

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

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Mission, Texas 78572

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“Leaders Soaring to Excellence”

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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Forms to Be Completed and Signed by Parents / Guardians(copies are distributed by ELA Staff)

- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information
- Pledge to Excellence Student / Parent / Teacher / Administrator Compact
- Permission for Participation in Counseling and Guidance Program
- Media Release
- Important Notice to Parents Concerning Student Injuries
- Family Handbook Acknowledgment

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Founder

Dr. J. Guadalupe Reyes

BOARD OR DIRECTORS

Vacancy, President

Vacancy, Vice-President

Maria Guadalupe Rivera, *Secretary*

Narcedalia Garza, *Treasurer*

Moab Gomez, *Member*

Abner Rodriguez, *Member*

Marivel Villacaña, *Member*

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Irma Castillo, *Superintendent*

Cecilia C. Septimo, *Principal*

Alma Munoz, *Business Manager*

Edna Gutierrez, *Counselor*

Vision Statement

To provide a quality educational environment that inspires each student to develop leadership skills with a spirit of EXCELLENCE.

Mission Statement

The TEAM of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY: Board of Directors, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents, in partnership with public and private agencies, is committed to provide an education that exemplifies excellence; to provide opportunities to obtain proficiency in English and Spanish, financial and entrepreneurial literacy, and ethical leadership skills that will prepare our students to achieve prominent positions of influence in our society.

We Believe Statements

- We believe all our children are leaders.
- We believe in encouraging the hearts of our children.
- We believe all obstacles can be overcome through a culture of excellence.
- We believe multi-language skills increase opportunities to succeed.
- We believe all our children can achieve financial & entrepreneurial literacy.
- We believe that proficiency in technology is an essential tool.
- We believe we should All Model the Way.
- We believe successful leaders with character and integrity can transform our society.

Highlights of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

- Excellent Facilities
- Highly Qualified and Committed Staff
- Rigorous and Relevant TEKS Curriculum
- Integration of College and Career Readiness Standards
- Financial and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Family and Community Involvement
- Environment of Excellence
- Smaller Learning Communities
- Dual Language Program (PK3-2nd Grade)
- Leadership Curriculum emphasizing Values, Integrity & Principles
- Gifted & Talented Program

Principal's Message:

Dear EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Students and Families,

The faculty and staff welcome you to Excellence in Leadership Academy for the 2023-2024 school year. We are proud of our dedicated, experienced staff and enthusiastic learners!

We want every student in Excellence in Leadership Academy to succeed. The Family Handbook is a resource to help all of us in that effort. The Family Handbook has been written to provide important information concerning specific rules, policies, and procedures related to the safety and operation of our schools. In order for our school to operate safely and efficiently, you and your student(s) must be familiar with and abide by the expectations, procedures and rules outlined in this family handbook.

In addition to the Family Handbook, every school system in Texas was required to develop an Educational Plan and ESSER plan to inform parents of the needed changes made to our school system due to the pandemic. Therefore, the Family Handbook will reference the Educational Plan and the ESSER plan will provide parents more detailed information about the expectations, procedures, and rules relative to any changes encountered to support student learning.

We ask parents and students to take time to review the pages in this handbook and the Educational Plan, which will help you and your student navigate through this school year. If you have questions about this handbook, Educational Plan, or other school issues through the course of this school year, please do not hesitate to contact me. Our goal is to maintain an open and productive line of communication with parents and welcome your comments, questions, and involvement.

Our goal as a charter is to help every child learn and grow to their maximum potential. We are eager to partner with you as we achieve this endeavor. As teachers and parents, we have a shared responsibility to prepare our children for the future. We thank you for entrusting us in providing a quality education that your child deserves. With your continued support, Excellence in Leadership Academy will produce ***“Leaders Soaring to Excellence”***.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cecilia Septimo

Mrs. Cecilia C. Septimo

Principal

Notices to Parents

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (ELA) does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The following EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Alma Munoz, Business Manager 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, Texas 78572; (956) 424-9504.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Edna Gutierrez, School Counselor, 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, Texas 78572; (956) 424-9504.
- Title VI Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination: Dr. Irma Castillo, Superintendent, 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, Texas 78572; (956) 424-9504.

All other concerns regarding discrimination: See Dr. Irma Castillo, Superintendent, 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, Texas 78572; (956) 424-9504.

Asbestos Management Plan

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is an asbestos-free facility. The Asbestos Management Plan, designed to follow state and federal regulations addressing asbestos, is available in the Main Office. If you have any questions, please contact Alma Munoz, Business Manager, at 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, Texas 78572, (956) 424-9504.

Pest Management Plan

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's classroom area may contact the principal at (956) 424-9504 or 915 W. Interstate Highway 2 Mission, TX 78572.

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

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

General Information

SCHOOL HOURS

School Opens: 7:15AM

Office Hours: 7:15AM – 5:00PM

Admissions

Age Provisions

To be eligible for admission and enrollment, a student must meet the eligibility standards for pre-kindergarten (3 & 4 year olds) and all other grade levels. Upon acceptance, parents are responsible to provide the required documentation for a student's enrollment (birth certificate, social security card, immunization records, proof of residency). Missing documents could lead to incomplete enrollment.

Residency

Student must reside within the approved designated geographic boundary. TEA has approved a list of geographic boundaries in EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. In order to comply with the geographic boundaries, the parent/guardian must provide a proof of residence within these boundaries. In a case where a student does not reside with parent(s), the guardian or the person responsible must show that they have lawful control of the student under a court order. That individual must provide a legal copy of the court documents along with the proof of residency. If such a court order exists, the child is entitled to admission under this provision. The following are examples of court orders:

- Foster Care
- Legal Guardianship
- Texas Family Services
- Divorce Decree

Homeless

A person who is homeless is entitled to admission in any Texas school district under the following provision 42 U. S. C 11302(a) and 42 U. S. C. 11434 (a):

Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence.” For more information on services through the McKinney-Vento Act, contact the Homeless Liaison, Mrs. Alma Salgado, at (956) 424-9504.

Foreign Exchange Student

Currently EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does not place any Foreign Exchange Student in the school district.

Expelled Students

An open-enrollment charter school may deny admission to a student expelled from a school district or other charter.

Record Requirements for Enrollment

As an open-enrollment charter school, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY transfers and receives records through the Texas Records Exchange (TREx). ELA complies with all rules and requirements set by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Relationship to FERPA

When the school receives a request for records, the school first needs to consider whether the information may be released at all.

Immunization Records

A student is required to be fully immunized against certain diseases. The charter may admit a student provisionally if the student has begun the required immunizations and continues to receive the necessary immunizations as rapidly as medically feasible. A student who is not fully immunized and has not begun the required immunization must not attend school. A homeless student may be admitted for 30 days pending initiation of vaccinations or receipt of vaccination documentation. A student who is a military dependent or any student coming from another Texas school may be enrolled for 30 days pending transfer of immunization records. For more information visit the web page: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.

Documentation of Identity

Any of the following documents listed is acceptable for proof of student's identity.

- Birth Certificate
- Statement from the Texas Department of State Health Services
- Driver's License
- Passport
- School ID cards, records, or report cards
- Military ID
- Hospital birth record
- Adoption record
- Church baptismal record
- Any other legal document that establishes identity

Requirements for Pre-Kindergarten (3 & 4 year olds)

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will provide full day Pre-kindergarten classes for all eligible students (4 year olds). ELA will provide ½ day Pre-kindergarten (3 year olds) for all eligible students.

Eligibility Requirements for Pre-Kindergarten (3 & 4 Year Olds)

To be eligible for the Pre-kindergarten Program, the child must:

- Be three (3) years old on or before September 1st.
- Be four (4) years old on or before September 1st.
- Have limited ability to speak and comprehend the English language.
- Be economically disadvantaged (eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program-Free/Reduced or in Head Start).
- Be Homeless
- Be the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserved component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority.
- Be the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserved component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty.
- Have been in conservatorship (foster care) of the Department of Family and Protective

Services (DFPS) following an adversary hearing.

