduct and should be viewed as representative of the misconduct that most frequently causes disruption to an orderly educational process. These acts of misconduct are listed in Levels I, II, III, IV, and V. The student who commits an act of misconduct that may be classified into any of the five levels will be subject to disciplinary action.

1.3.1 – When and Where These Rules Apply

- The policies and administrative procedures concerning student conduct apply to actions of students on school property (including before/after school, dismissal time, and after school care/activities) and school buses and, in some cases, for conduct occurring off of school property or within 300 feet of school property.
- These rules are applicable to students placed in the In-School Suspension Program (ISS). Under state law, a student may be expelled by RYSS for Level V misconduct that occurs on the property of another school district within Texas.
- The rules apply to the actions of students at all school-sponsored or school-related activities or events, such as field trips, sporting events, stadium assemblies, fairs, or evening, school-related activities.
- Students should be aware that the commission of any felony offense, whether at school or away from school, may result in the placement of the student in ISS or further disciplinary action determined by the administration.
- Students should be aware that administrators who are made aware of criminal activity, whether on or off of campus, will make a report to appropriate law enforcement agencies and that, in addition to these administrative rules, students may be subject to criminal charges for violations of the law.

1.3.2 – General Discipline Guidelines for Assessing Penalties

When administering discipline, RYSS personnel shall adhere to the following general guidelines:

1. Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain essential order and discipline.
2. Students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Administrators should use caution and should ordinarily consider developmentally appropriate interventions for very young children who engage in misconduct. Factors that must be considered in each decision concerning suspension, placement in ISS, or expulsion may include such factors as:
 - The seriousness of the offense;
 - Student's age and intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct;
 - Student's disciplinary history;
 - Student's attitude;
 - The potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment;
 - State law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences;
 - Whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment;
 - Whether the student has a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's misconduct.
3. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, RYSS transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent

behavior of Level II or higher misconduct. An administrator may find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense. Finally, a finding that a student has engaged in any offense listed as an offense under Level IV or Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

1.3.3 - Levels of Offenses—Overview (For details on Levels of Offenses, see Section 1.4.)

Acts of misconduct are categorized into the following five levels of offense:

- **Level I – Violation of Classroom or Transportation Rules**
Offenses that generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher.
- **Level II – Administrator Intervention**
Offenses that are more serious in nature or a continuance of Level I misconduct.
- **Level III – Off-Campus Suspension and/or Placement in In-School Suspension (ISS)**
Offenses that seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or at school-related activities, or a continuance of Level I or Level II-misconduct. A finding that a student has engaged in a Level III offense may constitute a serious offense.
- **Level IV – Suspension and/or Expulsion**
Criminal offenses as defined in Level IV. This may include any felony, whether school-related or not unless it is one for which expulsion is required. A finding that a student has engaged in an offense listed under Level IV constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.
- **Level V – Expulsion for Serious Offenses**
Offenses that include those for which a student may or shall be expelled under state law. They include continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates RYSS guidelines and policies while placed in ISS. A finding that a student engaged in an offense listed under Level V constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior.

Staff members will use their professional judgment to determine the most effective way to correct student misconduct. Disciplinary actions apply equally to all students.

1.3.4 – General Procedures for Resolving School Problems

School problems can best be resolved at the campus level. In order to resolve problems, parents, guardians, and/or students can do the following:

- Meet with a teacher at appropriate times to discuss existing problems.
- If the parents, guardians, and/or students are dissatisfied with the teacher’s decision or explanation, they can meet with the principal or designee to review the area of concern.

1.3.5 – Corporal Punishment

RYSS prohibits corporal punishment as a disciplinary method. Anyone who suspects a student has experienced corporal punishment is directed to file a report with a teacher, principal, or other RYSS personnel.

1.4 – LEVELS OF STUDENT MISCONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS

1.4.1 – Level I – Violation of Classroom or Transportation Rules

Each teacher or staff member establishes the rules for the classroom and for school-related activities. The classroom teacher can manage most of the behavior. The teacher may use any of the disciplinary options listed below in maintaining discipline.

Level I acts of misconduct include such behavior as:

- Violations of rules or procedures established by the teacher or staff member
- Refusal to participate in classroom activities
- Unexcused tardiness or absences to class
- Failure to bring required classroom learning tools or assigned work to the class
- General misbehavior, such as eating in class, horseplay, making excessive noise, general disruption, or violating campus dress codes
- Any other act that disrupts the classroom or interrupts the educational process of the class
- Failure to deliver or return written communications between home, office, and school
- Disruptive or noncompliant behavior on a school bus, at a school bus stop, or during the dismissal of school
- Failure to protect individual computer account passwords from disclosure

Level I disciplinary options/responses include:

- Verbal redirection, correction, or warning
- Teacher-student conference
- Parent contact: note or telephone call to parent
- Student-counselor/principal/caseworker conference
- Detention (maintained by teacher) before or after school
- Other appropriate in-class disciplinary action
- Restriction of school-bus privileges by the bus operator and RYSS administration

Level I procedures:

- Any RYSS staff member who observes a student violating class rules or other school rules may correct the student.
- A record of the offenses and disciplinary actions should be maintained by the teacher or staff member on the appropriate form.
- The teacher should discuss the misbehavior with the parent, an administrator, or support personnel.
- Level I behavior violations and disciplinary options/responses are not limited to those provided. Serious, repeated violations may result in a more severe response or referral to Level II.

1.4.2 – Level II – Administrator Intervention

Some infractions will result in a referral to the principal or designee. The disciplinary response depends on the offense, previous misbehaviors, and the seriousness of the misbehavior. Level II acts of misconduct include those student acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or in the school. A teacher who observes a student engaged in Level II or higher misconduct will fill out a discipline/referral form for the principal or designee. The intervention specialist will forward an oral or written report to the parents.

Level II acts of misconduct include such behavior as:

- Any infraction that goes against the RYSS Academic Code of Honor
- Repeated violation of classroom or transportation rules under Level I
- Cheating, plagiarism, or copying the work of other students
- Leaving the classroom or school grounds without the permission of school personnel
- Cutting class or other forms of truancy
- Possession of matches or other flammable materials
- Inappropriate display of affection
- Posting or distributing unauthorized materials on school grounds
- Failure to abide by rules and regulations at extracurricular activities or at co-curricular activities such as field trips
- Loitering in unauthorized areas
- Use or operation of paging devices, including beepers, cell phones, electronic pagers, or any other type of electronic communication system on school campuses or at functions during school hours. In addition to disciplinary action, the unauthorized use or operation of electronic devices will result in confiscation. The Intervention Specialist or other administrator will notify the parent. An administrative fee payable to RYSS will be charged. **NOTE: RYSS is not responsible for any confiscated items.**
- Cafeteria disturbance
- Violation of a school's [mandatory school-dress code policy](#)
- Disruptive behavior on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Any other acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or the school
- Accessing materials and sites on the Internet that are deemed to be inappropriate by RYSS
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate email, including emails containing offensive language, cyberbullying, untruthful statements, junk email, or jokes
- Any infraction that goes against the RYSS Academic Code of Honor

Level II disciplinary options/responses include:

- Parental contact by phone and written or oral notification to parent or guardian
- Required administrator/student/parent conference
- Detention or placement in in-school suspension (ISS)
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, such as field trips and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Removal of school transportation privileges
- "Behavior," "behavioral," and/or "conduct" contracts
- Teacher removal of the student from the classroom
- Suspension of transportation privileges
- Any other appropriate disciplinary actions determined by the intervention specialist or administration.

Level II procedures include:

- Referral to principal or designee is made by way of written report not to exceed one page in length.
- Administrator confers with student and/or teacher to establish appropriate action.
- Written or oral notification of action is sent to the parent. Notification is sent to the teacher, indicating the action taken.
- The Intervention Specialist retains the discipline referral form.
- Level II behavior violations and disciplinary options/responses are not limited to those provided.
- Repeated violations shall result in a more severe response and/or referral to Level III.

1.4.3 – Level III – Off-Campus Suspension and/or Placement in In-School Suspension (ISS)

Level III acts include misconduct for which an administrator may suspend the student from attendance at school or place the student into ISS. The principal or designee makes the disciplinary determination. The period of suspension is limited to three days per occurrence. A decision to suspend a student is final and may not be appealed.

