

# **RIO HONDO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**



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# Rio Hondo Jr. High School

## *PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE*

As you embark on a new educational journey into secondary school, the faculty and staff of Rio Hondo Junior High would like to welcome you to our campus. Our vision of a successful educational experience for our students is one built on teamwork. The responsibility of teaching our students is on everyone's shoulders.

The motto for the junior high is **“CREATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY”**.

This exemplifies our team approach to teaching as each and every individual in our community from the Superintendent and School Board, to staff and faculty as well as parents to policemen plays a role in educational experiences of our children. We anticipate that your time with us will be a profitable one.

Whether you are joining us for the first time or are returning for your third year, we know this will be an exciting time for all of us. Many activities from engaging schoolwork, pep rallies and field trips as well as new and challenging responsibilities await you. In addition, a variety of extracurricular organizations such as UIL, band, sports, cheerleading, and a yearbook will be available to students.

We will continue to promote progress in all aspects of school life as we continue to grow, expand our minds, and work hard toward our ultimate goal of the finest education possible. We sincerely feel that together, working cooperatively, we can continue to reach great heights and surpass the marks set by Bobcats who have gone before us. It is now up to all of us to become successful leaders.

Thanking you in advance for your support in this endeavor. Let's go out and make this a record setting year!

Sincerely,

Fidel Garza Jr., Principal

## **VISION STATEMENT**

“Academic Excellence”

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Rio Hondo ISD is to develop a positive environment that promotes academic excellence in college readiness and lifelong skills while developing productive, successful citizens.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

1. It takes the effort of our entire community to educate a child.
2. Children are eager to learn given a positive climate, engaging materials and expectable mentors.
3. Each student should have the opportunity to succeed according to his/her own potential.

# District Goals

Goal 1: Academic Excellence & Learning

Goal 2: Safe Environment

Goal 3: Community – Parental Involvement

Goal 4: Fiscal Responsibilities

Goal 5: Highly Qualified

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## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2015–16! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the school counselor, or the principal.

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

1. Acknowledgment Form;
2. Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information form;
3. Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education form, if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities; and
4. Consent/Opt-Out Form.

See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 4 and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation** on page 5 for more information.

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. The district's official policy manual is available for review in the superintendent's office and an unofficial electronic copy is available at [rhisd.net](http://rhisd.net).

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS**

This section of the Rio Hondo Junior High Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

### **CONSENT, OPT-OUT, AND REFUSAL RIGHTS**

#### **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation**

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

#### **Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information**

Teachers may display students' work, which may include personally identifiable student information, in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

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

#### **Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if Student is Under Age 14**

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

#### **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Otherwise Permitted by Law**

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

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

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

#### **Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees**

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional



responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

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

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

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

### **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a child’s education records without written consent. “Directory information” is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

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

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and the second for all other requests. For all district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: Directory information shall include student name, photograph, date of birth, honors, awards, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams. If you do not object to the use of your child’s information for these limited school-sponsored purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use the information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: Directory information shall include student name, honors, awards, grade level, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams. If you do not object to the use of your child’s information for these purposes, the school must release this information when the school receives a request from an outside entity or individual.

Also review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 8.

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

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

## **Participation in Third-Party Surveys**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information. Note that this does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. See policies EF and FFAA.

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

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

### **Human Sexuality Instruction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 57 and policy EC(LEGAL).

## **Religious or Moral Beliefs**

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

## **Tutoring or Test Preparation**

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

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

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

## **RIGHT OF ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS, CURRICULUM MATERIALS, AND DISTRICT RECORDS**

### **Instructional Materials**

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

### **Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent**

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

## **Student Records**

### ***Accessing Student Records***

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

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

### ***Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records***

A federal law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student's education records. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 4, are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- When district school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student's records. School officials would include board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or district medical staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, TEA, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, school district/system, or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or which the student has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the district discloses information it has designated as directory information. See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 4 for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure.

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

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

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

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is: 215 W. Colorado, Rio Hondo, Texas 78583

The address of the principal's office is: 501 N. Reynolds, Rio Hondo, Texas 78583

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

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

**Conferences** on page 59, and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 23 for an overview of the process.

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at [rhisd.net](http://rhisd.net).

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

### **Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications**

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

## **STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **Children of Military Families**

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

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

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

Additional information may be found at <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

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

#### ***Multiple Birth Siblings***

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. See policy FDB(LEGAL).



## **Safety Transfers/Assignments**

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent or principal for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See **Bullying** on page 19, policy FDB, and policy FFI.
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. See policy FDE.
- Request the transfer of your child to another district campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

## **Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Texas Project First, at <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org>
- Partners Resource Network, at <http://www.partnerstx.org>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Linda Lara/Thelma Camacho at 956-748-1043.

### **Students Who Receive Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home**

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

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

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

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

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

The designated people to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 are the school counselors at 956-748-1150. Also see policy FB.

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

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact principal at 956-748-1150.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

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

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

##### ***Age 18 and Older***

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

##### ***Between Ages 6 and 18***

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

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

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

##### ***Prekindergarten and Kindergarten***

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

## **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

### ***All Grade Levels***

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

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

As listed in Section I at **Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. Please see page 11 for that section.

### ***Secondary Grade Levels***

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

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for:

- A student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the district’s board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences, and
- A student serving as an election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

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

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

### ***All Grade Levels***

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special

programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

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

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

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

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

See policy FEA(LEGAL).