Documentation Required

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's social security number
- Child's current immunization records
- Child's proof of residency (utility bill must have name and address of parent or guardian)
- Proof of Income
- Copy of Parent's or Guardian's ID

Military Documentation Required

- Military Identification Card

Foster Care Documentation Required

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Service and Child Protective Services verification letter.

Attendance

When a student is absent, the parent is to call the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY office before 9:00AM and report the absence by giving the following information: student's name, grade, and the reason for absence. Failure to provide a proper written excuse (within three days of return to the school) will result in an absence being considered an unexcused absence. **Excessive absences could result in loss of credit for coursework.**

Upon returning (from an absence) to school, the student is required to do the following:

- Bring a written excuse/note from a parent or doctor stating the reason for the absence.
- A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted.
- When a student is absent, the school must have a note within 3 days from the parent/guardian or doctor concerning the student absence(s).
- **A doctor note or excuse from Mexico or another country will not be accepted.**

The note must include the following:

- Student's Name
- Grade
- Days missed
- Reason
- Parent/Guardian signature
- Parent/Guardian home and work phone number
- If you, the parent/guardian, call and notify us that the child is absent, a note or doctor's excuse must also be provided. The school keeps a file of all notes received for audit purposes.

Note to Parent: Absences are excused for personal illness or a death in the family. It is very

important for every student to be in class every day to maximize their opportunity for academic success. To that end, please do not schedule appointments, vacations, family trips, etc. during school time. **In addition, please do not check your child out of school (as a matter of convenience) prior to the end of the school day. Interruptions to the instructional setting are not encouraged.** A student who becomes ill during the school day will be sent to the office, with a “Nurse’s Pass” from the teacher. The office staff will notify the student’s parent should it be determined that the student be sent home. **In an effort to maintain safety, parents are not be allowed to sign-out their child after 2:30 p.m.** Parents must wait until regular dismissal time to pick up their child via the Drive-line.

Regular school attendance is essential for the 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 days, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are outlined in the following sections:

Daily Attendance Time

State law requires that daily attendance be taken every day. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will take student attendance at 10:00 a.m. each day. Parents are asked to schedule appointments (dentist, doctor, orthodontist, etc.) after school. In the event that it is absolutely necessary to miss instructional time for an appointment, please schedule the appointment so that the student does not leave class until after 10:00AM. When students are checked out, they must be signed out at the office and state the reason for pickup. Students will not be allowed to be signed out after 2:30PM. Only parents/guardians and/or authorized persons will be allowed to check students out. Please bring with you a photo identification. Once a child accumulates three (3) or more absences, then letters to parents will be sent out.

Compulsory Attendance

The State Compulsory Attendance Law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend school and District-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused.

Pre-K and Kinder students are subject to compulsory school attendance rules while they are enrolled in school. If the child has not reached mandatory compulsory attendance age (six (6) years old as of September 1 of the current school year), the parent/guardian may withdraw the student from school and the child will no longer be in violation of compulsory attendance rules. School employees must investigate and report violations of the State Compulsory Attendance Law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

Truancy, defined as a school-aged student deliberately not attending school, may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and his or her parents. A complaint against the parent may be filed in the appropriate court if the student:

- Is absent (unexcused) from school on ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent (unexcused) on three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

- Is tardy (excessively) which is considered as parts of days.

Senate Bill 143, which took effect on September 1, 2001, requires the school staff to notify parents and students about the new truancy enforcement requirements and court jurisdictional penalties. The compulsory school attendance requirements have broadened and defined responsibilities and authority. A student in violation of specific provisions governing unexcused absences may be referred to juvenile court or the Charter may file a complaint against a student in justice or municipal court without a jurisdiction waiver from the juvenile court. A student with ten (10) or more absences may have their enrollment revoked.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

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

- Religious holy days.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship and/or taking part in the United States naturalization oath ceremony.
- Documented health-care appointments, 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 return to campus.
- Participation by a Medicaid-eligible child in Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) programs; and
- Participation in an activity that is approved by the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY school board and is under the direction of a professional staff member.

Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least ninety (90) percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends fewer than ninety (90) percent of the days the class is offered may be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If make-up work is completed, absences for religious holy days and health care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after his or her enrollment in EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. For a student transferring into EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching consensus about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.

- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.
- **The student will be required to attend summer school to regain credit.**

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent. The actual number of days a student must attend to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Attendance and Enrollment

- Per Texas Education Code (TEC), §25.092, students must attend ninety (90) percent of a course (with some exceptions) to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2023-2024 school year.
- ELA enrollment calendar is as follows: Re-enrollment begins November 1st; Lottery is on the third Saturday of February; and New Student Enrollment opens after Lottery. *Both re-enrollment and new student registration continue until enrollment goal is met.*

***Refer to Educational Plan for further guidance on attendance**

Tardy Policy

Students should arrive to school by 7:55AM. Beginning the day promptly is important and demonstrates their commitment to success. ***If a student arrives late to school, after 8:00 a.m., a tardy pass will be issued to student. Students will not be served breakfast after 7:50AM.*** If a student arrives after official attendance is taken (10:00AM), he/she will be counted absent.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Tardy Policy has been developed to emphasize the importance of each student being in the classroom for the entire period, as well as arriving on time to school every day. Learning the responsibility of getting to class on time is an integral part of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY - standard of excellence, which prepares students for success. During the first few days of school, all teachers will be working with their students, focusing on getting organized and arriving to class on time, or early, every day. The **Tardy Policy** will commence **at the beginning of each school year** and will be implemented fairly and consistently throughout the year. **This year we will be implementing a Truancy Program.**

Tardy Guidelines (Arrival Time: 8:00AM)

A tardy is defined as arriving at school any time after instruction has begun. As parents, we respect the work force in not arriving late to our obligations. Let us set the example for our children to arrive on time to school.

The attendance office will send out letters to parents after:

- **“First Tardy Notice”** to notify parents/guardians when the student has accumulated five (5) tardies.
- **“Second Tardy Notice”** to notify parents/guardians if the child has accumulated ten (10) tardies.

- **“Third Tardy Notice”** to notify parents/guardians if the child has accumulated fifteen (15) tardies.

The parent/guardian will also be addressed by an administrator, which then may result in a review of enrollment status.

The student’s responsibility is to consistently improve personal efficiency in utilizing passing time, planning the quickest route while still moving safely regarding hall traffic. Students must be ready to actively participate in the whole-school activities of the Pledges (US Flag, Texas Flag, and Character of the Month) and a Moment of Silence/Prayer which begin promptly at 8:00AM.

The teacher’s responsibility is to encourage students to discover the best routine for the most efficient use of passing time. Teachers will be standing at their classroom doors to supervise students during passing times.

The parent’s responsibility is to discuss this policy with his/her child, reinforcing the student’s ability to meet this responsibility of learning promptness, and supporting the necessity for the school’s establishing immediate consequences to prevent chronic tardiness.

Attendance Guidelines

- Three (3) to Five (5) Absences
 - Mail 1st Warning Letter
 - No participation in Perfect Attendance rewards & no Annual Award
 - Required parent & teacher conference.
-
- Six (6) to Ten (10) Absences
 - Mail 2nd Warning Letter
 - No participation in Perfect Attendance rewards & no Annual Award
 - Required parent & teacher conference.
-
- Eleven (11) or more Absences
 - Mail 3rd Warning Letter
 - Required parent & principal conference.
 - Attendance Committee Review Meets
 - HB5: K-12th grade students who did not meet the 90% attendance rule through the school year.
 - Students will be required to attend Summer School/Retention

Withdrawing Your Child

Parent/guardian should send a note or call the office at least three (3) days in advance whenever a child will be moving out of the area or changing to another school. Parents are required to follow administrative procedures for official withdrawal and must indicate on the withdrawal form the name of the campus where their child will attend. A student who is withdrawing from EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY must turn in all classroom books, library books, and any other school property issued to the student. Parents are responsible to pay for lost or damaged books, technology, etc. upon the day of withdrawing. All accounts must be zeroed with the school at the time of withdrawal.