Level III acts of misconduct include such behavior as:

- Chronic or repeated disciplinary infractions of Level I and/or Level II offenses
- Fighting
- Gambling
- Misdemeanor stealing/theft of property, including computers and related equipment, in an amount under \$750
- Repeated instances of cutting class or other forms of truancy
- Possession of a knife
- Persistent disruptive behavior on a school bus
- Smoking, using, or possessing tobacco or tobacco products
- Interfering with school authorities
- Aggressive, disruptive action or group demonstration that substantially disrupts or materially interferes with school activities. This includes such acts as boycotts, sit-ins, trespassing, and walkouts.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests of school personnel and/or defiance of the authority of school personnel
- Changing school records or documents or signing a parent's name on school documents
- Failure to adhere to terms of behavior contracts
- Indecent/unsolicited sexual proposal/sexual harassment
- Harassment, including threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another student, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health
- Selling or soliciting for sale any merchandise on a school campus without the authorization of the building principal
- Display of disrespect toward school personnel or campus visitors
- Participation in activities by groups such as gangs and cults
- Wearing dress or attire signifying gang affiliations such as caps, bandanas, etc....
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures
- Possession or use of fireworks, "poppers," smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device that may be used to disrupt the educational process
- Possession of laser pens or laser pointers
- Possession of live ammunition or bullets
- Engaging in threats or other acts of intimidation that interfere with another student's desire or willingness to participate in the educational process
- Any verbal abuse or bullying of others, including but not limited to slurs, name-calling, or derogatory statements to another person because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, physical/personal appearance, or sexual orientation. Bullying is defined as any act or speech that subjects persons to indignity, humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse or threat of physical abuse, social or other isolation, shame, or disgrace.
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury (Section 22.01(a)(2), Penal Code)
- Misdemeanor criminal mischief (i.e., vandalism) resulting in the destruction or defacing of any

property, including surveillance cameras, computers, and related equipment, in an amount greater than \$20 but less than \$1,500. This includes rendering surveillance cameras, computers, or related equipment inoperable or damaging them by erasing data with magnets, intentionally introducing viruses, worms, or trojans, or tampering with programs or data without authority.

- "Hacking" or other use of computers to gain unauthorized access to the district or other databases, including student, faculty, or district data files, without permission. In addition to any criminal penalties, students may have their computer privileges suspended.
- Use of school computers or other electronic devices, including cell phones or digital cameras, to transmit, receive, view, or display obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, or racist media or to display information that advocates unlawful activities or provides guidance on the construction or production of weapons, illegal devices, or controlled substances
- Use of the school computer network with the intent to incite violence or aggressive and/or disruptive action on the part of the student body, use of slanderous language, or use of language that promotes racial disorder or sexual harassment and is disruptive to the school environment
- Use of the school computer network for soliciting or purchasing commercial materials and/or services of any kind
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate emails containing offensive language
- Logging on to a computer, sending email, or accessing the Internet or the district's intranet using a name or password other than the student's own
- Posting unauthorized Web pages, graphic images, or offensive language or comments on a school/district server, Web page, or guest book
- Use of the school computer network to engage in participation in hate groups
- Misdemeanor extortion, which is defined as obtaining money or information from another by coercion or intimidation of a value less than \$1,500
- Possession or use of any prescription or nonprescription drug, medicine, vitamins, or another chemical in violation of the Guidelines for Dispensing Medications at School
- Refusal to cooperate in, or interference with, a random metal-detector safety search
- Any other acts of serious misconduct that disrupt the school environment in the classroom and/or school
- Hazing, which means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act directed against a student by one person alone or acting with others that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization or general classification of students whose members are or include other students
- Assisting (directly or indirectly) with the promotion of any behavior prohibited by the RYSS Academic Code of Honor
- Damaging/tampering with school cameras
- Use or possession of electronic cigarettes or vapor products.

Level III disciplinary options/responses:

- Required administrator/student/parent conference
- Restitution or restoration, as applicable, for vandalism to property
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, such as field trips and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Placement of the student into in-school suspension
- Suspension for up to three school days per occurrence
- Removal of transportation services for up to one year
- Restriction or removal of computer-use privileges for up to one year
- Teacher removal of the student from the classroom
- Any other appropriate disciplinary actions determined by the administration.

Level III procedures include:

- Referral to principal or designee by way of discipline report will be sent to the parent.
- The principal or designee confers with student and parent about the misconduct. The student is given an opportunity to explain the incident. The administrator determines misconduct.
- The principal or designee decides whether to suspend the student or refer the student to ISS. Written notice of the offenses and the action taken are given to the parent and teacher. If the student is referred to ISS, the parent shall be given a letter stating the reasons for the removal and setting the term. The letter placing the student should state the term of placement in a specific number of days of successful attendance in the ISS. The final day of placement shall extend to a natural transition point such as the end of a grading cycle, a semester, or the end of the school year. Students under the age of 6 may not be placed in ISS.
- If the referral to ISS extends beyond the end of the next grading period or the end of the school year, the rules contained in the procedures for a long-term removal to ISS will be followed.
- Repeated violations shall result in a more severe response and/or suspension.

1.4.4 – Level IV - Suspension and/or Expulsion

Level IV acts of misconduct include such behavior as:

- Felony conduct. There are three instances of felony conduct for which a student must be referred to ISS. The placement made in accordance with this section shall be for any period considered necessary on the basis of the circumstances and facts known; however, the student shall still receive a review of the placement at intervals not to exceed 120 days. The circumstances include:
 1. Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony on campus, at a school-related function or activity, or within 300 feet of the school property line
 2. While enrolled in RYSS and regardless of the location of the offense, receiving deferred prosecution or a finding by a court or jury of delinquent conduct under the Family Code, or the reasonable belief of the principal that the student has committed a felony under Title 5 of the Penal Code, which includes criminal homicide; murder; capital murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; false imprisonment; kidnapping; aggravated kidnapping; indecency with a child; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding suicide; or tampering with a consumer product, regardless of where the offense occurs
 3. Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony other than one defined in Title 5 of the Penal Code that occurs more than 300 feet from the campus and is not related to a school-based activity or function if the principal reasonably believes that the student has engaged in such felony and the principal also determines that the continued presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.

Level IV misconduct also includes a finding that the student has engaged in the following conduct on a school campus, at a school-related activity, or within 300 feet of school property:

- Engaging in an assault, which is defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another and which may include causing bodily injury by recklessly or intentionally pointing a laser pointer or laser pen at another student or a staff member (Section 22.01(a)(1) and Section 1.07(a)(8), Penal Code)

- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled drug, or other controlled substances (Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.), unless punishable as a felony
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a dangerous drug (Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code), unless punishable as a felony
- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol
- Possessing, selling or giving a vape within 300 feet of school property
- Selling, giving or delivering an alcoholic beverage to another person
- Committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to an abusable volatile chemical or possession, delivery to a minor, or possession of paraphernalia used with volatile chemicals (Sections 485.031 through 485.034, Health and Safety Code)
- Engaging in conduct that contains elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure, defined to include offenses against chastity, common decency, morals, and the like
- Felony stealing/theft of computer equipment or any other property in an amount greater than \$75
- Burglary of any RYSS facility
- Defacing school property with graffiti or other means that results in a loss or destruction to property in an amount less than \$20,000.