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

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

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

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

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student’s absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student’s absences.

- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student’s parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

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

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

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

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

Official attendance is taken every day during the second instructional hour.

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

### **Documentation after an Absence**

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

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

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

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

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

## Driver License Attendance Verification

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

## ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW

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

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA;
- The performance ratings of the district's evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

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

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

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. For more information, see **Academic Counseling** on page 25 of this handbook and policy EIF.

### PERSONAL GRADUATION PLAN (PGP)

A principal shall designate a guidance counselor, teacher, or other appropriate individual to develop and administer a personal graduation plan (PGP) for each student enrolled in a junior high, middle, or high school who:

1. Does not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment instrument;  
or
2. Is not likely to receive a high school diploma before the fifth school year following the student's enrollment in grade level nine, as determined by the District.

A PGP must:

1. Identify educational goals for the student;
2. Include diagnostic information, appropriate monitoring and intervention, and other evaluation strategies;
3. Include an intensive instruction program described in Education Code 28.0213 see EHBC;
4. Address participation of the student's parent or guardian, including consideration of the parent's or guardian's educational expectations for the student; and
5. Provide innovative methods to promote the student's advancement, including flexible scheduling, alternative learning environments, online instruction, and other interventions that are proven to accelerate the learning process and have been scientifically validated to improve learning and cognitive ability.

A student's IEP developed under Education Code 29.005 see EHBAB may be used as the student's PGP.

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

Students will be recognized for “A” Honor Roll – 90% or better in each core area. Perfect Attendance – Zero absences for the six weeks. NOTE: More than two early pickups before 3:50 p.m. will constitute an absence for purposes of perfect attendance each six weeks. Accelerated Reader Incentives/Awards will be given throughout the year.

## **BULLYING**

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. Also see **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 12

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

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

Also see **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 12, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27, **Hazing** on page 43 policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

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

Also see **Food Allergies** on page 46

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at central office. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual

conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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

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

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

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/Programs Available In Your County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention%20and%20Early%20Intervention/Programs%20Available%20In%20Your%20County/default.asp).

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

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf>
- [http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/child\\_abuse.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/child_abuse.html)
- <http://taasa.org/resources-2/>
- [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml)
- [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml)

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

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

## **CLASS RANK / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT**

### **TOP 10 GRADUATES**

An average of the grades received in Language Arts, (including Reading 6<sup>th</sup>), Math, Science, and Social Studies, accumulated from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years shall be used to determine the highest-ranking students.

The grade point average will determine student ranking. The appropriate grade point for each course will be determined by the level the course has been assigned. The two levels include Pre-AP and Advanced/Regular. Based on the selection criteria, the top 10 graduates including the Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be announced.

To be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, students must have been enrolled in Rio Hondo Junior High for their entire 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. All other top ten awards will be given to students who have been enrolled in Rio Hondo Junior High for their entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

RHJH administrators and counseling staff will calculate the Top 10, 8<sup>th</sup> grade candidates at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> six-weeks grading period.

## CLASS SCHEDULES

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

	Breakfast/ Announcements	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Lunch</b>	7:50 8:00	8:00 8:45	8:50 9:35	9:40 10:25	10:25 10:55	11:00 11:45	11:50 12:35	12:40 1:25	1:30 2:15	2:20 3:05	3:10 3:55
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lunch</b>	7:50 8:00	8:00 8:45	8:50 9:35	9:40 10:25	10:30 11:15	11:15 11:45	11:50 12:35	12:40 1:25	1:30 2:15	2:20 3:05	3:10 3:55
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> Lunch	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Lunch</b>	7:50 8:00	8:00 8:45	8:50 9:35	9:40 10:25	10:30 11:15	11:20 12:05	12:05 12:35	12:40 1:25	1:30 2:15	2:20 3:05	3:10 3:55

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- **Early Release Days**-Days will be used for tutorials and acceleration.
- **Pep Rally Schedule**-9<sup>th</sup> Period will be from 2:30-3:15 and pep rally will start at 3:15.

See **Schedule Changes** on page 60 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.

## COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

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

Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, the student or parent should submit the written complaint form to the campus principal. If the

concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

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

### **Disruptions of School Operations**

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

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

### **Field Trip**

School rules and consequences will apply to all school related field trips.

## **In-School-Suspension (ISS)**

Students assigned to I.S.S. are prohibited from attending any school related functions during/after school hours such as: school dances, sports events, etc. This will remain in effect throughout the duration of the student's stay in I.S.S.

## **Social Events**

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

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

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

## **COUNSELING**

### **Academic Counseling**

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

### ***High School Grade Levels***

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

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

### **Personal Counseling**

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

Also see **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 65 and **Suicide Awareness** on page 66.

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

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

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

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

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

## **CREDIT BY EXAM FOR ADVANCEMENT/ACCELERATION—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject**

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

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

### **Students in Grades 6–12**

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

Dates Scheduled:

September 21, 2015

October 26, 2015

January 11, 2016  
March 7, 2016  
April 25, 2016

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

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

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

### **Dating Violence**

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

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

### **Discrimination**

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

### **Harassment**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Retaliation**

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

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

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor,

principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.

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

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

### **Investigation of Report**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **DISCRIMINATION**

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27.

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

### **School Materials**

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

The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students.

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

### **Nonschool Materials**

#### ***From Students***

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

The campus principal shall designate times, locations, and means for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. See policy FNAA.