Make-up Work

Upon returning to school, students who are absent will be given an opportunity to make up tests and/or turn in assignments/projects due in any class missed because of absence. The number of days afforded to students for make-up work will be equal to the number of days absent. A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up 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 a 50 for the assignment. During extended absences (3 days or more), parents may contact the teacher to request missing assignments. Completing makeup work positively affects the student's grades; however, it does not reduce the days of absences.

Academic Reports to Parents

Grading periods at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY are divided into 6 six-weeks reporting periods. The student's progress will be assessed through class assignments, class participation, homework, tests, quizzes, projects, etc. These assessments determine the grade for the period. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will communicate each student's academic progress through the following methods:

- Report Cards: Will be sent home on the Wednesday following each reporting period as indicated by the Excellence in Leadership Academy.
- Interim Progress reports: Will be sent at regular intervals of three (3) weeks.
- Final report cards will not be issued until all records are cleared. Students must pay for lost or damaged books to have records cleared.

Students in grades K-8, are graded on the following scale:

100-90	A	Demonstrates Exceptional Mastery of material
89-80	B	Demonstrates Mastery of material
79-70	C	Demonstrates Average mastery of material
69-60	D	Demonstrates Some Knowledge of material
59-below	F	Demonstrates Lack of Mastery of material

Pre-K (3 & 4 years old) students are graded on the following scale:

E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
NI	Needs improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

Students who show exceptional mastery in all content classes will earn A-Honor Roll status. Recognition will also be acknowledged for students who earn A & B Honor Roll in all content areas, and all B Honor Roll in all content areas.

Academic grades that are below average and behavior grades below satisfactory will require a

parent/teacher conference. If needed, an Administrator/Parent/Teacher conference may also be required. Behavior grades below satisfactory may prohibit students from participating in school-sponsored activities such as whole-school activities, assemblies, etc.

Honor Roll

Will be based on all subject areas and conduct grades. A student must maintain more “A’s” than “B’s” to qualify for “A&B” Honor Roll. Honor Roll must be maintained throughout every six-week reporting period to receive all “A, A & B, or B” Honor Roll for the year. Six-weeks Honor Roll recognition ceremonies will be held after each marking period.

Homework Guidelines

- Homework assignments are to be directly related to instructional objectives and skills.
- No homework is to be assigned Wednesday night. It is a Family Night.
- Homework is not to be assigned over the holidays or weekends. Special projects may be an exception.

***Refer to Educational Plan for further guidance on assignments & grades**

Promotion

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 charter. A student may be promoted only the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level and on assessments (TPRI, STAAR). *Physical, emotional, and maturational factors will be considered in addition to academic achievement in making decisions regarding the most appropriate instructional placement of each student.*

Final decisions of promotion, placement, or retention shall be the responsibility of the Grade Placement Committee including child’s teacher(s), parents, and administration. Students in kindergarten may be promoted/retained using portfolio assessment, teacher observation, and/or teacher recommendations.

Students in grades Kinder-8th grade may be promoted from one grade level to the next by obtaining an overall average of 70 or above in each core subject area for the school year. In addition, the student must show adequate mastery of minimum skills for the current grade level. State mandated and skills-based assessments, teacher recommendations and local assessments will also be used to determine students’ academic achievement progress for the year. A student’s need for retesting and extra credit work of points will carry weights in teacher recommendation for retention. Failure to meet these requirements will result in student’s retention for the year.

Accelerated Learning Instruction- HB 4545 & HB 1416

HB 4545 has effective since June 16, 2021, and applies beginning with the 2021- 2022 school year. LEAs should evaluate Spring 2023 STAAR scores, in addition to HB 1416, to identify students who will require accelerated instruction that complies with these new requirements during the 2023- 2024 school year.

Accelerated Instruction: For any student who did not pass STAAR grades 3-8 or EOC assessments, accelerated instruction must be delivered in the 2023-2024 school year (starting in fall 2023) or subsequent summer of 2024. Accelerated instruction entails either:

- assigning a classroom teacher who is a certified master, exemplary, or recognized teacher, or
- delivering supplemental instruction (e.g., tutoring) before or after school, or embedded in the school day and meeting HB 4545, in tandem with HB 1416, requirements. Accelerated instruction delivered in summer 2023 will only satisfy the HB 4545 requirements if the criteria for supplemental instruction were met. (See the Supplemental Instruction Requirements section below.)

Under HB 1416, Accelerated Learning Committees are no longer required for students who did not pass the STAAR test in grades 3, 5, or 8 math or reading, the previous school year. However, ELA is committed to student success and will continue to offer accelerated instruction.

- Under HB 4545, parents have the right to request a different teacher. Establishing the ALC in the summer would provide a window of opportunity to address in advance parent requests for different teachers and manage staffing and scheduling accordingly

Texas Education Agency. “House Bill 4545 Implementation Overview.” *Texas Education Agency*, Texas Education Agency, 2 July 2021, <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/house-bill-4545-implementation-overview>

STAAR Assessments (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness)

3rd-8th Grades

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- **Mathematics Annually:** 3rd grade thru 8th grade
- **Reading Annually:** 3rd grade thru 8th grade
- **Science:** 5th and 8th grade
- **Social Studies:** 8th grade

Activities

The purpose of the activities of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is to provide opportunities for the students to practice their leadership skills, to augment school spirit, and to encourage sportsmanship. Each student is encouraged to become a part of the organized activity life of the Academy. Students are expected to memorize each month’s character pledge. A student from each class will be recognized every month as “**Leader of the Class**” for displaying most frequently leadership qualities at school, overall good academic grades, and overall good attendance & promptness. Information regarding specific activities will be forwarded to parents via notes, school messenger, parent newsletter, Facebook, etc.

Educational Field Trips

All field trips taken by classes are approved on the basis of their contribution to the educational program of the school. A signed permission form is required before the student is allowed to make the trip with the class. Educational trips **may** incur a cost to cover the cost of food, tickets, and/or transportation. Information about prospective educational trip costs will be sent home with

students well in advance of the actual event or activity. Educational trips are considered to be an extension of the classroom. **Students are expected to attend.** Please note student discipline referrals may inhibit participation in field trips. Students not attending field trips are still required to attend school. Non-attendance may result as an unexcused absence. **Monies raised for field trips are non-refundable.**

Student is responsible to follow EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S Code of Conduct and staff's directives at all times. ***DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND PRIORITIZING STUDENT SAFETY, FIELD TRIPS FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR WILL DEPEND ON THE CURRENT CDC AND LOCAL GUIDELINES.**

Assemblies

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY hosts several assemblies each year. We choose our assemblies based on the cultural and educational value they will add to our students. All students are provided access to on-campus assemblies at no cost. **DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, ASSEMBLIES MAY BE CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY, AS NECESSARY.**

Morning Drop-Off

Parents may drop-off children beginning at 7:15AM. Please do not drop-off your child earlier than 7:15AM as supervision is NOT available at that time due to staff schedules.

Staff duty begins at 7:15AM. STUDENTS WILL REPORT TO THE CAFETERIA OR DESIGNATED AREA FOR BREAKFAST.

Wellness Policy

A fundamental mission of the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is to encourage healthy behaviors among its students, staff, administration, parents, and Board of Directors. This especially includes providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become healthy and productive adults. Therefore, the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY promotes a healthy school environment by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning experience. Our school will contribute to the basic good health status of our children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition, physical activity, adequate rest, and stress reducing practices. Through these endeavors, we expect to increase the students' readiness to learn, reduce absenteeism, improve physical fitness, and improve mental health.