Level IV misconduct also includes a finding that the student engaged in the following conduct on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity:

- Knowingly making a false report against a staff member that is later determined to be unsubstantiated at the conclusion of any investigation initiated as a result of the report
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another when the person knows or should reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative
- Participation in an illegal organization such as a fraternity, sorority, secret society, gang, cult, or other criminal combination prohibited by law that is defined as an organization composed at least in part of students and that seeks to perpetuate itself by recruiting members from the students enrolled in school on the basis of the decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a student in the school who is qualified by the rules of the school to fill the special aims of the organization (Section 37.121, Texas Education Code). Participation includes indirect participation such as recruiting and indirect guidance or leadership of the activities of gangs, cults, secret societies, and fraternities and sororities
- Repeated possession of ammunition or bullets
- Possession of BB guns, pellet guns, or air rifles
- Possession of electric stun guns or other protective devices designed to administer an electric shock
- Possession of replicas of guns that are sufficiently similar in appearance to a real gun such that, if pointed or shown to another person, a reasonable person may believe the student to be in possession of a firearm
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Use of computers or any other means to access and to tamper with RYSS records, to include grade books or any other public school records or any other records of a school-related activity maintained by RYSS
- Level IV additionally includes the following, regardless of whether the offense occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity:
 - Conduct involving a public school that contains the elements of the offense of false alarm or report or terrorist threat

- The terrorist threat is defined as threatening to commit violence or harm to any person or property with intent to cause an emergency response or that places any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or interrupting the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access by threats of violence or other means, or causing impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, the public water, gas, or power supply, or another public service
- Making a "hit list," in which a student makes a list of people to be harmed by means of a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with the intent to cause bodily harm
- Engaging in the offense of retaliation against any school employee by engaging in conduct such as intentionally or knowingly threatening to harm another by an unlawful act in retaliation for that person's performance of their official duties, unless the student engages in conduct punishable as a felony in retaliation against a person, in which case the student may be expelled under Level V.

Level IV disciplinary options/responses:

- Required administrator/student/parent conference
- Restitution or restoration, as applicable, for vandalism to property
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, such as field trips and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Placement of the student into in-school suspension
- Suspension for up to three school days per occurrence
- Removal of transportation services for up to one year
- Restriction or removal of computer-use privileges for up to one year
- Teacher removal of the student from the classroom
- Any other appropriate disciplinary actions determined by the administration.

Level IV procedures include:

- Referral to principal or designee by way of discipline report will be sent to the parent.
- The principal/designee confers with student and parent about the misconduct. The student is given an opportunity to explain the incident. The administrator determines misconduct.
- The principal/designee decides whether to suspend the student or expel. Written notice of the offenses and the action taken are given to the parent and teacher. If the student is suspended, the parent shall be given a letter stating the reasons for the removal and setting the term. The letter placing the student should state the term of placement in a specific number of days.

1.4.5 – Level V – Expulsion for Serious Offenses

Level V acts of misconduct include serious misbehavior and/or illegal acts that threaten to impair the educational efficiency of the school and/or that most seriously disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom and/or school. Under state law, students may be expelled for any violation listed under this section. Expulsions may occur if the Level V act of misbehavior occurs on school property or at a school-related or school-sponsored activity on or off school property. Expulsion means the removal of a student from school for more than three days but not longer than one calendar year.

Level V Required Expulsion

A student shall be expelled from school if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, engages in any act of misconduct that qualifies for expulsion, such as:

- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a firearm, which is defined as any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use (Section 46.01(3), Penal Code)
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** an illegal knife, which is defined under state law (Section 46.01(6), Penal Code) as a knife with a blade over five-and-a-half inches and also includes hand instruments designed to cut or stab by being thrown (martial-arts stars), a dagger, a bowie knife, a sword, or a spear
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a club, which is an instrument that is specially designed to inflict serious bodily injury or death when a person is struck with the instrument and includes a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk (Section 46.01 (1), Penal Code)
- Uses, exhibits, or possesses** a weapon listed as a prohibited weapon under Section 46.05, Penal Code. Prohibited weapons are an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a short-barrel firearm, a firearm silencer, a switchblade knife, brass knuckles, armor-piercing ammunition, a chemical-dispensing device, or a zip gun.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of:
 - a) Aggravated assault, which includes causing serious bodily injury to another during the commission of an assault or using or exhibiting a deadly weapon during the commission of an assault (Section 22.02, Penal Code) and which may include damage to a person's eye caused by pointing a laser pen or laser device at another
 - b) Sexual assault (Section 22.011, Penal Code)
 - c) Aggravated sexual assault, which includes causing or threatening to cause serious bodily injury to another during the commission of a sexual assault or using or exhibiting a deadly weapon during the commission of a sexual assault (Section 22.021, Penal Code)
 - d) Arson (Section 28.02, Penal Code)
 - e) Murder (Section 19.02, Penal Code)
 - f) Capital murder (Section 19.03, Penal Code) or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder (Section 15.01, Penal Code)
 - g) Indecency with a child (Section 21.11, Penal Code)
 - h) Aggravated kidnapping (Section 20.04, Penal Code)
 - i) Aggravated robbery (Section 29.03, Penal Code)
 - j) Manslaughter (Section 19.04, Penal Code)
 - k) Criminally negligent homicide (Section 19.05, Penal Code)
 - l) Continued sexual abuse of a child or children (Section 21.02, Penal Code)
 - m) Possessing**, using, selling, giving, delivering, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug or committing a serious act or offense while being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, but only if the conduct is punishable as a felony.

- Brings to school a firearm, as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 921, that includes any weapon, including a starter pistol, which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device. Students violating this section shall be expelled for at least one year except that:
 - a) The superintendent of schools may modify the length of the expulsion in the case of an individual student.
 - b) The district must expel the student for one year but may modify the expulsion in order to provide educational services to the expelled student in ISS.
 - c) Federal law requires the expulsion of any student who brings a firearm to school for a minimum term of one year.
 - State law does not allow students under the age of 10 to be expelled. The district or other local educational agency shall provide educational services to an expelled student under the age of 10 in a disciplinary alternative education program.
 - The district or other local educational agency may provide educational services to an expelled student who is 10 years of age or older in a disciplinary alternative education program.
 - The term of the expulsion may be modified by the superintendent/designee in the case of the individual student, complying with state and federal laws.

- Additionally, a student shall be expelled for engaging in any conduct containing the elements of an offense for which expulsion is required while retaliating against a district employee as a result of the employee's employment with the district, whether it occurs on or off of school property or at a school-related function.

- ** Possession means actual care, custody, control, or management. A student shall be considered to be in possession of any substance or object prohibited or regulated by RYSS if the substance or object is:
 - (1) on the student's person or in the student's personal property, such as the student's clothing, purse, book bag, or briefcase;
 - (2) in any private vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, such as an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle;
 - or (3) in any school property used by the student, such as a locker or desk.

Level V Options/Responses under Optional Expulsion:

- Notification and investigation by local law enforcement are required. If a decision is made by local law enforcement to transport the student, the administrator should normally contact the parents within one hour.
- Required administrator/parent/student conferences
- Exclusion from extracurricular activities, including field trips and commencement exercises/award ceremonies
- Restitution or restoration as applicable
- Referral to principal or designee, counselors, and/or appropriate agencies
- Referral to juvenile court for legal action
- Suspension for up to three consecutive days per occurrence
- Expulsion (more than three consecutive school days per occurrence, but not longer than one year). In cases of a student who engages in sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student, there is no limitation on the length of the expulsion or the length of the placement in ISS.

Level V Procedures:

1. The administrator contacts the police to investigate the school infraction and/or illegal act and confers with the student after consulting with law enforcement. If the student is arrested, the parents should be notified within one hour. Any expulsion must include an official police or law-enforcement investigation. However, it is not necessary to await the results of the investigation before proceeding to an expulsion hearing.
2. The investigating building administrator notifies the student and parents or guardians in writing of the reasons for the proposed expulsion and of the disciplinary response to the conduct. If the student withdraws from the district prior to the imposition of an expulsion, the administrator may proceed with determining an appropriate punishment for the offense.
3. A school administrator who is an impartial hearing officer will conduct a full hearing before a decision to expel a student is made.
4. The district shall inform the student's teacher(s) of the conduct of a student who has engaged in any violation listed in this section. The teacher shall keep this information confidential.
5. Students expelled from RYSS are entitled to receive educational services but are not entitled to participate in any regular or extracurricular district programs during the period of the expulsion.

1.4.6 – Zero Tolerance of Criminal Charges

All students who unlawfully possess a firearm, illegal knife as defined by state law, explosive, or any other dangerous object or weapon on RYSS property, on school buses, and/or in attendance at RYSS-related activities shall be recommended for expulsion. In every case where students engage in conduct that contains the elements of an offense in violation of the Texas Penal Code or Education Code, RYSS will pursue arrest and charges.

1.4.7 – Reports to Local Law Enforcement

RYSS has an obligation under the law to notify local law enforcement if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that any of the following offenses have occurred in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.