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

#### ***From Others***

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

The superintendent shall designate times, locations, and means for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.



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

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

In accordance with new standards, the district opted to require a uniform for grades Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup>. The uniform is mandatory for all Rio Hondo Junior High students as it was approved by the School Board in March 1999. The uniform policy is not intended to prohibit any student who is not in uniform from receiving the education to which he or she is entitled.

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

- If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student may be suspended. The district prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, or that advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under policy FNCF (L) and prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption or interfere with normal school operations.
- All shirts must be tucked in.
- Jackets, sweaters, etc, must remain unzipped with the exception of outside during cold weather days. No blankets will be allowed.
- Belts will be required for any pants/shorts that are too loose fitting and hanging down around the hips. All pants will be worn at the waist.
- Baggy pants are prohibited. No frayed, cutoffs or torn jeans will be allowed. No tape will be allowed to cover frayed or torn jeans. Pants and shorts with extra pockets are not allowed even if pockets are sewn (ie. cargo/carpenter pants).
- No joggers are acceptable (elastic on bottom of pant legs).
- Male students are prohibited from wearing earrings/studs while under the school's jurisdiction (ie. Includes school functions and on school bus/district transportation).
- Male student's hair is to be neatly trimmed/styled, and is neither to exceed the top of the collar, nor the base of the earlobe. Bangs shall not touch the eyebrows.
- Inappropriate hairstyles that the administration believes are a distraction to the learning environment are prohibited. Inappropriate hairstyles include but are not limited to: Mohawks, fohawks, spiked hair, excessively bushy hair, shaved names/symbols/etching on the scalp or unnatural hair colors.

- Beards, mustaches, and goatees are prohibited.
- Items and clothing displaying skulls/skeletons are prohibited.
- No hats/caps, visors, or beanie caps will be permitted.
- No bandanas, headbands/scarfs allowed on campus except during sports activities.
- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must not be shorter than three (3) inches above the knee in a standing position.
- Tights, leggings, jeggings, hose, or other similar undergarments must be covered by acceptable school attire.
- All tattoos must be concealed with band aids or ace bandage.
- Shaved or clipped eyebrows are not allowed.
- Cheerleading uniforms are not permitted to be worn during the school day.
- Students are expected to wear shoes. NO sport cleats, flip-flops , slip-ons , house/bootie-type slippers or sleepwear are allowed.
- Body piercing, such as tongue, nose, eyebrows, ear gauges etc. are prohibited and unacceptable and such jewelry will be confiscated.
- Wallet chains or chains on clothing will not be allowed.
- Topless, backless tops; exposed midribs; low cut tops; spaghetti straps, and see through clothing are prohibited.
- Tight-fitting shirts are not allowed.
- Blouses or oversize tops such as a shirt, a sleeveless jacket, sweatshirt, ties or vest are not allowed to be worn over the uniform shirt.
- Pull-over jackets, coats, sweaters, or sweatshirts with hoodies are not allowed.
- Jackets with headphones are not allowed.
- No headphones are allowed on campus.
- Sunglasses/eyeglasses may not be worn unless prescribed by a doctor.

Students and parents may determine a student’s personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

<i>Dress Code For:</i>	<i>Shirts</i>	<i>Pants</i>
<b>Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</b>  <i>RHJH Mode of Dress</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Solid</b> Navy blue polo style shirt</li> <li>• <b>Solid</b> White polo style shirt (<b>No transparent/ sheer shirts</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Solid</b> Red polo style shirt</li> <li>• <b>Solid</b> Yellow/Gold polo style shirt</li> <li>• <b>Solid</b> Black polo style shirt</li> </ul> <p>** Polo style shirts must be plain and have a collar and buttons in the front.</p> <p>** Shirts must be longer than pant waistline in order to be tucked in properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No tight fitting shirts</b></li> </ul>	<p>** Blue or black jeans, navy, black, or khaki pants, capris, walking shorts, skirts, or overalls.</p> <p>** Shorts, skirts, skorts must not be shorter than 3 inches above the knee.</p> <p>** Pants with traditional front/back pockets are acceptable. Pants may not have additional pockets.</p> <p>** No “Cargo” or “Carpenter” pants or shorts are acceptable. Pants and shorts with extra side pockets are not acceptable.</p> <p>** No baggy or oversized pants, no cutoffs, torn or frayed pants or shorts.</p> <p>**No leggings or jegging are acceptable</p> <p>**No joggers are acceptable (elastic on bottom of pant legs)</p>
Jr. High Football Season Pep Rally Days (Thursday)	Bobcat Spirit Shirt/Cheer Tops/Bobcat Jerseys  OR  RHJH Mode of Dress	RHJH Mode of Dress
Friday (all year)	Bobcat Spirit Shirt/Cheer Tops/Bobcat Jerseys  <b>OR</b> RHJH Mode of Dress  <b>OR</b> College Shirt	RHJH Mode of Dress

**NOTE:** No pullover jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, hoodies, coats, etc. will be allowed. Jackets, sweaters, etc. must remain unzipped with the exception of outside during cold weather days. Clothing and grooming that in the principal’s judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption or interfere with normal school operations is prohibited.

**No oversized clothing is allowed.**

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

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

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

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers. Students are not allowed to have cell phones in their possession during STAAR testing.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The first time device is confiscated, student will collect item after school. The second time, the parent will collect item. Third or additional violations of cell phone policy will result in a \$ 10.00 charge or a 7 day holdover will apply before phone will be released to the parent.