- Fitnessgram: Parents can request, in writing, their child's physical fitness assessment results at the end of the school year.
- All athletes require a yearly physical exam (no exceptions).

Cafeteria

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Students will eat in the cafeteria at the designated periods. Breakfast is provided from **7:15AM - 7:50AM**. Lunch periods are assigned by grade levels. The assigned lunch period is an opportunity to enjoy being with friends and enjoy a well-prepared lunch from home or cafeteria. Due to safety compliance, we are unable to offer microwave use in the cafeteria. Food items brought into school should also follow school nutritional guidelines. Sharing of any food or drink items is **strictly prohibited**. Students are required to maintain their eating areas clean and remain seated until they are dismissed.

In our efforts to maintain safety, parents will not be allowed to eat with their child.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) being served or sold on school premises during the school day. No candy may be provided to students at any time, except for the days specified as FMNV days. No carbonated or energy drinks allowed. There are portion size restrictions on chips, certain snacks and sweets, milk and fruit drinks. Fruits and vegetables should be offered daily. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY must offer 2%, 1%, or skim milk.

Special Diets: USDA regulations require any substitutions or modifications in school meals for children who require restrictions on their diets be supported by a statement from a licensed physician from the United States. Annual revision of special diets will be required.

***Refer to Educational Plan for further guidance on Child Nutrition**

Birthday Celebrations

- Small birthday parties should be scheduled from 3:00PM-3:20PM.
- Parents may bring store-bought (and sealed) cupcakes & individual juices only; however, these must be dropped off at the front office for later distribution by a staff member. Homemade items are not permitted.
- No pizzas, hot dogs, etc.
- No birthday decorations.
- Birthday parties will be held in teacher's classroom.
- Electronic devices/cellular phones (i.e., cameras) will not be allowed.

Transportation

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will not provide transportation service to and from school for students. It is the parent's responsibility to drop off and pick up their child(ren) daily. For the safety of our students and staff, all students must be dropped off and picked up at designated areas. During morning drop off and after school pick up, parents must remain in their vehicle. **Children will not be released if parents are not in their vehicle.**

Cellular Telephones/Electronic Devices

The use or operation of cellular telephones, electronic devices, or any other type of electronic communication system by students on the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY campus or at functions during school hours is **strictly prohibited. Only ELA issued technology is allowed on school premises.** In addition to disciplinary action, the unauthorized use or operation of these devices will result in confiscation. The first time a telecommunications device is confiscated the student may pick it up afterschool. The second time the parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the front office for a fee of \$15.00. In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. These devices will only be released to the parent after school (**2nd offense**). Additionally, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will not be responsible for loss or mistreatment of any personal electronic device, including: games, iPods, personal speakers, or

personal music devices, etc. These devices are **not permitted** on campus and are subject to the same disciplinary action and confiscation policy.

Child Abuse and Neglect

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 physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone, who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

- Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches.
- Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior.
- Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school. A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the 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://dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp

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

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>

<http://snpn.nonprofitoffice.com>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml

http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml

Reports may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (800) 252-5400 or on the web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>

Fundraising

All collections of fees from students and all fundraising activities must be approved by the principal. Monies raised for field trips are non-refundable. Students or Parents are not allowed to sell or purchase non-approved items.

Distribution of Non-School Materials

Vendors or parents/guardian are prohibited from soliciting funds, merchandise, or taking orders on campus. Written handbills, photographs, petitions, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials may not be sold, circulated, or distributed on campus by a student or non-student without the approval of the principal. Posting signs on school property is prohibited. Loitering or passing out flyers at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is strictly prohibited and all parties involved are subject to dismissal from EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

Dress Code

The EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY student dress code policy was developed to reflect our collective belief that students develop school pride not only by attaining honor in scholastic accomplishments, but also by exhibiting dress and grooming skills that reflect positive behavior. Boys and girls are expected to be clean, neat and appropriately dressed **each day. Hairstyles and fashions, which cause or may cause a distraction are unacceptable.** Boy's hair length should not be longer than the collar of their shirts. Boys may not wear earrings. No color streaks in hair are allowed for either boys or girls. Appropriate undergarments are expected.

Parents will be called each time their child arrives to school out of uniform. **The administration of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY reserves the right to make the final decision regarding compliance with dress code and/or appropriateness of clothing, hairstyles and/or accessories.**

Dress Code Violation Procedures

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1st Violation | Phone call to the parent to bring appropriate uniform, student conference explaining uniform requirements and purpose for the dress code policy. |
| 2nd Violation | Phone call and discipline report to the parent for out of uniform status, parent/student conference addressing purpose for the dress code policy, and development of plan to adhere to dress code policy. |
| 3rd Violation | Parent will be asked to purchase an extra school uniform to be kept at school. |

NOTE: If a student is not wearing the appropriate top or bottom, a phone call will be made to the parent in an attempt to correct the problem. If a used uniform is available in his/her size and parent is unable to bring appropriate uniform that day student, the student will be asked to change into the provided uniform. A student who violates the Student Dress Code is not eligible for Leader of the Class. Repeated dress code violations may also affect his/her behavior grades and participation in extracurricular activities.

Boys MUST wear the following:

- + ELA Polo purple shirt (Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays)
- + ELA White shirt with Purple Tie (Wednesdays)
- + Khaki pants/Black pants

- ✦ Khaki or Black shorts only allowed for PK3-2nd
- ✦ ELA College shirt with jeans (Fridays)

Girls MUST wear the following:

- ✦ ELA Polo purple shirt (Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays)
- ✦ ELA White blouse with Purple Tie (Wednesdays)
- ✦ Khaki pants/Black pants
- ✦ Khaki/Black skirt (knee length)
- ✦ Khaki or Black shorts/skorts only allowed for PK3-2nd
- ✦ College shirt with jeans (Fridays)

NOTE: ELA sweater & jacket orders will be taken 1st semester. **ONLY ELA sweaters & jackets will be allowed (or all black, admin-approved sweater/jacket).** NON-ELA sweaters & jackets worn to school, will have to be removed once inside the school building. Other dress attire may be encouraged on specified days. These will be noted on the monthly calendar given to parents and posted on the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY website or Facebook page.

Fire Drills

Student safety on campus or at school-related events is a high priority for EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. Although the school has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. Students should: avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk; 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; immediately follow the instructions of teachers and other school employees who are overseeing the welfare of all students. State law mandates that the school conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills. Exit routes are posted in each classroom. Students are expected to exit the building quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. It is imperative that students follow directions so that teachers can take attendance and ensure that every student has cleared the building. During these drills, student failure to adhere to these expectations is considered a severe behavior violation.



Standard Response Protocol

Student Safety

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Drill for weather events, fire, accidents, intruders, and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration. Our school is expanding the safety program to include the **Standard Response Protocol (SRP)**. The SRP is based on these four actions. Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.



Hold is followed by the Directive: “**In Your Room or Area**” and is the protocol used when hallways need to be kept clear of occupants.



Secure is followed by the Directive: “**Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors**” and is the protocol used to safeguard people within the building.



Lockdown is followed by “**Locks, Lights, Out of Sight**” and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place.



Evacuate and may be followed by a location, and is used to move people from one location to a different location in or out of the building.



Shelter State the **Hazard** and **Safety Strategy** for group and self protection.