Such offenses include:

- Murder; capital murder
- Aggravated kidnapping
- Aggravated assault
- Injury to a child or an elderly individual
- Sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault
- Arson
- Robbery; aggravated robbery; burglary
- Manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance; manufacture, delivery, or possession of a miscellaneous illegal substance or delivery of marijuana within 1,000 feet of a school or playground
- Deadly conduct, as described by Section 22.05, Penal Code, includes recklessly engaging in conduct that places another person in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, home, or occupied vehicle
- Terrorist threat, which generally involves the threat of a violent act that places a person in fear of serious bodily injury or is designed to incite panic; cause disruption to the use of a public building or space; interrupt the use of public communications, transportation, the water, gas, or power supply, or another public service; or cause an emergency response as more specifically described by Section 22.07, Penal Code
- Use, sale, or possession of a controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, or marijuana, as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code
- Possession of a club, explosive weapon, firearm, firearm silencer, handgun, illegal knife, knife, brass knuckles, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, switchblade knife, armor-piercing ammunition, hoax bomb, a chemical dispensing device, or zip gun, as listed in Sections 46.01(1-14) or Section

- 46.01(16) of the Penal Code
- Organized criminal activity, which includes the commission of murder, capital murder, arson, aggravated robbery, robbery, burglary, theft, aggravated kidnapping, kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, forgery, deadly conduct, burglary of a motor vehicle, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, a gambling offense, or other criminal activity if it is done with the intent to establish or maintain or participate in a collaboration of three or more persons or participate in the profits of such a combination in carrying on criminal activity as further defined under Section 71.02 of the Penal Code
- Any other criminal offense for which a student may or shall be expelled.

The principal or designee who notifies local law enforcement of these offenses shall notify each instructional or support staff member who has regular contact with the student who has committed the offense.

1.4.8 – 86th Legislation TEC Chapter 37

Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year going forward in accordance with the 86th Legislative Session as it relates to Student Discipline under the Texas Education Code Chapter 37, the following will be implemented in all RYSS schools:

1. The out-of-school suspension of homeless students is prohibited unless the student engages in certain behaviors defined by TEC §37.005(c)(1)-(3) while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property (Ref. House Bill 692).
2. Two new conditions must be considered to determine what is in the best interest of the student before ordering a suspension, removal to an alternative disciplinary education program (DAEP), expulsion, or placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) (House Bill 811, TEC §37.001(a)(4) amendment), which are:
 - a. (E) a student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services; or
 - b. (F) a student's status as a student who is homeless.
3. A transition plan for students being released from a DAEP, JJAEP, or a juvenile detention center will be implemented. The school will create a personalized transition plan developed by the campus administrator and other specified persons (House Bill 2184, TEC §37.023 addenda).
4. The school will provide an alternative means of receiving all course work provided in the classes in the foundation curriculum that the student misses as a result of an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Also, it will include the conduct that contains the elements of the offense of a terroristic threat as described by Penal Code 22.07(c-1), (d), or (e), as a reason that a student must be served academically by a JJAEP during the term of the removal (House Bill 3012, TEC §37.005 Subsection (e) and TEC §37.011(b) amendments).
5. The school will post on the district's Internet website, for each district campus, the designated person, e-mail address, and dedicated telephone number of the campus behavior coordinator under TEC §37.0012) according to Senate Bill 1306, Texas Education Code §26.015.
6. In all schools, the duties for school district peace officers, school resource officers, and security personnel be included in:
 - (1) the district improvement plan under TEC §11.252;
 - (2) the local student code of conduct adopted under TEC §37.001;

- (3) any memorandum of understanding providing for a school resource officer; and
- (4) any other campus or district document describing the role of peace officers, school resource officers, or security personnel in the district (Ref. Senate Bill 1707, TEC §37.081(d)).

- 7. When determining whether there is a reasonable belief a student has engaged in conduct defined as a felony offense by the Penal Code, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee may consider all available information, including the information furnished under Article §15.27 (related to a notification to schools by law enforcement agencies of the arrest or referral of children), Code of Criminal Procedure, and upon request, the information included in new TEC §37.006(k-1):

In addition to the information provided under Subsection (k), the law enforcement agency shall provide to the superintendent or superintendent's designee information relating to the student that is requested for the purpose of conducting a threat assessment or preparing a safety plan relating to that student. A school board may enter into a memorandum of understanding with a law enforcement agency regarding the exchange of information relevant to conducting a threat assessment or preparing a safety plan. Absent a memorandum of understanding, the information requested by the superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall be considered relevant (Ref. Senate Bill 2135, TEC §37.006(e)).

- 8. The schools will consider new reasons for which a student must be placed in an alternative disciplinary setting. A student who engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of harassment under Texas Penal Code §42.07(a)(1), (2), (3), or (7) against an employee of the school district must be placed in a DAEP. Penal Code §42.07(a):

A person commits an offense if, with intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another, the person:

- (1) initiates communication and in the course of the communication makes a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene;
- (2) threatens, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
- (3) conveys, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury;
- (7) sends repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another (Ref. Senate Bill 2432, TEC §37.006(a)(2)).

1.5 – BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

RYSS prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and making hit lists. Students who violate this prohibition will be dealt with to the fullest extent allowed in the Student Code of Conduct section of this handbook, and as allowed by law; at minimum, any incident of bullying is considered a Level III offense (See Section 1.4.3).

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by RYSS and that:

- Will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or damage to the student's property;
- Is so sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; or
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

1.5.1 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of the Internet, cell phones, or other devices to send, post, or text message images or material intended to hurt or embarrass another person. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Continuing to send email to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender; sending or posting threats, sexual remarks
- Ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums and posting false statements as fact intended to humiliate the victim
- Disclosure of personal data such as the victim's real name, address, or school on websites or forums
- Posing as the victim for the purpose of publishing material in the victim's name that defames or ridicules that person
- Sending threatening and harassing texts, instant messages, or emails to the victim
- Posting or sending rumors of gossip to instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target, which is determined to have material and substantial interference with school activities or with the rights of students and teachers.

1.5.2 Reporting of Bullying

Anyone (parents, students, employees) who suspects bullying is occurring or has occurred shall report this as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A report of the alleged act should be made to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other RYSS employee. Any RYSS employee who receives a report of bullying is required to immediately notify the principal or designee. A record of all reports of bullying shall be reduced to written form. RYSS employees are obligated under penalty of law to report any incident of suspected or actual bullying, and the principal or designee must timely respond to any report, up to and including taking disciplinary action as described in [Section 1.4](#). Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten business days from the date of the report; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

1.5.3 Bullying and the Special Education Student

In all cases of suspected bullying in which a student enrolled in Special Education is involved, no disciplinary consequences shall be imposed until an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

1.5.4 Examples of Bullying

Behaviors that are not acceptable and considered as bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Any verbal abuse of others, including slurs, name-calling, or derogatory statements to another person because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, physical/personal appearance, or sexual orientation
- Any act or speech that subjects persons to indignity, humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse or threat of physical abuse, social or other isolation, shame, or disgrace
- Cyberbullying (See Section 1.5.1);
- Harming someone's self-worth by verbal and nonverbal communication, for example, teasing, name-calling, insulting, intimidating, threatening, making gestures, staring, or eye-rolling
- Harming another person's group acceptance through gossip, rumors, trying to ruin the person's reputation, arranging public humiliation, excluding others, getting others to exclude others, or interfering in someone's making or keeping friends in any way
- Engaging in threats or other acts of intimidation that interfere with another student's desire or willingness to participate in the educational process
- Indecent/unsolicited sexual proposal/sexual harassment
- Harassment/dating violence, including threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraining, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury
- "Sexting" or using a cell phone or other personal communication device to send a text or email messages or possessing text or email messages containing images reasonably interpreted as indecent or sexually suggestive while at school or at a school-related activity.

NOTE: In addition to any disciplinary action, phones will be confiscated; and any images that are suspected of violating criminal laws will be referred to law enforcement authorities.

1.6 – ENROLLMENT

In accordance with the RYSS Original Charter and the Charter Renewal, the following represents the Charter Holder's formal Admission Policy.

1.6.1 Non Discrimination

Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success (RYSS) prohibits discrimination in its admission policy on the basis of sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, academic, artistic, or athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend in accordance with Section 12.111 of the Texas Education Code. RYSS may deny enrollment of a student who has a documented history of a criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems as described in the Texas Education Code, Subchapter A, Chapter 37. The decision to enroll a student with one or more such issues rests with the principal of the campus to be impacted.