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. See **Searches** on page 62 and policy FNF.

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

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

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. See **Searches** on page 62 and policy FNF.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **ENERGY DRINKS/PRODUCTS BAN**

Due to the possible health risks to students as well as the disruption to the educational process, RHJH has banned the use, sharing or possession, of energy drinks/products on school campus.



## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

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

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. Also see **Transportation** on page 66.

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

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

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. The equipment used in football is no exception. As a parent, you are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

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

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

## **Athletic Department**

The purpose of the Athletic Program is to enrich the total educational process and to develop young people into good citizens of our community, state and nation. Participation in athletics has the potential of great value in education. The goal of all coaches in the RHJH Department is that athletics will positively influence the habits, skills and attitudes of both participants and observers of athletic events. The building and development of physical, mental, moral and social character will be stresses daily. The main objectives of the athletic program are to instill into our students a positive attitude, leadership, skill development, competitiveness and pride of accomplishment through intense preparation, loyalty, self-discipline, mental toughness and victory or defeat with honor.

**Academics** are extremely important and will be stressed daily. Everyone in the Athletic is here to get an education; those capable of successfully completing this primary task may now compete in sports. Do not lose sight of this fact. We are governed and will abide by all the rules and regulations as set forth by the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and the Texas Education Agency. To be eligible for competition, a student-athlete must be passing all courses at the end of each six weeks grading period. A student failing to pass a course will not be able to participate in a game until they are passing all courses on their 3 week *progress report* issued during the next six-weeks.

**Discipline** means doing what is right or necessary under all circumstances. Discipline is a vital part of any successful program. If you do not follow the guidelines set forth for the team, you will be disciplined. Each team's head coach will handle all discipline cases on an individual basis, with set guidelines in this handbook. An athlete is subject to dismissal and /or elimination from the program for the following:

1. Habitual discipline problems at school.
2. Stealing/theft, unlawful acts.
3. Displaying lack of respect or obedience toward a Coach, Teacher, Adults, Principal, or fellow teammates.
4. Failure to participate in prescribed workouts.
5. Failure to attend classes, practices, meetings or games.
6. Use or affiliation with alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco.

**Equipment** will be treated as if it were your own property. It should never be abused when in use, and should be hung in its proper place when not in use. You are not to wear any issued school equipment at any other time other than practices or games. You will be held responsible for (both financially and care of) all equipment issued. All equipment issued will be recorded and everything must be turned in and checked off at the end of the season.

## **General Information**

- \* Students are required to travel to all scheduled games and/or meets with the team on the school bus. Parents may take their son/daughter home after the event with a written note provided to the coach, by the parent or guardian.

- \*\* Parent must pick-up their child as soon as possible upon return from game/meets. Athletes are not allowed to leave campus to return later for pick-up. Once the student leaves campus RHJH staff is no longer responsible.

### **Rio Hondo Junior High Boy's/Girl's Athletic Guidelines**

Welcome to Junior High Sports! We are looking forward to this year and have high expectations for practices, games meets and tournaments. It is important to know that when your child makes the decision to join the athletic program there are certain rules and guidelines that must be followed.

1. Athletes must follow all rules established by the Texas U.I.L. (University Interscholastic League)
2. Athletes must abide by the expectations written in the R.H.J.H. Student Handbook.
3. Athletes will be encouraged to participate in all 4 sports offered at the Jr. High. (Volleyball, Football, Cross-Country, Basketball, and Track)
4. Practice uniforms will be provided for each athlete, as well as game uniforms. It is the student's responsibility to take care of the clothes issued. In the event the items are lost or stolen the student will be required to pay for replacement. All uniforms issued for any sport must be washed on a weekly basis. Practice and game uniforms may only be worn for RHJH practices and games and at no other time.
5. Athletes are required to dress out every day.
6. It is the student's responsibility to notify the coach of any injuries. If an athlete is injured or in pain and cannot participate in sports class, a parent's note will be honored for only two days. A Doctor's excuse must be provided for any additional extension of time.
7. Athletes must dress in the proper attire for all practices and/or games. Athlete's hair must be pulled back in a ponytail using soft ligatures only. Jewelry or bodily piercing jewelry of any kind is not allowed.
8. Athletes must be in attendance the school day before a sporting activity and at least ½ day on game day in order to participate in the event unless a doctor's excuse is submitted to the attendance clerk.
9. During any practices, games, meets, or tournaments the athlete must remain and be seated with the team.
10. Cell phone, pager, or any electronic devices are not allowed at any games. Cell phones may be used to call parents, only to inform of arrival from away games. Cell phones will be confiscated if a student uses the phone without permission.
11. Lockers will be issued to all athletes. All personal possessions are the responsibility of the athlete. Athletes will be responsibility for securing their own possessions.
12. Lying, stealing, and bullying will not be tolerated.
13. Athletes may be changed from the A team to the B team and vice versa depending on the performance of the player.
14. Athletes missing practice, be it for medical or personal reasons, you will be expected to do some conditioning make-up.

## GUIDELINES FOR NOT RECOMMENDING STUDENTS FOR THE ATHLETIC CLASS PERIOD

### 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE:

1. Overage by UIL standards (student cannot be 14 years old by September 1)
2. Certain health limitations.
3. Excessive occurrences of not dressing out for PE class as required (30+ times).
4. Documented excessive occurrences of non-participation or poor attitude in PE (30+).
5. Failing 1 or more classes, 4 or more six weeks throughout of the year.