Training

Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year. More information can be found at

<http://iloveuguy.org>

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency. **Assure that the office always has on hand current up-to-date emergency information.**

Bad Weather Closing

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY may close the school because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY's facilities. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will attempt to contact all parents. In addition, if it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, administrators will post a notice on:

- A) ELA's Website
- B) ELA's Facebook
- C) School Messenger
- D) Radio or TV Station

Radio Stations

K-TEX FM100	(956) 973-9202	Country	Weslaco, Texas
KBFM 104	(956) 973-9202	Hip Hop	Alamo, Texas
KGBT FM 98.5	(956) 664-9852	Spanish	McAllen, Texas
KVMV FM 97	(956) 782-5868	Christian	Pharr, Texas

Television Stations

KGBT TV Channel 4	(956) 366-4444	Harlingen, Texas
KRGV TV Channel 5	(956) 631-5555	Weslaco, Texas
KVEO NBC Channel 23	(956) 544-2323	Brownsville, Texas
UNIVISION Channel 48	(956) 687-4848	McAllen, Texas
KTLM Telemundo Channel 40	(956) 686-0040	McAllen, Texas

General Procedures for Resolving Parent Concerns

Resolving Parent concerns is vital to maintaining a positive school/parent relationship. In order to resolve concerns, parents, guardians, and/or students can meet with the teacher at appropriate times to discuss their concern. Because maximizing instructional time is vital for your child's education, we ask that you schedule a conference with the teacher during the teacher's conference period or before or after school. If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with the teacher's decision or explanation, they may schedule an appointment to meet with an administrator to address their concern. Parents, guardians, and students who wish to appeal an expulsion should refer to the section of the *Code of Student Conduct* relating to procedures for appeal.

Health Services

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY staff will not be permitted to dispense medication to students without written parent consent. All medication must be registered with the office staff and can be administered in the schools' main office.

Medication Policy

Only the school nurse or principal, or their designee, may administer medication to a student if the medication is to be taken during the school day.

Prescription medications must be properly labeled and in the original container. Medications will only be given according to the instructions on the label. A Parental Permission Form for Administering Medications at school must be filled out and signed by the parent at the nurse's office/front office. We are not allowed to give prescription medications labeled with one student's name to any other student, even a brother or sister. Medications will be not be administered without proper documentation. **NO over the counter, samples, herbal products, dietary supplements or medications from Mexico or another country will be administered at school.** Students may not have ANY medications with them on campus; therefore, medications can only be dropped off and/or picked up by the parent/guardian.

Unapproved medications will be confiscated. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up medications kept at school throughout the school year. Medications not picked up will be disposed of after the students are dismissed for the school year.

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 the Principal his/her 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 instructional day, the student and parents should discuss this with the 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 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY or at an EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY - related activity.

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 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 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 certified or credentialed medical or mental health professional employed or contracted by EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student should have a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). With current files, we will be able to offer critical information should an accident or injury occur that requires medical attention. Please contact the school office to update any health-related information that the school needs to know.

Texas Immunization Requirements

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school. An administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. **If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.**

Health Screenings

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY performs the state required screening vision, hearing, acanthosis and spinal screenings on your child during the school year. Parents will be notified of the results of the screening only if medical follow-up is necessary. This screening procedure does not replace your child's need for regular health care and check-ups.

Communicable Diseases

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

COVID-19

A mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a [coronavirus](#) (*Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2* of the genus *Betacoronavirus*), is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure. Always monitor your daily health, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid close contact, and stay abreast of medical updates via the CDC and local authorities.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) [external icon](#) will work.

Monitor Your Health Daily

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
 - Especially important if you are [running essential errands](#), going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a [physical distance of 6 feet](#).

- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
 - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY to provide the following information:

What is meningitis?

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

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms. Children (over 1-year-old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, most 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. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes). The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

Where can you get more information?

Your 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 Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Texas Department of Health, <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us>.

Head Lice – SB 1566 Effective September 1, 2017

School age children are at an increased risk for getting head lice (an estimated 6-12 million children ages 3-11) get head lice every year. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention support that lice do not cause illness and do not pose a health threat to the entire student population.

The most common means of transmission is through physical/direct (head-to-head) contact. Indirect transmission is uncommon but may occur via shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair accessories that have been in contact with an infected person. Most transmissions are directly from head-to-head. Transmission is likely to take place when children are playing in very close contact or sleeping near one another. An infestation shall be determined by the school administration on finding live lice or nits when looking closely through the hair and scalp. If nits are found but there are no live lice on the hair, the school administrator or designee shall notify parent / guardian to see if treatment has taken place within the last seven days. If treatment has occurred within the last week, the student may stay in school. Educational material about nit removal and prevention of lice should be provided to parent / guardian. If treatment has not occurred in the last seven days, the student should be sent home at the end of the day for treatment and removal of lice. Once treatment has been completed, the student can return to school. If live lice are found on the hair, the parent / guardian shall be notified by the end of the day via phone, email, and or/ a note sent home with the student. The parent / guardian shall be provided educational materials about treatment and prevention. Parent / guardian of each child assigned to the same classroom as the child with lice will be advised in writing or electronically no later than the fifth school day after the date on which the administrator or designee, becomes aware of that fact. The information will include the recommendations of the CDC about treatment and prevention of lice and may not identify the child with lice.

Requirements for Readmission to School – Students must bring proof of treatment or a statement verifying treatment signed by parent/ guardian. If the student has been treated and provides proof of treatment, the student may be readmitted to school. If written proof of treatment is not provided, then parent / guardian will be contacted that student must be sent home until written proof of treatment is provided. If live lice are found at re-check, the parent / guardian should be contacted to discuss the adequacy of treatment. The student will be sent home from school unless otherwise recommended by the administrator or designee. If your child continues with head lice, please visit with your child's pediatrician about how to handle head lice. Once a child has been appropriately treated to eliminate head lice, the child may return to school.

Code of Student Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities

Students and parents are expected to become familiar with the provisions outlined in the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY *Code of Student Conduct*. Carefully review the responsibilities of the students, parents, teachers, administrators, and Board of Directors. All stakeholders must work together to ensure the safety, educational, and social development of the child.

Each student will be given a copy of the *Code of Student Conduct*. Parents and students are to review this information and sign and return the acknowledgement page.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY teachers and administrative staff have the right and responsibility to respond to student acts of misconduct that interfere with the goals of education. The following information regarding student misconduct is provided in detail in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Unruly students will not be allowed to disturb the educational process for others in our student population.

Behavior Expectations for ELA

Common Area	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
Common Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk facing forward• Keep hands, feet, objects to self• Get an adult to help when necessary• Use school equipment and materials appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use kind words and actions• Wait your turn• Follow adult directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow school rules• Follow dress code• Solve problems with words• Be honest• Take care of personal belongings and school equipment• Clean up after self

ALL COMMONS AREAS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS ARE TO BE INCLUDED WITH SETTING-SPECIFIC BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No sharing food• Sit in properly is assigned seat• Report problems or spills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be polite• Allow others to sit next you• Use quiet voices• Use food table manners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get all condiments, utensils, and milk before sitting down• Raise hand and wait to be dismissed• Throw your tray• Clean your table
Playground Recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk to and from recess quietly• Stay within boundaries• No play fighting• Keep rocks, sawdust, mulch, etc. on ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play fair• Include everyone• Use kind words and actions• Follow adult directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put playground equipment in designated area when finished using it• Walk promptly to line when asked to do so• Return to class quietly• Follow game rules

Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay and/or walk on the right side of hallways, walking forward • Hall pass required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold door for the person behind you • Use quiet voices • Respect displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep feet quiet when in halls • Refrain from making loud noises which disrupts learning
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep water in the sink • Use soap and water for washing hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give people privacy • Use quiet voices • Quiet, Quick, clean • Use only needed paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush toilets after use • Put paper towels in garbage can • Return to class promptly
Arrival & Dismissal Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay on sidewalks • Walk at all times • Use crosswalks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use kind words and actions • Wait your turn • Follow adult directions • Be a good community member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on time • Leave on time • Escort students into office if tardy for check-in
Library, Computer, Gym, Music Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands, feet, objects to self • Use school equipment and materials appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use quiet voices • Follow adult directions • Use kind words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave area neat and in order
Assemblies	Enter and leave in an orderly fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applaud at appropriate times • Use audience manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate appropriately (ex: hand-raising)
Office and health Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report problems and concerns • Follow emergency procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use quiet voices • Wait your turn • Sit on bench quietly • Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your needs politely
Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk facing forward • Stay with your group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet voices • Follow adult directions • Use kind words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a good impression • Be responsible for own belongings

BE SAFE***BE RESPECTFUL*****BE RESPONSIBLE**

Prohibited

Consistent infractions from the following will be subject to a review of the student's enrollment status at EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.

