



**Student Success**  
at  
**Waxahachie**  
**High School of Choice**

**Parent/Student Handbook**  
**2022 - 2023**

**55 Northgate Drive**  
**Waxahachie, TX 75165**  
**972-923-4695 office**  
**972-923-4717 fax**  
**Office Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

# Preface

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

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

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

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

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact the campus front office.

## ***NOTICES TO PARENTS***

### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Waxahachie ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender:

Mr. Lee Auvenshine, Deputy Superintendent and Legal Services  
411 North Gibson Street  
Waxahachie, TX 75165  
(972) 923-4631

- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability:

Mrs. Ginger Robinson, Director of Educational Support and Counseling  
411 North Gibson Street  
Waxahachie, TX 75165  
(972) 923-4631

[See WISD Board Policies FB (LOCAL) and FFH (LOCAL).]

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos, and is available at the WISD Administration Building or WISD Support Services Office. If you have any questions, please contact the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities at 972-923-4631.

### **Pest Management Plan**

The district 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 school assignment area may contact the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities at (972) 923-4631.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW**

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

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings.
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings.
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA.
- The performance ratings of the district's evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law, and
- Information compiled by TEA for submission of a federal report card.

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

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

# WAXAHACHIE HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE

## Our Heroes

Brittni Navarro	Instructor
Jacquey Taylor	Instructor/ SPED
Krystal Vickers	Instructional Aid
Susan Williams	PEIMS/Registrar
Jennifer Mudd	ESL
Erica Scott	Counselor
Anna Vazquez	Attendance
Annie Bonilla	Secretary
Tiffany Cotton	Behavioral Coordinator
Al Benskin	Director

### OUR MISSION

The High School of Choice's (HSoC) mission is to provide students in "at-risk" situations the opportunity to attain excellence through a non-traditional high school diploma program.

### PURPOSE

The High School of Choice has been established to address the unique needs of students in at-risk situations. We believe that the future of our country depends on the education of its youth; that education should be the concern of everyone, and that education provides for the optimum development of each individual so that each individual may make satisfactory decisions in an ever-changing society.

Staff members in Waxahachie High School of Choice are dedicated to students and believe in the dignity and worth of each individual. It is the desire of the staff to work with students, parents, and the community to address the needs of the individual. Together we can establish a setting in which students are successful academically, emotionally, and socially.

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**Initials**                      Enrollment in the Waxahachie's High School of Choice is a **privilege**. Any repeated violations of the rules **will** result in removal from the program.

## **PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR ENROLLMENT**

A student must meet certain criteria to be considered for admission to the HSOC, including but not limited to:

- ✓ HSoC applicants **must be current WISD students** who have successfully completed at least nine weeks of school at Waxahachie High School or Global High School.
- ✓ The student and counselor of the sending school must **submit** the HSoC Application, complete with a current transcript, current attendance and discipline records, testing information including accommodations, and any other requested documentation. This information must be submitted to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. (DCI)
  - 90% or above attendance rate
  - Minimum of 17 credits
  - No DAEP placement in the current school year
- ✓ HSoC applicants **must be coded as at-risk students** as determined by the State and Federal At-Risk indicators listed on the application. Students qualifying in multiple at-risk indicators will be assessed and placed based on seat availability.
- ✓ HSoC applicants **must be selected** for admission by the application review process, led by the DCI.
- ✓ HSoC applicants **must live** within the boundaries of Waxahachie Independent School District. Any student found living / moving outside WISD boundaries will be withdrawn from the Waxahachie High School of Choice.
- ✓ **A student must have passed 3 out of 5 of the STARR End of Course (EOC) requirements in order to be considered for acceptance in the HSoC.**

## **ONCE ACCEPTED TO WAXAHACHIE HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE**

- ✓ Once accepted, the DCI will notify the sending school as well as the HSoC via e-mail. This e-mail will be sent to the Principals, Counselors and registrar of the respective schools.
- ✓ The sending school counselor will contact the student/parent to inform them of the withdrawal process. The student will need to be withdrawn from the sending campus AFTER the intake interview at HSOC can be held, allowing for the student to change his mind on attendance.
- ✓ The parent and student must schedule and attend an intake interview at the HSOC by

calling 972-923-4695.