### 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TO 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE:

1. Overage by UIL standards (student cannot be 15 years old by September 1).
2. Certain health limitations or frequent notes of excuse from home.
3. Documented excessive occurrences of non-participation or poor attitude.
4. Failing 1 or more classes, 4 or more six weeks throughout the year.
5. Failing to complete 2 or more sports athlete had made a commitment.

\*\*\* No student will be denied the opportunity to participate in a school sports program. Morning and/or afternoon workouts will be available for participation.

\*\*\* After 1<sup>st</sup> semester a reevaluation of students can be made. Upon responsible correction of above infractions recommendations for placement into athletic class can be made. Also, infractions of stated rules and regulations recommendations can be made to remove students from athletic class.

## **RHJH Physical Education Program**

### GOALS, GRADING POLICY, RULES, AND GUIDELINES

GOAL: The goal of the RHJH Physical Education Program is to provide a fun and safe environment for our students and to develop the following:

1. The students overall physical wellness, thereby improving their physical growth and mental attitude.
2. Healthy fitness habits.
3. Athletic skills.
4. Knowledge of game rules.
5. Sportsmanship, teamwork, and cooperation skills.
6. Responsibility and self-reliance.

### GRADING POLICY:

*50% Class preparation:* Students are required to dress out for PE every day, including activity days. Dressing requirements are as follows:

- Gray T-Shirt as long as it does not violate dress code, Plain all gray t-shirt with no emblems, designs, etc. (Must have sleeves and long enough so one cannot see skin).

- Black Shorts, black warm up pants, or black wind pants, no stripes or other colors –as long as it does not violate dress code. (Must be of good length to the knee and not baggy).
- Tennis shoes must be worn (No boots, sandals, or high heels).
- Jewelry of any kind is not allowed.
- PE clothes cannot be the same worn to school that day.
- A RHJH P.E. uniform may be purchased from P.E. Department.

*40% Class participation:* Students are required to follow instructions given by coaches for stretching, exercises, cardio-vascular run-walk, and daily activity.

*10% Reading:* Students will be participating in a Developing Reading and Fitness Time (D.R.A.F.T.) day every Thursday. Students need to bring a book to read for about 15 minutes.

### CLASS RULES:

1. Students are to be inside dressing room or gym when tardy bell rings.
2. Students dressing for class will be allowed 5 extra minutes at the beginning of class to change into PE attire (must be in dressing room before tardy bell).
3. Students will be allowed 10 minutes at the end of class to change back into school uniform. Shower facilities are available.
4. Must wear any type of athletic shoe, not slip-ons.
5. No rough or unsafe playing will be allowed.
6. No name calling, cussing or harassing.
7. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
8. Follow directions at all times.
9. No food drinks, or gum will be allowed in the gym.

The athletic department will provide students with rules, policies, and guidelines for participation.

### **Standards of Behavior**

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

### **Offices and Elections**

Certain clubs, such as student council, and other organizations will hold elections for student officers.

### **FEES**

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

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

- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 67.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

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

## **FOODS AND SNACKS**

### **Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)**

On March 1, 2004, the Texas Department of Agriculture issued the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy which has been enforced as of August 2004. As per this policy, students are NOT to be served or provided access to foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV's) during the school day. Foods include carbonated beverages, gum, or candy, etc.

Students who bring FMNV's in their lunch from home will NOT have their foods confiscated, but students may NOT share FMNV's with another student.

Effective July 1, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture informed state agencies and School Food Authorities that USDA will not be providing waivers for Smart Snacks requirements.

As per this policy, students will not be served or provided access to foods of minimal nutritional value and all other forms of candy at any time anywhere on school premises the period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the school day.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 14 days before the event. For further information, see policies FJ and GE.

For the upcoming school year, schools will be allowed to have unlimited fundraisers as long as the fundraisers adhere to the federal Competitive Rule (i.e. Smart Snacks) requirements. Food items that do not meet the Competitive Rule requirements must be sold outside of the school day. The following are additional examples of allowable fundraisers that may occur during the school day:

- Any non-food items
- Any food items not meant for consumption on the school campus during the school day (e.g. cookie dough to be prepared at home)
- Any food item sold after the end of the school day (e.g. 30 minutes after the end of instruction on campus)
- Food items sold in concession stands after the end of the school day (e.g. 30 minutes after the end of instruction on campus)
- Any food items that meet the federal Competitive rule requirements

## **GANG-FREE ZONES**

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

## **GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT**

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27.

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required

for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

Each student should have a minimum of 12 grades per 6 weeks, (2 grades per week, and a minimum of 1 test grade every 2 weeks).

Determination of 6 weeks grades: Major tests, research/term papers, major projects, oral presentations, reports, notebooks, daily work, homework, classwork, daily quizzes, unit/chapter tests, and content-based assessments, etc. Semester grades are derived by averaging the three 6 week periods. Semester tests will not be administered. STAAR Test scores will not be used as part of a student's grade.

In accordance with grading guidelines, a student shall be permitted a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade. See Board Policy EIA (Local).

Report cards will be issued to students on the Wednesday following the end of each six week period, unless otherwise directed by the administration.

Also see **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 59 for additional information on grading guidelines.

### **PRE-AP Academic Contract and Waivers**

Since Pre-AP Classes are considered a part of the G/T program, the following guidelines will be followed for withdrawing students from these classes and allowing waivers for UIL eligibility.