Level of Offenses

Level I These offenses generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher. Consequence: Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conference; Loss of Privileges

- Disrupting class/environment
- Sleeping in class
- Use of Cellular Telephones/Electronic Devices
- Dress Code Violation
- Cheating: Academic dishonesty (to be handled by classroom teacher)
- Throwing Tantrums
- Playing with Cafeteria Food

- Throwing Objects
- Horse-Playing

Level II These offenses are more serious than Level I and/or represent the student's inability to control Level I misconduct. Level II offenses call for administrative intervention. Consequence: Parent/Guardian conference with teacher and principal; Detention; Loss of Privileges; Behavior Contract; and/or Suspension.

- Disrespectful
- Biting
- Profanity toward another student(s) or employee(s); charges come into play if student is 11 years of age or older.
- PDA (Public Display of Affection)
- Leaving class without permission
- Hitting/Kicking/Hurting Others
- Obscene Gestures/Behavior
- Stealing
- Refusing Staff's Directives
- Falsifying school documents

Level III These offenses seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, the school, and/or at school-related activities, or are a continuance of repeated Level I, II, or III misconduct. Consequence: Parent/Guardian and principal conference, Behavior Contract, Suspension and/or Withdrawal.

- Harassment/Threats or Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Matches/or lighters
- Fighting
- Instigating a Fight/Food fight
- Leaving Campus without permission
- Skipping Classes
- Setting Fire Alarm
- Verbal/Written Threats
- Vandalism
- Damaging Property
- Using an object as a weapon

Level IV Level IV misconduct involves more serious criminal offenses. This includes any felony, whether school-related or not, unless it is one for which expulsion is required. This level of misconduct may result in expulsion.

- Explosives mandate expulsion
- Repeatedly violates school rules
- Sexual Harassment: Sexual contact, conduct, behaviors, gestures and/or verbal comments that are deemed inappropriate or offensive. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated.
- Inappropriate use of school technology equipment
- Terroristic threats

- Committing arson mandates expulsion
- Gang related activity
- Consistent infractions of bullying or harassment of other students
- A student shall be expelled if the students use, exhibits, or possess a firearm, (Section 46.01(3) of the Texas Penal Code) on school property or while attending a school sponsored or school related activity on or off property.
- Possession of:
 - Pornography
 - Drugs
 - Weapons

Level V Level V misconduct are serious criminal offenses that will result in expulsion.

- Retaliation against students and/or employees
- Aggravated Assault
- Aggravated Sexual Assault
- Indecency with a student
- Criminal Mischief

Administrative review will be the final decision on all of the above items/levels.

Harassment

At EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, we believe every person deserves to be treated with sensitivity and respect. Students will strive to make all members of the school feel accepted and will treat everyone, regardless of physical, mental, or other differences, with respect. As a school community, **we will not tolerate harassment of any kind**, whether it is of a general nature or falls within the specific examples listed below.

- ***Ethnic harassment:*** abuse of an individual or group based on ethnic origin
- ***Religious harassment:*** abuse of an individual or group based on religion
- ***Gender harassment:*** abuse of an individual or group based on gender
- ***Sexual harassment:*** use of sexuality to harass

Harassment includes both the more easily identified acts of verbal, written or physical abuse, (i.e., persistent derogatory comments, persistent demeaning remarks, threatening remarks, racial or ethnic slurs, leering references to someone's body, inappropriate touching, inappropriate gestures) and the subtler, but equally damaging forms, such as graffiti and stereotypical jokes.

Cyberbullying and Sexting

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 Code of Conduct, and may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior. Additionally, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law

enforcement because engaging 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 the following with your child <http://beforeyoutext.com>, which is 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

Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment. Bullying including online bullying **will not be tolerated**.

Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY prohibits bullying, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Definition

Bullying means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements and that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a scholar's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property.
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Excellence in Leadership Academy; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

The school also prohibits cyberbullying, which means bullying done using any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

Application of Policy

This Policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:

- Interferes with a student's educational opportunities or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, Excellence in Leadership Academy, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Reporting Procedures

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. Any student who believe that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the principal, a teacher, or other school employee. A report may be made anonymously, orally or in writing. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal.

Notification Procedures

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY employees must notify the principal immediately after an incident of bullying is reported to the employee. The principal will provide notice of an incident of bullying to:

- a parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- a parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident;"

Investigation of Report

If a report is made orally, the campus principal documents the incident report to written form. The campus principal shall determine whether the allegation in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and if so, proceed under that policy instead. The campus principal shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegation in the report. The campus principal shall take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during an investigation, if appropriate.

Concluding the Investigation

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten business days from the date of the report; however, the campus principal shall take additional time, if necessary, to complete a thorough investigation. The campus principal shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including determination of whether bullying occurred, and send a copy to the Superintendent.

Charter District Action

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Family Handbook. Disciplinary action may not be imposed on a student who after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying. The charter may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not arise to the level of bullying under this policy.

Counseling Options

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY provides counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying and/or who engages in bullying.

Confidentiality

To the greatest extent possible, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against who a report is filed, and witnessed. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.

Special Education

Discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities will comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including IDEA.

Appeal

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcomes of the investigation may appeal through EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Policy, beginning at the appropriate level.

Suicide Prevention

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY establishes a procedure for providing notice of a student identified as at risk of committing suicide to a parent or guardian of the student within a reasonable amount of time after the identification of early warning signs, which may include declining academic performance, depression, anxiety, isolation, unexplained changes in sleep or eating habits, and destructive behavior toward self and others.

The intent is to make a recommendation for early mental health interventions (suicide prevention) to the student's parent/guardian. It is not intended to interfere with the rights of parents or guardians and the decision-making regarding the best interest of the child. Intent is to notify a parent or guardian so that a parent or guardian may take appropriate action. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY does not have the authority to prescribe medications. Any and all medical decisions are to be made by the parent/guardian of a student.

Searches

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

Stealing

At EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, we believe in respecting people's property. A student who demonstrates this respect never defaces anything that belongs to another student or the school, never "borrows" property (including money, clothing, books, academic work, papers, art supplies, library books or classroom supplies) without specific permission, never takes or hides food or other items that were intended for another person, never takes things from the "Lost and Found" that are not theirs, and never violates a student's or teacher's privacy by entering their room, computer files or folders, lockers, or other personal property without permission.

Damage to School Property

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY students are to take pride in their school. They must not destroy or deface school property. For this reason, students are not allowed to bring permanent markers to school. Student desks are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school, even when assigned to an individual student. Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks. A disciplinary report and a parent conference will be

required for any student who participates in acts of vandalism or damage to school property. Additionally, the student may be referred to the proper law-enforcement agency. In any case, students will be required to pay restitution or perform civil remuneration for any damage to school property, including damaged or unreturned textbooks and/or equipment.