All new students to RYSS must complete the TEA Charter Student Admission Application. Once the application has been submitted and approved by Principal, parents can start the enrollment process. Parents will complete all required forms and provide copies of any documents requested by the district.

1.6.2 Student Records

Cumulative student records shall be maintained for each student while enrolled at RYSS. The records shall be maintained at the school where the student is currently enrolled until graduation or withdrawal.

Records for non-enrolled students shall be retained for the period of time required by law. The superintendent or designee is the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Those records can be accessed at the school site or at the administration office.

The district shall make a student's records available to the student's parents, as permitted by law.

The records custodian or designee shall use reasonable procedures to verify the requestor's identity before disclosing student records containing personally identifiable information.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours without charge upon written request to the records custodian. For in-person viewing, the records custodian or designee shall be available to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the student's records shall be maintained at all times, and records to be viewed shall be restricted to use only in the superintendent's, principal's, or counselor's office or other restricted area designated by the records custodian. The original copy of the record or any document contained in the cumulative record shall not be removed from the school.

Copies of records must be requested in writing and it will be fulfilled within 24 to 48 hours. Parents may be denied copies of records if they fail to follow proper procedures. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of a parent, one copy of the record shall be provided at no charge.

A parent may continue to have access to his or her child's records under specific circumstances after the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

1.6.3 Immunization Records

Each student shall be fully immunized against diphtheria, rubella (measles), rubella, mumps, tetanus, and poliomyelitis. The school nurse will review all immunization records upon student enrollment. The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) may modify or delete any of these immunizations or may require immunizations against additional diseases as a requirement for admission to any elementary or secondary school. Education Code 38.001(a), (b)

TDSHS requires students in kindergarten through twelfth grade to have the following additional vaccines, according to the immunization schedules set forth in department regulations: pertussis, hepatitis B, hepatitis A (for students attending schools in high incidence geographic areas as designated by the department), and varicella (chickenpox).

TDSHS requires students in seventh through twelfth grade to have the meningococcal vaccine, according to the immunization schedules set forth in department regulations.
25 TAC 97.63(2)(B)

1.7 – ATTENDANCE

1.7.1 Compulsory Attendance

RYSS complies with the Texas compulsory attendance law and expects all students enrolled to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes every day. The Blackboard Connect System will be used to call parents to inform them of their child's absence. Excessive absences and/or failure to abide by RYSS and TEA guidelines could result in a final attendance review which may result in filing a complaint against the parent through the truancy courts and/or withdrawal from RYSS to return to the student's home school.

The Texas Education Code (TEC 25.094514) states that failure to attend school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period the school district may file a complaint against the parent in a county, justice, or municipal court for an offense under Section 25.093 Every effort will be made with the parent and the student to adhere to the attendance policy via phone calls, home visits, counseling, truancy referrals, etc.

1.7.2 Excused Absences

Acceptable reasons for excused absences are:

Personal Illness - With official documentation of the visit from the medical service provided or note signed by parent/guardian.

- There can be no more than five hand-written notes per semester; others must be approved by the principal.
- The note must include student name, date of absence, the reason for absence, parent's signature, parent's phone number.
- A student that is signed out early (no matter the reason) must bring a note/doctor's excuse the next school day attended.
- Notes must be turned in within five days of absence. Notes will not be accepted after this time.
- All notes must be turned in to the attendance office. Notes are NOT to be given to teachers or office staff. It will be the responsibility of the parent to make sure that the attendance office receives the excuses in a timely manner.

NOTE: A TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, OR SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SCHOOL IN WHICH A STUDENT IS ENROLLED MAY EXCUSE THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE STUDENT FOR ANY REASON ACCEPTABLE TO THE TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, OR SUPERINTENDENT.

A student not actually on campus at the time attendance is taken may be considered in attendance for FSP purposes if the student:

- is enrolled in and attending off-campus dual credit program courses and is not scheduled to be on campus during any part of the school day. Students who are enrolled in and attending an off-campus dual credit program course and are scheduled to be on campus during any part of the school day should have their attendance recorded while they are on campus. See 3.6.2.2 Alternative Attendance-Taking Time for Certain Student Populations for instructions on how to record attendance for these students if they are not scheduled to be on campus during the official attendance-taking time.
- is participating in an off-campus work-based learning opportunity and is not scheduled to be on campus

during any part of the school day. Students who are participating in an off-campus work-based learning opportunity and are scheduled to be on campus during any part of the school day should have their attendance recorded while they are on campus. See 3.6.2.2 Alternative Attendance-Taking Time for Certain Student Populations for instructions on how to record attendance for students not scheduled to be on campus during the official attendance taking time.

- is enrolled full-time in Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) courses. See 12.2 Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) for information on recording daily attendance. Students who are enrolled in one or more TXVSN courses but attend a regular campus part of the day and who are not scheduled to be on campus during the official attendance-taking time should have their attendance recorded during the part of the day they are on campus. See 3.6.2.2 Alternative Attendance-Taking Time for Certain Student Populations for instructions on how to record attendance for these students.
- is participating in an activity that is approved by your local school board and is under the direction of a professional staff member, an adjunct staff member, or a paraprofessional staff member of your school district. The adjunct staff member must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and be eligible for participation in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. Students participating in any activity that is not approved by your local school board or without certified district personnel supervision must be counted absent. For attendance to qualify for funding purposes, the professional staff member, adjunct staff member, or paraprofessional staff member must be accompanying the students as an official of your school district for the specific purpose of supervising the students and must be approved by your school board to supervise the activity. For example, students would be reported present if they are participating in 4H activities that are supervised by a county extension service agent who has been approved by the local school board as an adjunct staff member or a paraprofessional staff member of your school district.
- is participating, with local school board approval, in a short-term (for example, five-day) class that is provided by the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) or the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) at a location other than the student's campus. The student must not be considered in attendance for FSP purposes on any day the student is traveling between the student's district and the location of the class but is not attending class. (However, travel days may be excused for compulsory attendance purposes. See 3.6.4 Excused Absences for Compulsory Attendance Purposes.) Your school district is responsible for obtaining documentation of the student's class attendance from the TSBVI or TSD.
- misses school for the purpose of observing religious holy days, including traveling for that purpose.⁶⁵ Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student will observe the holy days. Your school district may elect to excuse additional travel days; however, the student would be considered absent for the additional travel days for attendance accounting purposes. Your school district is responsible for determining what constitutes a religious holy day for purposes of excusing absences. The agency does not maintain a list of days that qualify as religious holy days for purposes of being considered in attendance for FSP purposes. However, we do provide the following guidance: To be considered a religious holy day, the day should be one generally recognized by the student's religious denomination as a holy day that is required to be observed by all members of that denomination. Church retreats, camps, and mission trips and individual religious rites (baptisms, christenings, bar mitzvahs, etc.) are not considered holy days.
- is in grades six through 12 and misses school for the purpose of playing "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in Texas for a deceased veteran.
- misses school for the purpose of attending a required court appearance, including traveling for that

purpose.⁶⁷ Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student is required to appear in court. Your school district may elect to excuse additional travel days; however, the student would be considered absent for the additional travel days for attendance accounting purposes. A court appearance is considered to be required if the law (federal or state) or the court mandates an appearance by the student in a criminal, civil, or traffic matter. Examples of required court appearances would be appearances in response to a jury summons in the name of the student, a subpoena in the name of the student, or a traffic ticket marked “You Must Appear” or “Court Appearance Required.” Additional examples would be a student’s appearance in court as a plaintiff or defendant or as the subject of a court proceeding, such as an adoption or custody proceeding. Acceptable forms of documentation include a copy of a pleading or other document filed with the court, a notice from the court clerk regarding a hearing or trial date, a jury summons, or a subpoena.