A student must maintain a passing grade for each six weeks. If a student fails two consecutive six weeks, or fails the first semester, the student will automatically be transferred to a regular classroom.

Students who fail a Pre-AP class may request a waiver for UIL participation. An eligibility waiver will be granted to student for Pre-AP classes who make a written request to the campus principal by the Friday following the six weeks grading period. The waiver forms may be picked up at the RHJH front office.

A student performing a 59 or lower in a Pre-AP class will not be granted a waiver for UIL eligibility.

### **HARASSMENT**

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27.

### **HAZING**

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student



for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

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

Also see **Bullying** on page 19 and policies FFI and FNCC.

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### **Student Illness**

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

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

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

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

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

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

- What is meningitis?

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

- What are the symptoms?

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

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

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

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

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

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

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

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

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

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

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

Also refer to **Immunizations** on page 49 for more information.

## **Food Allergies**

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

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

Also see policy FFAF and **Celebrations** on page 20.

## **Life Threatening Food Allergy – Information and Procedures**

Students with serious life-threatening food allergies attend the Jr. High Campus. In an effort to be proactive and keep all students safe, the following guidelines will be followed by all staff, parents, and students in addition to all persons requesting the use of school facilities after school hours. We thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. Any questions should be forwarded to the campus principal.

### **Guidelines:**

1. Avoid bringing peanut or whole egg food products onto the Jr. High Campus.
2. If these products have been eaten prior to arrival at school, students should wash their hands and rinse their mouth to remove the presence of an allergen. Student may request to go to the bathroom upon arrival to school when the need arises to take care of this issue.
3. A peanut, nut, egg free table will be provided for students with these allergies.
  - a. A friend may sit at the peanut, nut, egg free table provided that it is determined with reasonable certainty that these allergens are not present in their lunch. We will not check any student's lunch or snack for allergens unless the student would like us to do so. If they do not wish for us to do so, these students may not sit at the peanut, nut, egg free table.

- b. Students/Visitors may sit at a designated table with a friend if it cannot be determined with reasonable certainty that these allergens are not present in their lunch. This practice will ensure the proper cleaning of the designated table on a daily basis.
4. Celebrations are permissible in classrooms with students who have life threatening food allergies; however, the menu **MUST** be presented to the teacher at least one week (7 days) in advance so that appropriate suggestions/arrangements can be made to safely meet the needs of all the students in the classroom.
5. All party items must be contained in the classroom.
6. Classroom teachers who do not have students with life threatening allergies must notify maintenance to clean the room appropriately after a party.
7. A teacher who assigns a project or lab will ensure there is no peanut, nut, or egg product in the activity.
8. Food items that are taken home (i.e. goody bags) will remain closed or sealed in a Ziploc bag and placed in the backpack to take home. These items may **NOT** be consumed on the bus ride home.

## **Head Lice**

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

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

## **Physical Activity Requirements**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters or at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters.

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

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

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

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

See policies at BDF and EHAA. See **Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 6 for additional information.

### **Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan**

Rio Hondo ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact the principal with questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan.

### **Other Health-Related Matters**

#### ***Physical Fitness Assessment***

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

#### ***Vending Machines***

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

#### ***Tobacco Prohibited***

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

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

#### ***Asbestos Management Plan***

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact Michael Gonzalez, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at (956) 748-1000.

## ***Pest Management Plan***

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

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Michael Gonzalez, the district's IPM coordinator, at (956) 748-1000.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's homeless education liaison, Rita Lopez, at (956) 748-1000.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework will be assigned as needed by individual teachers.

## **ILLNESS**

See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 44.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

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

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

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

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

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

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **Questioning of Students**

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

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

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

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

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

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

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to

prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

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

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

### **LEAVING CAMPUS**

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

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

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office



and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

### **During Lunch**

This is a closed campus. No students are allowed to leave during lunch without a parent or otherwise authorized adult. Parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out.

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

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

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

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an English language learner (ELL) in certain state statutes and state rules, is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

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

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 63, may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I

end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

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

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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

## **MAKEUP WORK**

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

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

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

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade." See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 16

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

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

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

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

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

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

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

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Rio Hondo ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Veronica Puente, Human Resources Director, 215 W. Colorado, Rio Hondo, Texas 78583, (956) 748-1000 .
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Mrs. Rita Lopez, Assistant Superintendent for Special Programs, 215 W. Colorado, Rio Hondo, Texas 78583, 956-748-1000.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Mr. Ismael Garcia, 215 W. Colorado, Rio Hondo, Texas 78583, 956-748-1000.

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

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **Working Together**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.

- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child’s academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. See **Academic Counseling** on page 25.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at (956) 748-1150 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 59.
- Becoming a school volunteer. For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 68.
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the campus principal.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 47.
- Serving on a committee to determine criteria to be used to evaluate the overall performance of the district and each campus in community and student engagement. For further information, please contact the campus principal.
- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. See policies at BE and BED for more information.

### **Parent Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Guadalupe Garza and may be contacted at (956) 748-1157.

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS**

### **Athletics' Participation**

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

This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

### **Other Exams and Screenings**

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues, or for abnormal spinal curvatures.

Also see policy FFAA.

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

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

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

See policy EC for more information.

## **PRAYER**

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

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

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

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

In grades 6, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas, a grade of 70 or above in reading/language arts and in mathematics, and a grade of 70 or above in either science or social studies.

In grades 7-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas, a grade of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics, and a grade of 70 or above in either science or social studies.