Gun Free (Possession of a Weapon)

A weapon includes, but is not limited to, firearms, guns of any type whatsoever including air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded), knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, and explosives. It may also include any toy that is presented as a real weapon or reacted to as a real weapon. Criminal charges may be filed for this violation. Possession of a weapon at school or any school-related activity may subject a student/parent/visitor to disciplinary action and/or criminal charges. It makes no difference whether the weapon was placed in the person's possession without his/her knowledge. If it can be confirmed that a weapon was brought on district property by a person other than the one who possessed the weapon, that person shall also be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal charges. All weapons brought on campus, real or toy, shall be confiscated by the administration or law enforcement personnel. Gun-free zone applies to open-carry and concealed weapons (HB 910).

Smoke Free School Zone

The use of tobacco products and/or e-cigarettes (as defined by Section 38.006), will not be allowed under any circumstances, at any time on EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S property or school owned vehicles, or at school-sponsored activities. Smoking on school property is a violation of state law and is punishable by fine.

Personal Possessions

Please label all of your child's belongings. Many items are lost each year, and labels help us return them to the owners. Although the school has a lost-and-found area, items are discarded after an appropriate time for students to claim them. **Unless otherwise requested by the teacher, toys, cards, video games, or other expensive items should NOT be brought to school.** We cannot be responsible if they are lost or stolen. For health and safety reasons, students may not bring pets to school.

Lost and Found

Many items are lost and found during the school year. When lost items are found, they are placed in the Lost and Found designated area. We encourage students to secure and label their personal items to avoid losses. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Parent/Guardian Conferences

Arrangements can be made for parent conferences with individual teachers and the principal. These meetings should be prearranged since staff may not be available during certain times of the day. Parents are to call the school at (956) 424-9504 to schedule a conference with a teacher and/or with the principal. **Parents must meet with teachers prior to requesting a meeting with an administrator for any questions or concerns relating to their child.** Upon arriving to campus for a scheduled visit, parents are to report directly to the office to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass. The staff will gladly assist parents with their scheduled appointment. **Conferences are not scheduled during instructional periods.** *To preserve confidentiality of student records and*

information, other family members and friends should not participate in parent/guardian conferences with teachers and/or administrators. If a parent/guardian cannot conduct himself/herself in a positive or proactive way, the meeting/conference will be stopped and continued at a later time and date. The goal of parent/guardian, teacher and administrator conferences is not to vent or conduct oneself in a negative way, but rather to be proactive and see what can be done to help the student/child.

Student Records

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

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, are considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to: The parents – whether married, separated, or divorced – unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

School officials who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student's records include:

- Superintendent, administrators, and principal.
- Teachers, diagnostician, and support staff.
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer).
- A parent or student serving on a school committee.
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

“Legitimate educational interest” regarding student records include 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 and educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

The Superintendent is the custodian for all student records.

A **Request for Student Records Form** must be completed to receive a student's records. Only the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is allowed access to a student's records. Staff will strive to provide parents the requested records as soon as possible but may take up to 48 hours to reproduce a student's record. A fee may be charged for a second request of a student's records.

After School Tutorials or Saturday Tutorials

The instructional schedule encompasses time to address individualized instruction based on students' strengths and areas of need; however, a teacher may recommend certain students participate in after school tutorials to address prerequisite skills and/or to reinforce certain skills. Parents of identified students requiring tutorials are encouraged to work collaboratively with the

teacher to maximize the opportunities afforded to their child. Students are required to remain in assigned areas. Teachers and staff have full authority over student conduct in after school activities on school premises and at school-sponsored events off school premises. Students are subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct. If a student is recommended for Afterschool and/or Saturday Tutorials, his/her attendance is **not optional**. After school and Saturday Tutorials are mandatory.

After School Program

After School Programs are also provided Monday-Friday from 3:30PM – 5:00PM at a cost of \$5.00 per day. A snack is included. Special pricing is available for families with more than one child staying for the After School Program. Teachers and staff have full authority over student conduct in after school activities on school premises and at school-sponsored events off school premises. Students are subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct. Students not picked up by 4:00PM will be sent to the After-School Program and incur the \$5.00 fee.

Student School Pictures

School pictures will be provided each year. Parents will have the opportunity to purchase school pictures.

NOTE: If you decline permission to photograph your child, you child's picture(s) will not be included in EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY's yearbook or PowerPoint presentations.

Student Supplies

Students are required to enter each classroom ready to learn. Students are responsible to bring the items listed on their specific grade level school supplies' list at the beginning of school or the time of their enrollment. Throughout the year, your child should come to school with the following school supplies and materials daily: school binder, pencils, homework, etc. Parents are encouraged to visit with their child's teacher throughout the year to determine if any additional materials are needed.

Student Telephone Usage

Students may use the school telephone in the office in case of an emergency. The telephone is not to be used for general conversation or to call home for non-emergencies. Parents are asked to remember that the office telephone is a business telephone. Students will not be allowed to leave class to make telephone calls. In cases of emergency calls to students, messages will be hand delivered to them at a time that does not interfere with instruction.

Textbooks / Library Books

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY provides textbooks and electronic access to textbooks for student use during the school year. Students are responsible for the care of textbooks, library books, and other school equipment and property. Parents will be charged for lost or damaged books and equipment. Final report cards will not be issued until all records are cleared. Students must pay for lost or damaged books and school equipment to have records cleared.

Visitors

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit our school; however, procedures for visitors will be enforced. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the front office and comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. **A photo identification is required.** All parents and visitors will be given a visitor's pass that must be worn and be clearly visible while on district premises. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY enforces the Raptor Visitor Management System in our school to strengthen our program of campus safety for students and faculty. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with the prior approval of the principal and the teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. **Use of electronic devices is prohibited while visiting the school.** All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior including inappropriate language will not be permitted. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is a closed campus.

Student/Parent/Teacher/Administrator Compact

This compact has been established to encourage shared responsibility for high student performance and achievement. The compact will be shared during Meet the Teacher Night/sent home at the beginning of the school year. Parents are encouraged to discuss the compact with their child(ren).

HB4 High-Quality Pre-K Grant: Family Engagement Plan

One of the strong components of Excellence in Leadership Academy is family involvement. Research indicates an improved academic success rate when families are directly involved in the education of their children. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will include the following strategies and activities that address each component of the family engagement plan:

- Facilitate family-to-family support: At the beginning of the year, Excellence In Leadership Academy will host a get-to-know each other light brunch to share with parents the school's rules & expectations, curriculum, progress monitoring, end-of-year expected outcomes, and to promote activities that will be provided for parents. Parents are encouraged to share their strengths and interests with us and each other so that they might participate in school activities that coincide with their interests or talents. We also encourage the sharing of contact information among parents to keep in communication with each other as a means of support.
- Establish a network of community resources: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will provide Parent Training sessions addressing multiple intelligences, identifying your child's temperament, behavior management/discipline, enhancing your child's self-esteem, speech & language development, etc. Community partners may include presenters who can provide trainings including psychologists, professors, and speech language pathologists. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will also refer parents to other community agencies such as Texas Department of State Health Services, Mujeres Unidas, Casa Esperanza, and other counseling centers. Excellence in Leadership Academy will develop a list of the most

requested community agencies and place a link on the district website for greater access to our families.