- is in the conservatorship of the DFPS and misses school: o to participate in an activity ordered by a court under the Texas Family Code, Chapter 262 or Chapter 263, provided that scheduling the participation outside of school hours is not practicable⁶⁸ or o to attend an activity under a service plan under the Texas Family Code, Chapter 263, Subchapter B. ⁶⁹ The student may be considered in attendance for travel days for this purpose. Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student is participating in the activity, appointment, or visitation.
- misses school for the purpose of serving as a student early voting clerk, if your school district has a policy allowing for this type of excused absence, ⁷⁰ or an election clerk or student election clerk.⁷¹ Your school district may excuse a student’s absence for this purpose for a maximum of two days in a school year.⁷² A student may be considered in attendance for travel days related to an absence to serve as an election clerk or student election clerk but not for travel days to serve as a student early voting clerk. Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student is serving as an election clerk. Your school district may elect to excuse additional travel days; however, the student would be considered absent for the additional travel days for attendance accounting purposes. Travel days do not count toward the two days per school year maximum. To serve as a student election clerk or student early voting clerk, a student must: o be eligible to serve as an election clerk under the Texas Election Code, §32.051(c); o be at least 16 years of age; o have the consent of the principal of the school the student attends; o be a US citizen; and o have completed any training course required by the entity holding the election. ⁷³ To serve as an election clerk (as opposed to a student election clerk), a student must meet the requirements specified in the Texas Election Code, §32.051.
- misses school for the purpose of appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student’s application for US citizenship, including traveling for that purpose.⁷⁴ Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site of the governmental office. Your school district may elect to excuse additional travel days; however, the student would be considered absent for the additional travel days for attendance accounting purposes.
- misses school for the purpose of taking part in the student’s own US naturalization oath ceremony, including traveling for that purpose.⁷⁵ Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site of the ceremony. Your school district may elect to excuse additional travel days; however, the student would be considered absent for the additional travel days for attendance accounting purposes.
- is temporarily absent because of a documented appointment for the student or the student’s child that is

with a health care professional licensed, certified, or registered to practice in the United States. 76 A documented appointment with a health care professional includes an appointment of a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder with a health care practitioner⁷⁷ to receive a generally recognized service⁷⁸ for persons with that disorder.⁷⁹ To be considered temporarily absent, the student must begin classes or return to class on the same day of the appointment. The appointment must be supported by a document, such as a note, from the health care professional.

- is absent as the result of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible. Documentation from a health care professional licensed, certified, or registered to practice in Texas must be provided that specifies the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment. A student with a mental health or substance abuse condition who is being treated for a serious illness (TEC, §25.087(b)(3)) in an outpatient day treatment program or partial hospitalization program, under the care of a health care professional licensed, certified, or registered to practice in Texas, shall be excused for the authorized treatment period, and shall not be withdrawn from school. The discharge summary from the outpatient day treatment or partial hospitalization program must include treatment admission and discharge dates to be provided to the school by the family or medical facility upon return to school as documentation to excuse absences for the duration of the authorized outpatient treatment plan or partial hospitalization.
- is in his or her junior or senior year of high school and misses school for the purpose of visiting an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization to determine the student's interest in attending the institution.⁸⁰ Your district must not excuse for this purpose more than two days during a student's junior year and two days during a student's senior year and must adopt a policy stating when an absence will be excused for this purpose and a procedure for verifying students' visits to institutions of higher education.
- is 17 years of age or older and pursuing enlistment in a branch of the US uniformed services or the Texas Army National Guard. Your district must not excuse the student for this purpose for more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school and must adopt a policy stating when an absence will be excused for this purpose and a procedure for verifying the student's activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the US uniformed services or the Texas Army National Guard.
- is absent to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or is immediately returned from continuous deployment of at least four months outside the locality where the parent, stepparent, or guardian regularly resides. Your district is required to excuse up to five days for this purpose in a school year. An excused absence for this purpose must be taken no earlier than 60 days before the date of deployment or no later than 30 days after the date of return from deployment.
- misses school for the purpose of visiting a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner permit. The student must be enrolled in high school and 15 years of age or older. Your district may not excuse the student for more than one day of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school for each purpose (obtaining a driver's license and obtaining a learner license). Your district must verify the student's visit to the driver's license office in accordance with the procedures adopted by your district.

1.7.3 Unexcused Absences

An absence for any reason other than those listed in Section 1.7.2 of this handbook shall be classified as UNEXCUSED unless otherwise approved by Principal.

1.7.4 Absences and Denial of Course Credit

The Texas Education Code (TEC 25.092) requires that a student is in attendance for 90% of the days a class is offered in a semester in order to be awarded credit for that class. Additionally, students with three or more excused or unexcused absences in any credit course may have their credit withheld, and an asterisk (*) will appear on the student's report card. This is a credit issue and not a pass or fail issue. A student may be passing the course but also have three or more unexcused absences and a resulting asterisk indicating withholding of credit. Students with attendance issues or concerns will be placed on an attendance contract. Failure to correct attendance may result in denial of credit and/or a recommendation to return to the zoned school. Students must report to school on time every day.

1.7.5 Attendance Appeals Committee (Course Credit Appeal)

RYSS has a school attendance appeals committee, the composition of which shall be named by the principal of the academy where the committee is convened. The committee shall review petitions for class credit for students who have excessive absences. Excused or unexcused absences both count toward the 90% credit rule.

The committee may grant class credit in those cases where absences are due to extenuating circumstances, and the committee may stipulate additional requirements, which a student must meet in order to regain credit in a course. Any student not meeting all requirements on the day of graduation proceedings shall not be allowed to participate.

1.8 – STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The function of the school nurse is to provide acute, chronic, episodic, and emergency health care; assessment of student's health status; identification of health problems that may affect educational achievement; development of health care plans; and administration of medications. The nurse cannot diagnose but can make recommendations based on the individual student. Parents must inform the nurse of any student with a chronic or serious illness. A medical statement describing the condition should be provided by the parent for the student's confidential health record.

To be admitted to the clinic, a student must have a written permit from the teacher whose class the student is missing. A student may come to the clinic during lunch with a permit. Any student, who wishes to leave school because of illness, must come to the clinic and sign out in the appropriate office. The student's parent(s) will be notified before the student is dismissed from school due to illness. Parents are asked to please pick up their children as quickly as possible after being notified. Students who go home without a permit from the nurse will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action. All medical excuses for Physical Education restrictions must originate with the nurse.

Parents should keep their child at home if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more. Students must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea. The child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Skin rash that has not been diagnosed by a doctor as being noncontagious. The nurse must have a medical release for the student to return to school.
- Untreated inflamed/pink eyes. A doctor's note is required for the student to return to school. If inflammation is due to "allergies," the doctor must document it.

If students exhibit any of the above symptoms at school, they must be picked up by their parents.

A contagious medical condition is one that will spread from one person to the next. The flu, strep throat, chickenpox, and infectious pink eye are some examples.

When a student has been seen by the doctor, he or she must bring a doctor's note in order to return to school.

1.8.1 Medication

The policy of the Board of Education does not authorize RYSS school personnel to dispense or administer medication of any kind. That includes aspirin, a similar preparation, or any other drugs. Nurses and other school personnel, however, can give medication during school hours under the following restrictions:

Students who are noncontagious, on long-term medication, on preventative medication, or for a prolonged period on medication that cannot under any arrangement be administered other than during school hours may take medication during school hours. The health care provider's statement must be accompanied by the written permission of at least one parent. This form will be kept on file in the clinic. No medication will be dispensed without this form on file. With the required documentation on file, students may self-administer asthma medications.

The medication is to be furnished by a parent and brought to the clinic in the original container labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, and directions for the time, route, and dosage. The physician's name must be on prescription medication. All medications must be delivered to the school by an adult and must be picked up from the school by an adult.

1.8.2 Lice

Hundreds of days are missed each school year because of head lice infestation. 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 discuss a plan for treatment with an effective medicated shampoo.

After a student has undergone 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. The bed sheets, blankets, pillows, and the entire home environment should also be treated to prevent infestation. If a parent discovers head lice in a child's hair, parents are asked to inform the school nurse as soon as possible. Follow-up screening will be done in the student's classroom. Parents should instruct their children not to share combs, brushes, hats, or scarves with anyone.

More information on head lice can be obtained here: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>

1.8.3 Immunizations

Each student shall be fully immunized against diphtheria, rubella (measles), rubella, mumps, tetanus, and poliomyelitis. The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) may modify or delete any of these immunizations or may require immunizations against additional diseases as a requirement for admission to any elementary or secondary school. *Education Code 38.001(a), (b)*

TDSHS requires students in kindergarten through twelfth grade to have the following additional vaccines, according to the immunization schedules set forth in department regulations: pertussis, hepatitis B, hepatitis A (for students attending schools in high incidence geographic areas as designated by the department), and varicella (chickenpox).