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

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

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

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

See **Standardized Testing** on page 63.

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

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

Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student at the middle school or junior high level who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a school counselor,

teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the school counselor or principal and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

See **Leaving Campus** on page 51.

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

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 3 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies] is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. See **Working Together** on page 55 for how to schedule a conference.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal or superintendent pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 42.

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

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

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports should be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 2 days.

## **RETALIATION**

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27.

## **SAFETY**

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

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.



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

### **Accident Insurance**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

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

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will alert the community in the following ways: KRGV Channel 5 News, KGBT TV Action 4 News, and the Blackboard Connect.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Students' schedules will not be changed unless an internal office change needs to be made. Schedule changes will be considered only in extreme circumstances. Should a schedule change take place, it will be the student's responsibility to have the respective teachers (dropping/adding) sign the official schedule change form.

A schedule change becomes official only when the principal and both teachers have signed the form, authorizing clearance, and the form has been returned to the office by the student.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

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

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

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

- Courtyard for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Playground for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

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

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

### **Conduct Before and After School**

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

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

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

### **Cafeteria Services**

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

State and federal law, as well as board-adopted policies, define when, where, and by whom competitive foods, which are foods not sold as part of the regular meal program, can be served or sold on school premises during the school day. For more information, see policies CO(LEGAL) and FFA(LOCAL).

## **Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use through their ELA classes, before school from 7:15 – 7:50 and during their lunch periods.

## **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups**

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

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

## **SEARCHES**

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

## **Students' Desks and Lockers**

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

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

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

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

## **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

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

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

See policy FNF(LEGAL) and **Electronic Devices and Technology** Resources on page 34 for more information.

## **Vehicles on Campus**

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

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

### **Trained Dogs**

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

### **Metal Detectors**

For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).

### **Drug-Testing**

For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page 65.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 27.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency or who are English language learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the counseling department at (956) 748-1150.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

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

#### **Grades 3–8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7

- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. See **Promotion and Retention** on page 57 for additional information.

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

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

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

### ***High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments***

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II,
- Biology
- United States History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

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

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

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

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

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient (LEP) and who require this type of testing accommodation.

## **STEROIDS**

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

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

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL website at <http://www.uiltexas.org/health/steroid-information>.

## **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

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

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

Please contact Guadalupe Garza , who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at (956) 748-1157 with any questions.

## **STUDENT SPEAKERS**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events:

Student speakers shall introduce:

1. Football games; and
2. Opening announcements and greetings for the school day.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to

you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children’s mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-child-adolescent-services/>.

## **SUICIDE AWARENESS**

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

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Students failing one or more core courses will be required to attend Summer school as provided by the district. In addition to maintaining 90% attendance, the student’s Summer school grade will be used to determine if the student is to be promoted to the next grade. Students failing one or more portions of the STAAR may also be recommended for Summer School. Misbehavior during Summer school will not be tolerated.

## **TARDIES**

Promptness to class is essential for the effectiveness of instruction. Students must be inside the classroom at the time the tardy bell rings to avoid being tardy. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

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

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

## **TRANSFERS**

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

See **Safety Transfers/Assignments**, on page 12, **Bullying**, on page 19, and **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services**, on page 12, for other transfer options.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

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

requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

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

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

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

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Transportation Director at (956) 748-1029.

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

Students are only allowed to ride their designated bus home from school. If a student should need to ride another bus, written (preferably) or verbal parent permission is required. If the student is going home with another student, both sets of parents must call or send a note to the school office giving permission for this to occur. Only then will a bus pass will be issued to the student. Bus drivers will not allow students to board a non-designated bus without this pass. This policy is for the safety of your child and must be followed strictly.

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

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



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

## **VANDALISM**

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

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

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

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

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

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

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

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

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

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

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the main office at (956) 748-1000 for more information and to complete an application.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

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

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

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

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

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

## Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is required for high school students beginning with ninth graders in the 2014–15 school year, and for any student in middle school who fails a

section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

# APPENDIX I:

## Freedom From Bullying Policy

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit [www.rhisd.net](http://www.rhisd.net). Below is the text of Rio Hondo ISD's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date that this handbook was finalized for this school year.

STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

FFI(LOCAL)

Adopted on 2/24/2012

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**Note:** This policy addresses bullying of District students. For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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**BULLYING  
PROHIBITED**

The District prohibits bullying as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

**DEFINITION**

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

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

EXAMPLES	Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.
RETALIATION	The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.
EXAMPLES	Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.
FALSE CLAIM	A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
TIMELY REPORTING	Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.
REPORTING PROCEDURES STUDENT REPORT	To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.
EMPLOYEE REPORT	Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.
REPORT FORMAT	A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.
PROHIBITED CONDUCT	The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.
INVESTIGATION OF REPORT	The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.
CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION	Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee

	shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.
	The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.
NOTICE TO PARENTS	If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.
DISTRICT ACTION BULLYING	If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.
DISCIPLINE	A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.  The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.
CORRECTIVE ACTION	Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.
TRANSFERS	The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.
COUNSELING	The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.
IMPROPER CONDUCT	If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.
CONFIDENTIALITY	To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.
APPEAL	A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.