- Increase family participation in decision-making: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will provide opportunities to interested parents to participate in a parent advisory committee where the District Improvement Plan is shared with them, what we have accomplished and initiatives for the following year. Through participation in this committee, parents will be able to provide ideas, suggestions, and feedback for educational decisions impacting the student body. Parents will also have an opportunity to participate in a Wellness Policy advisory group. This advisory group will assist in making nutritional and health recommendations for the Family Handbook.
- Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will provide sharing sessions for Families. Staff will present strategies for parents on how they can help their child at home with different instructional and educational activities. These will include: make and take sessions, modeling of read alouds, learning of rhymes, songs, activities and ideas on how to promote literacy. In order to extend our character education to the home, a flyer will be sent home on a monthly basis explaining the value of the month with the 5 “I Wills...”/“Yo Decido...” for the parents to practice and remind their child(ren) at home. Parents will also learn how to access CIRCLE: CLI engage site where they will find newsletters for parents and other resources including quality early learning activities that promote school readiness for parents to use at home.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators on culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies that support the education of the child: EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is a dual language campus where all our students learn both English and Spanish. As part of our professional development offerings to all our staff, we include dual language issues, such as meeting the educational and social-emotional needs of limited English students, English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies, and cultural sensitivity. With grant funds, we will contract Region I ESC Specialists who will provide bilingual-bicultural trainings to our staff on culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies that support the education of our students. We will also promote respect for both languages: English and Spanish. We observe the Language of the Day throughout the campus: English on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Spanish on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. All communication sent to parents is provided in both languages, English and Spanish.
- Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement: - EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY utilizes parent surveys to evaluate its overall school performance. We will continue to provide the parent surveys and utilize them for continuous improvement. Also, the input provided at the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Wellness Policy meeting will be utilized to assess family engagement efforts and assure continuous improvement. We will also initiate Evaluation Feedback forms at each one of our Parent Training sessions to assess the effectiveness of these activities and sessions provided. We have a procedure in place where students can earn up to \$50 Eagle Bucks should his/her parent attend every Parent Training session provided. We also keep track of the number of parents that attend every school activity. While this is part of how

we evaluate family engagement, we will now utilize data in our effort to provide continuous improvement purposes.

Supporting Students with Learning Difficulties or requiring Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This process links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Special Education Referrals:

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply. Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the

evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person(s): Ms. Ilma Solis

Phone Number: (956) 424-9504

Section 504 Referrals:

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: Mrs. Ludivina Vasquez, *Special Education Coordinator*

Phone Number: (956) 424-9504

Additional Information:

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)

Contact Person for Gifted and Talented Program:

Contact Person: Mrs. Edna Gutierrez, *School Counselor*

Phone Number: (956) 424-9504

Additional Information: <https://www.texaspsp.org/>

Title I at Excellence in Leadership Academy

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY is a school wide Title I campus. We are committed to the goal of providing a quality education for every student and recognizes that some students may need the extra assistance available through the Title I Program. Title I is a federally funded program designed to improve educational opportunities by providing aid to elementary and

secondary education. The intent of Title I is to expand learning opportunities while supplementing basic skills instruction in reading and math. This program serves students who need to improve their reading and/or math skills. The goals of the Title I program are to:

- Develop positive attitudes toward reading/language arts and math
- Individualize reading/language arts and math instruction according to student needs
- Increase reading/language arts and math achievement
- Increase student self-esteem
- Involve children with parent(s) in reading/language arts and math activities at school and at home

Title I monies are used to provide academic services to children who have been identified by the school as failing or most at-risk of failing to meet the state's student achievement standards. The Title I program is designed to reach as many students as possible providing them with the opportunities and support needed to achieve higher standards of performance within the classroom. Individual or small group help is provided to students who are “struggling” with grade level material. Title I services must provide instruction that will enable the students to reach proficiency.

Highly Qualified Staff

The Title I staff has met and/or exceeded the criteria set by the state of Texas for highly qualified teachers.

Parents Right to Know

According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), parents have the right to know the professional qualifications of his/her child’s teacher(s).

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether their child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Please contact the principal for this information if you so desire.

Parental Involvement Policy Statement of Purpose

Research shows that greater parental involvement leads to greater student achievement irrespective of such factors of socioeconomic status or ethnic background. The most accurate predictor of student academic achievement is the ability of the student’s family to create a home environment that encourages learning; to communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for achievement; and to become involved in the student’s education. -Alan Blankstein, *Failure Is Not an Option* (2004) EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY believes education requires a partnership between the home and school because of the extremely important role a parent plays in the educational success of their child. As such, this Parental Involvement Policy has been established to promote parental involvement within the school.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY believes that activities to increase family involvement are a vital part of the Title I Program; therefore, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY shall provide parents an opportunity to design, implement, evaluate, and suggest changes to improve the program. Components of the Title I Program include parental notification, parental in-service, student program reports, parent-teacher conferences, parent visitation, parent advisory committees, meetings, announcements, and policy dissemination.

Types of Parental Involvement

Parents can become involved with their child's education in many ways. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY values the at-home contributions and those that take place at school. *Reading to students at home, helping with homework, signing and returning school notes, and discussing the day's activities over the dinner table are as important as volunteering at school.* EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY will work to assist parents in understanding the academic standards and assessments, help parents work with their child(ren) to raise achievement, and plan activities throughout the year for families.

Parents are also encouraged to attend Parent Trainings and to participate as a Parent Volunteer. Please keep in mind that this is a school environment of excellence and leadership. Appropriate dress and behavior by parents and visitors is expected at school and school-sponsored activities.

Notification of Progress

Student academic progress will be monitored, and written notification will be provided to parents on a three-weeks basis, using interim progress reports and report cards. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY teachers are also available for consultation during **scheduled** parent-teacher conferences. Parents are encouraged to talk to the Title I staff if they have concerns about their child's progress or the Title I program.

Evaluation of the Title I Program

Parents of students participating in the Title I program will have the opportunity to evaluate the Title I program. This evaluation will include a section pertaining to the effectiveness of the parental involvement policy, areas of strengths and weaknesses, and barriers to be overcome. The Title I staff, with the help of parents, will use this information to evaluate the program and to make changes within the program as needed.

Other Important Information for Parents of Students with Disabilities Options and Requirements for Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

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

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 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. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY must complete the evaluation and the report within 45 school days of the date EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY receives the written consent. EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY must give a copy of the report to the parent.

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for Special Education services is Ms. Ludivina Vasquez, Special Education Coordinator, at (956) 424-9504.

Again, this handbook is provided to you and your child(ren) to encourage your participation in your child’s education and to optimize the learning experiences of your child. Thank you for the trust you place in EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY for the overall education of your child. We look forward to working collaboratively with you this school year to meet the academic goals for your child while developing his/her maximum leadership potential.

Welcome to the EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY Family!



EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

School Calendar 2023-2024

First Day of School **08/16/23**
Last Day of School **05/24/24**

Student Instructional Days 175

Teacher Work Days 187

School Start Time 8:00 AM
School End Time 3:30 PM

July-23						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
August-23						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10*	11*	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
September-23						
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October-23						
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November-23						
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December-23						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Six Weeks Periods	
1 st Six Weeks	August 16 – September 22 27 Days
2 nd Six Weeks	September 25 – November 3 28 Days
3 rd Six Weeks	November 6 – December 21 29 Days
4 th Six Weeks	January 8 – February 16 28 Days
5 th Six Weeks	February 19 – April 5 28 Days
6 th Six Weeks	April 8 – May 24 35 Days
Staff Planning / Work Days*	
STUDENTS DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL	
August 7-11 & 14-15, 2023	
October 6, 2023	
January 4-5, 2024	
February 9, 2024	
May 27, 2024	
Holidays	
LABOR DAY, September 4	
THANKSGIVING, November 20 – 24	
WINTER BREAK, December 22 – January 3	
SPRING BREAK, March 11– 15	
GOOD FRIDAY, March 29	
EASTER MONDAY, April 1	
MEMORIAL DAY, May 27 (students only)	
Bad Weather Days	
October 9, 2023	
February 12, 2023	
Food of Minimal Nutritional Value Days	
Dec. 21, 2023 - Feb. 14, 2024 - May 24, 2024	
STAAR Testing Days	
April 16 - 26	
April 23 - May 10	
June 18-28 Retest	
TELPAS Testing Days	
February 19 – March 29	
HB 2610 Minutes	
175 Days x 450 minutes = 78,750 minutes	
Board Approved 02/20/2023	
Revised 07/24/2023	

January-24						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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February-24						
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March-24						
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April-24						
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May-24						
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June-24						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

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