TDSHS requires students in seventh through twelfth grade to have the meningococcal vaccine, according to the immunization schedules set forth in department regulations.
25 TAC 97.63(2)(B)

If a student's immunizations are incomplete, the parent/guardian will be sent a letter by the school nurse to this effect. In order for the student to remain in school, the immunizations required must be obtained within the time designated, and proof of immunization must be provided to the nurse before being readmitted to class.

For a complete list of required immunizations, please contact the RYSS nurse. Students 13 to age 23 may complete a Baylor College of Medicine Teen Clinic consent form for access to clinic services.

1.8.4 Contagious Diseases and Conditions

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain conditions or diseases are NOT allowed to come to school while they are contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should keep the child at home; and it is requested until symptoms of the disease or condition are completely gone, or the child has been seen by his or her health care provider. All students exhibiting contagious conditions must NOT return to school unless written notice from a health care provider is received.

1.8.5 Health Screenings

The State of Texas requires that all students have yearly vision and hearing screenings. All fifth-grade and eighth-grade students are also required to have a yearly spinal screening. The nurse and/or personnel who are certified by the state will perform the screenings. If the student or parent prefers, the requirements may be met by a professional examination by the student's health care provider. A copy of the results should be sent to the student clinic to verify the assessment, the results, and possible treatment. If a student is currently under a physician's care for a vision, hearing, or spinal condition, parents are asked to please send a copy of the report to the health clinic so modifications can be implemented.

1.8.6 Medical Conditions

All medical conditions, either previous or currently being treated by a medical doctor or health care provider, **MUST** be reported to the school nurse. A list of all medications the student is taking must be provided to the nurse in case of an emergency and will be maintained confidential.

1.9 FOOD SERVICE

1.9.1 Nutrition Policy

The new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will help schools make healthy choices and the easy choice by offering students more foods and beverages that emphasize whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, leaner protein, lower-fat dairy while limiting foods with too much sugar, fat, and salt.

1.9.1.1. Nutrition Standards for Foods

Any food sold in schools must be either a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, a protein food, a “whole-grain rich” grain product, or a combination of food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit or vegetable or contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of a nutrient cited in the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). (Calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber). Additionally, foods sold must meet a range of nutrient requirements, including the following:

- Calorie limits include snack items: ≤ 200 calories, entrée items: ≤ 350 calories.
- Sodium limits include snack items: ≤ 200 mg per portion as packaged, entrée items: ≤ 480 mg per portion as packaged.
- Fat limits include total fat: ≤35% of calories, saturated fat: < 10% of calories, trans fat: zero grams,
- Sugar limits include either: ≤35% of calories from total sugars in foods **or** ≤ 35% of weight from total sugars in foods.

1.9.1.2 Nutrition Standards for Beverages

Schools may sell plain water, plain low-fat milk, plain or flavored fat-free milk and milk alternatives, 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of these beverages.

Schools may offer additional beverage options outside of the meal-service period for high school students.

These are no more than 20-ounce servings of calorie-free, flavored, and/or unflavored carbonated water and other “calorie-free” beverages that comply with the FDA standard of fewer than five calories per serving. Also, for high schools, the rule proposes that no more than 12-ounce servings of other lower-calorie beverages may be served outside of the meal service. Two alternatives for these beverages are proposed: ≤ 40 calories per 8-ounce serving (≤ 60 calories/12-ounce serving).

1.9.1.3 Competitive Food

Nutrition standards may be reviewed by visiting the Smart Snacks/product calculator at the following website:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>

Competitive food may not be sold during the school day except for those specific cases explained in Section 1.9.1.7 for fundraising activities. When fundraising activities are authorized by the principal and the Child Nutrition Director, competitive food may be sold during the school day. This food must not be part of the reimbursable meal **and must meet required nutritional standards**. Food that is sold must not be sold in or around the cafeteria area. There are no restrictions on food given away, including food at events such as field day and birthday celebrations. Food that meets the Smart Snacks criteria in the school product calculator specifications is allowed once they are approved by the principal and the Child Nutrition Director.

Nutritional standards may be reviewed by visiting the Smart Snacks/product calculator at the following

website:

https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/smart_snacks/alliance_product_calculator/

1.9.1.4 Breakfast and Lunch

Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success provides healthy and nutritious meals for every student enrolled at no charge through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program. CEP is a federally funded program; RYSS is not required to obtain “Free and Reduced-Lunch Applications” from students. Families only need to fill out the school’s “Socio-Economic Form” in order to qualify for the CEP Program. All students must have a “Socio-Economic Form” on file. This form is included in the enrollment package and is also available to the parents of new students at the orientation meetings held before the school year begins. Current students will complete the form during the first week of school.

Services provided in the school cafeteria are regular lunch, snack bar, and a variety of specialty food items. All food items meet the required nutritional standards. RYSS publishes breakfast and lunch menus and posts them on the district website on a monthly basis.

1.9.2 Cafeteria Expectations

RYSS IS A CLOSED CAMPUS. CONSEQUENTLY, STUDENTS MAY NOT LEAVE CAMPUS DURING THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY FOR ANY REASON WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL.

- All students must exit the building before the tardy bell rings at the beginning of each lunch period.
- Students at lunch may not re-enter the building until the end of the lunch period unless they have permission to do so.
- Outside food is not allowed on campus.
- Parents can attend lunch with their children if the parent is the legal guardian of the student.
- Food/lunch that is provided by the parent must be for their child only.
- For safety reasons, students cannot exit the campus during meals.
- The consumption of food is allowed only in the cafeteria unless the administrator or teacher requests in writing otherwise to accommodate the need for tutorials or other approved reasons. No food may be consumed in other areas of the campus.
- Only bottled water may be brought to school to be consumed only during the lunch period. Unsealed containers such as convenience-store cups may not be used at school.
- All trash must be disposed of in the containers provided in the cafeteria. After eating, students must clear their table of all food-service items and dispose of these items in trashcans. Trays and flatware may not be removed from the cafeteria.

1.9.2.1 Maintaining a Pleasant Dining Environment

- The opportunity for a pleasant lunch in the cafeteria is dependent on the continued cooperation of all students to keep eating areas free of the trash. Students who are careless are not respecting their fellow students. Pride in the RYSS campus begins with each student assuming responsibility for his or her own actions.
- Suppose students are experiencing any difficulty while at lunch, several teachers and administrators will be available in the lunch areas for assistance. Students should seek their assistance and not take matters into their own hands.
- Students who participate in food fights are subject to disciplinary action.

1.9.3 Fundraising Activities

The RYSS School Nutrition Policy allows six days of fundraising activities per campus, per school year, to sell food or beverages on campus that do not have to meet federal nutrition standards. The six approved dates for fundraising activities are available in the School Nutrition Policy or can be obtained from the school principal.

Additional sales of food items by approved school clubs or organizations may only occur after school hours on campus. Plans for these activity sales must be submitted to the principal for approval at least two weeks in advance of the event. Fundraising activity guidelines must be followed for the proper deposit of monies made from these sales.

No food or beverages may be sold while school meals are being served in the food-service area between the hours of 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.

1.9.4 Birthday Celebrations

Food for birthday celebrations that are otherwise restricted by the nutrition policy (cake, pizza, candy, etc.) is permitted only during the last 30 minutes of the school day. Parents must notify their child's teacher and obtain the principal's approval prior to the date of the party. All food items must be dropped off in the front office. This type of celebration is not permitted in the cafeteria area. Home-cooked food of any kind is NOT permitted.

1.9.5 Classroom Celebrations

Only two classroom parties are permitted during the school year—the last day before winter break and the last day of school. During these two days, no food can be sold (fundraising) to the students. Parties are to be scheduled after students' lunch period so that celebrations will not replace a nutritious lunch. Home-cooked food of any kind is NOT permitted.

1.9.6 Outside Food

Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success does not allow homemade or home-baked food items to be served to students at any school event. All foods and snacks provided to students as snacks during school hours must be store-bought and must display an ingredient label for food allergen verification.