**RECORDS  
RETENTION**

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

**ACCESS TO  
POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES**

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's Web site, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

## **APPENDIX II: REQUIRED FORMS**

### **Parent/Student Copies**

The following forms are only copies of information that was provided in the registration packet. Please keep the following forms for your records:

- Acknowledgement Form
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information
  - School-Sponsored Purposes
  - For all Other Purposes
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education
- Consent/Opt-Out Form
  - Surveys Concerning Private Information
  - Marketing Activities
  - Opt-out for Nonemergency Physical Exam or Screening
- Release Form for Display of Student Work and Personal Information

## Acknowledgment Form

My child and I have received a copy of the Rio Hondo Junior High Student Handbook for 2015–16. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook, I should direct those questions to the principal at (956) 748-1150.

Printed name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Rio Hondo ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you the following forms so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** in the Rio Hondo Junior High's Student Handbook for more information.

## School-Sponsored Purposes

For the following school-sponsored purposes: Rio Hondo ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Photograph
- Date of birth
- Honors
- Awards
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of a member of an athletic team

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

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:**

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), [**do give**] [**do not give**] the district permission to use the information in the above list for the specified school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

## For all Other Purposes

For all other purposes, Rio Hondo ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Honors
- Awards
- Grade level
- Enrollment status
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of a member of an athletic team

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:**

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

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. See **Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page 5 for more information.

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

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), request that the district **not** release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education without my prior written consent.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that if this form is not returned with the other materials identifying what the district considers directory information, the district will assume that permission has been granted for the release of this information.

## Consent/Opt-Out Form

Dear Parent:

The district is required by federal law to notify you and obtain your consent for or denial of (opt-out) your child's participation in certain school activities. The activities include any student survey, analysis, or evaluation, known as a "protected information survey" that concerns one or more of the following eight areas:

5. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
6. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
7. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
8. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
9. Critical appraisals of others with whom the student has a close family relationship;
10. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
11. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
12. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

This notice and consent/opt-out requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and to certain physical exams and screenings.

Following are activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the 2015–16 school year. This list is not exhaustive and, for surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, the district will provide parents with notification as well as an opportunity to review the survey and consent or opt their child out. Please note that this notice and authority to consent transfer from the parent to the student when the student reaches 18 or is an emancipated minor under state law.



## Surveys Concerning Private Information

Date: On or around \_\_\_\_\_

Grades: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: (name of survey) \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: This is an anonymous survey that asks students questions about

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“To consent: You must sign and return this consent form no later than \_\_\_\_\_ if you permit your child to participate in this survey.”

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent’s signature

“Contact the principal at (956) 748-1150 no later than \_\_\_\_\_ if you do not want your child to participate in this activity.”

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information survey, please submit a request to the front office. The school official will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to your child.

## Marketing Activities

Date: 2015–16 School Year

Grades: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: Student-Based Commercial Services

Summary: School collects and discloses, or allows businesses to collect, use, or disclose, personal information collected from students, including: \_\_\_\_\_

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This personal information would include and go beyond the information the district has categorized as directory information.

These businesses provide student-based products and services: \_\_\_\_\_

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To consent: You must sign and return the consent form no later than \_\_\_\_\_ if you permit your child to participate in this activity.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent's signature

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any marketing survey, please submit a request to front office. The school official will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to your child.

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## Opt-out for Nonemergency Physical Exam or Screening

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

Grades: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

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To opt out: Contact the school official at [(956) 748-1150 no later than \_\_\_\_\_ if you do not want your child to participate in this activity.

## Release Form for Display of Student Work and Personal Information

Occasionally, the Rio Hondo ISD wishes to display or publish original student work, which may include personally identifiable student information as defined in the Student Handbook, to promote student academic and extracurricular activities on the district's Web site, a Web site affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom Web site, and in district publications.

Original student work includes artwork, projects, photos taken by the student, or other academic or creative work. The district may also wish to publish or display original video and voice recordings.

The district agrees to use these student works and information only in the manner described above.

**Parent: Please circle one of the choices below and check the applicable boxes:**

I, parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** my permission for the following to be displayed or published by the district:

- Original student work
- Voice recordings
- Video recordings

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Fight Song**  
**"Across the Field"**

Fight the team across the field  
Show them the Bobcats are here,  
Set the earth reverberating  
With a mighty cheer,  
Rah! Rah! Rah!  
Hit them hard and see how they fall,  
Never let that team get the ball,  
Hail, hail, the gang's all here,  
So let's beat the (name the team) now!

**Alma Mater**

Hail, Rio Hondo High,  
All hail to thee.  
Ever we pledge to you,  
Love and loyalty,  
R-H-S!  
Our colors black and gold,  
We rise on high.  
Always we will be true to the Rio Hondo High.

# **RIO HONDO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT RIO HONDO JUNIOR HIGH**



## **ADMINISTRATION & COUNSELORS**

Raul J. Trevino, Principal  
Mrs. Ruby Brady, Asst. Principal / Instructional Facilitator  
Mrs. Rebecca Mesa, Asst. Principal / Instructional Facilitator  
Mrs. Virginia Davila, Counselor  
Mrs. Claudia Villarreal, Counselor

## **OFFICE STAFF**

Nelda Trevino, Principal's Secretary  
Guadalupe Alfaro, Receptionist  
Antonia Mehaffey, PEIMS Secretary  
Cynthia Flores, Counselor's Clerk / In-take

## **SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER & ADDRESS**

Front Desk: (956) 748-1150  
Fax Number: (956) 748-1168

Mailing Address: 215 W. Colorado, Rio Hondo, Tx 78583  
Physical Address: 501 N. Reynolds St., Rio Hondo, Tx 78583