The school may not provide access to food that does not meet the nutritional standards at any time anywhere on school premises. If parents bring their own child's lunch, students may NOT SHARE this type of food with other students. This policy does not apply to field trips.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form \(AD-3027\)](#) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

1.10 TRANSPORTATION

RYSS offers transportation services during school field-trip events and for students who attend BRYSS Academy in Brownsville, Texas. The transportation service (bus service) operates during scheduled events, according to the following guidelines:

- The time spent on the bus is considered an extension of the school day. All school rules apply. A student who misbehaves on the bus may lose bus-riding privileges.
- Any student causing a disruption or fails to abide by teacher or chaperone requests will result in the student's removal from field-trip opportunities.

1.11 VISITORS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All visitors, including former employees of the Tejano Center for Community Concerns and/or the Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success, former students, parents, and volunteers, must register in the school office and be issued a Visitor's Badge/Permit. The visitors' badge/permit must be always visible while the individual is on school premises.

Visitors will not be permitted to walk unaccompanied into instructional areas without a stated purpose, notice of which would have been provided to the office prior to the visitor's arrival. Visitors not arriving for official school business will be discouraged from visiting during the instructional time but will be welcome to return after school hours.

1.11.1 Volunteers

Volunteers are welcomed and valued educational partners. Volunteer opportunities are coordinated at each academy by the principal or designee. Community members who are interested in serving as volunteers are directed to contact the principal at the academy where they would like to volunteer. Every prospective volunteer must undergo a criminal background check. Additionally, if a volunteer will directly interact with students during the course of a regular school day, the volunteer must agree to be fingerprinted.

VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools) clearance is processed in the RYSS Human Resources Department. For more information, please call (713) 640-3700.

1.11.2 Parent Organizations

Parents are encouraged to organize as a community and have as their focus the creation of an efficient and effective partnership with the school. Each academy has its own parent organization. Each parent organization will operate according to bylaws and procedures mutually agreed upon by its members and in collaboration with the principal. The parent organization shall coordinate all its efforts with the principal or his or her designee.

1.12 PROPERTY: PERSONAL AND SCHOOL

1.12.1 Respect for Individual and School Property

Everyone in the RYSS community is expected to demonstrate respect for individual and school property.

1.12.2 Responsibility for Personal Property While At RYSS

RYSS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY AT ANY TIME.

Students who disrespect property by acts of theft or vandalism, as well as failure to comply with Sections 1.13.1 and 1.13.2, below, shall be dealt with according to the guidelines and procedures outlined in the Student Misconduct section of this handbook.

1.12.3 – Other Items

The use of skateboards, skates, and roller blades is strictly prohibited on campus.

If a student rides a bicycle to school, a helmet must be worn while riding. Students must make arrangements with the campus principal to designate a bicycle-secure station.

1.13 – STUDENT COMPLAINTS

RYSS encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teacher, principal, or another campus administrator. If, after a reasonable attempt, the student or parent does not believe the complaint or concern to be satisfactorily resolved, the student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint. Any student or parent filing a complaint shall be guaranteed freedom from retaliation by any RYSS employee or board member.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek an informal resolution to their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

1.13.1 – Complaint Procedure

A student or parent who wishes to file a formal complaint must do so in writing. The complaint may be filed by hand delivery, e-mail, fax, or U.S. mail.

Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A student or parent shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

As regards the complaint procedure, “days” shall mean RYSS business days. In calculating timelines under this procedure, the day a document is filed is “day zero,” and all deadlines shall be determined by counting the following business day as “day one.”

The complaint must include:

1. Complainant – the name of the person who is filing the complaint (If it is a parent, the complaint must also include the name of the student, if filed on behalf of a student).
2. Reason for complaint – a full description of the incident that is the cause for the complaint, and includes such information as
 - a) Who was involved in the incident?
 - b) What was the incident all about? What seemed to incite the incident?
 - c) When did the incident take place?
 - d) Where did the incident take place?
 - e) Why file a complaint?
3. Actions-to-date – What actions have the complainant taken to resolve the issue prior to filing a formal complaint?
4. Remedy sought – What resolution does the complainant desire?

The student may be represented by an adult at any level of the complaint.

1.13.2 – Levels of Complaints

Step One – Complaint forms must be filed:

- Within 15 days of the date the student or parent first knew, or with reasonable diligence, should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint; and
- With the lowest-level administrator who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. In most circumstances, students and parents shall file Level One complaints with the principal or designee. Whoever received the complaint must note the date and time the letter of complaint was received

and immediately forward it to the appropriate administrator.

The appropriate administrator shall hold a conference with the student or parent within ten days after receipt of the written complaint, and he or she shall have ten days following the conference to provide the student or parent a written response.

Step Two

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the superintendent or designee to appeal the Level One decision. The appeal notice must be filed within ten days of Level One response.

The appeals notice must be filed in writing as follows:

- Include a cover letter to indicate the reason for appeal;
- Include a copy of Level One written response;
- Include a copy of the original written complaint.

The superintendent or designee shall hold a conference within ten days of receipt of appeals notice. At this conference, the superintendent or designee shall only consider issues and documents presented at Level One. The superintendent or designee shall have ten days following the Level Two conference to provide to students or parent a written response.

Step Three

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the student or parent may request a conference with the Board of Education. The appeal notice must be filed in writing within ten days of receipt of Level Two response, or if no response, within ten days of Level Two response deadline.

The appeals notice must be filed in writing as follows:

- Include a cover letter to indicate the reason for appeal;
- Include a copy of Level Two response notice (if no written response provided, note accordingly);
- Include a copy of Level One response notice (if no written response provided, note accordingly);
- Include a copy of the original written complaint.

The superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and location of the board meeting at which the complaint will be reviewed.

The board will only consider documents included in Level One and Level Two conferences. The board may ask questions and set time limits on responses. The board may choose to give oral notice of its decision at the time of the conference or may exercise its right to respond in writing within ten days of the conference.

If for any reason the board fails to reach a decision regarding the complaint within ten days of the Level Three conference, the lack of a response by the board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

1.14 Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

1.14.1 Framework

RYSS supports the U.S. Department of Education's Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Framework to help develop the broader communities to build capacity for student achievement and school improvement. RYSS believes that the education of a child is the result of joint efforts of parents, students, school, and community. RYSS also believes that parental engagement that is active and regular significantly increases the potential for their students to achieve academic success.

Along with community and business partners, RYSS FACE Department can make a definite impact and difference in students' lives by providing access to mentors, develop sustainable strategic partnerships, pipelines to internships, scholarships, and access to workforce development opportunities. Together with parents, teachers, staff, local communities, and partners...RYSS scholars will achieve educational excellence.

- Parents are valued partners in the educational process.
- All school and district activities will give due consideration to the engagements of parents.
- In our effort to keep staff and parents safe, a variety of in-person and/or virtual meetings will be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department is available to all parents and students for support with educational and community resources.

1.15 TITLE I

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, each RYSS school that receives federal Title I, Part A funds must develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to parents of participating children a School Parental Involvement Policy that contains information required by section 1118(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The policy establishes the school's expectations for parental involvement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parental involvement activities. In our effort to keep staff and parents safe, a variety of in-person and/or virtual meetings will be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.15.1 District Parental Involvement Policy

The school will involve parents in the joint development and joint agreement of its School Parental Involvement Policy and its school-wide plan, if applicable, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way under section 1118(b) of the ESEA.

RYSS annually hosts:

- Three parent-involvement meetings with parent representatives from each Title I School-Wide Campus (Parents review policy, guidelines and are updated on any current changes). Representatives are encouraged to visit the school to gain information, actively volunteer and attend meetings/events. The first meeting is held in September
- Annual parent survey

The school will distribute to parents of participating children and the local community the School Parental Involvement Policy.

- Posted on the website
- Title I parent meeting
- First six weeks' report card pick-up

The school will convene an annual meeting to [inform parents of the following:](#)

- Title I meetings
- Calendar of events
- Volunteer opportunities

The district will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language, the parents can understand.

Types of communication utilized during the parent meetings may include, but are not limited to:

- Brochures
- PowerPoints
- Flyers
- Videos

1.16 REQUIRED FORMS

The following *required forms* must be completed for every student or family, within the first ten days of the school year, or first ten days of enrollment, whichever comes first. These forms are distributed by the campus of enrollment and monitored by the district Registrar's Office

- **Acknowledgment of Distribution of the 2023-2024 Raul Yzaguirre Schools for Success District Parent-Student Handbook Form**
- **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

This page was intentionally left blank.