- ✓ **Students must provide the following documents at the HSoC orientation and enroll in the HSoC:**
  - ✓ Copy of birth certificate
  - ✓ Shot records
  - ✓ Proof of residency (current water, gas, or electric bill)
  - ✓ Driver's license of parent and student (if applicable)

**The following documents must be signed at the intake interview before a student will be officially enrolled in the Waxahachie High School of Choice:**

- ✓ APEX Contract
- ✓ Academic Honesty Contract
- ✓ HSoC Expectations
- ✓ Parent-School-Student Compact
- ✓ Signed form, if applicable, agreeing to the **Foundation Graduation Plan** or **Foundation with Endorsement Plan.**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous days, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials. 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 of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

### **ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous 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 of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

## **Compulsory Attendance**

### Age 19 and Older

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

### Between Ages 6 and 19

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

## **Exemptions for Compulsory Attendance**

### All Grade Levels

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

- Religious holy days.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship.
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. (Still recorded as an ABSENCE for state recording purposes.
- For students in conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  1. An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  2. Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

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

### Secondary Grade Levels Only

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus or associate principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

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

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



## FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

### All Grade Levels

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

### Age 19 or Older

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

### Between Ages 6 and 19

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

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

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

## ABSENCES

A student absence is marked as unexcused unless a parent calls or provides a note with documented acceptable excuse(s) for the student’s absence or a doctor’s note is provided listing an approved reason for the student’s absence. If a student is absent, the parent/student over 18 **should call the school at 972-923-4695** as soon as possible to explain why the student is absent.

The student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the specific reason for the absence. **Notes must be received within three days of the student’s**

**return to school. A student who is absent for more than three consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the extended absence from school.** [See Board Policy FEC (LOCAL).]

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school. [See Board Policy FEC (LOCAL).] The principal may, if a student has established a questionable pattern of absences, also require a physician's or clinic's statement of illness after a single day's absence as a condition of classifying the absence as one for which there are extenuating circumstances.

After three days of absences, a letter will be sent to the parent as a reminder of the compulsory attendance law and truancy. **Truancy is defined as the voluntary, unexcused absence of a student on 10 or more days within a six-month period.**

**A student will be withdrawn from the program in case of attendance violations. Readmission to the program will be possible either by attending extra sessions on assigned days to make-up time missed in the class due to attendance violations or a student may be required to reapply for admittance with the DCSS after a period of 30 school days. Students MAY be readmitted based on seat availability.**

## **EXCUSED (Approved) ABSENCES**

Any child may be excused from school for absences resulting from personal sickness, death in the family, court appearance with documentation, quarantine, and weather or road conditions.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

A student absents from school for any reason other than personal illness, death in the immediate family, court, school related event, quarantine, and weather or road conditions will be assigned an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences include vacations during scheduled school days, baby-sitting, and oversleeping, etc.

**\* If a student is 19 or over in the HSoC, they WILL be withdrawn when 5 unexcused absences are accumulated throughout the current school semester. Please see section under absences for re-admittance policy.**

## **DOCTOR / DENTIST / COURT APPOINTMENTS**

**Every effort should be made to schedule appointments with doctors and dentists at times other than school hours.** If a student returns to school the same day or attends part of the day prior to the doctor's appointment or court appearance, etc. and presents a doctor note or court documentation verifying the appointment, the absence is excused. Students will be picked up and signed out for early dismissal in the main office. **Students will remain in class until signed out.**

## CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

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 contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

## CLASS TIMES

**\*The class times are as follows:**

<b>LUNCH:</b>	11:45a.m. – 12:15p.m.
<b>Full Day:</b>	7:30a.m. – 3:15p.m.
<b>At Directors Discretion</b>	7:45a.m. – 11:45a.m.
	7:45a.m. – 1:00p.m.

Every effort will be made to accommodate class requests however, class sizes are limited. Students must attend during their scheduled class time. **Class time will be strictly enforced.**  
**If you are not in school at the assigned time, you will be counted absent.**

It is the responsibility of both the parent/guardian and student that he/she arrives **on time** and is **in attendance** every day. Morning students must be in the classroom/at the door promptly at 7:35 a.m. **\*Students arriving late on a regular basis will be disciplined according to policy, including but not limited to withdrawal from the program.**

## WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

**A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school. The parent that signed the student in at HSoC registration, must withdraw this student.** The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the campus principal's office. On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the campus counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

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

## **REQUESTING LIMITED MEDIA OR NO CONTACT WITH A STUDENT THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

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

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

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee, please submit a written request to the campus principal stating this preference.

## **PARENTS OF STUDENTS WHO SPEAK A PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

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

## **OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

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

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to provide parents the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*. Additional information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available from the school district in a companion document, *A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and

resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is the Director of Special Education, at (972) 923-4695.

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See Board Policy FDB (LOCAL).]

### **Communication: Skywards *Family Access* and *School Messenger***

Students are a vital link between home and school. We encourage students to share all communications with their parents. Additionally, we will utilize *School Messenger*, newsletters, the website, parent conferences and meetings, e-mail, phone calls, surveys and take-home folders, as well as other vehicles for sharing information and gaining feedback.

Parents may also register for Family Access by *Skyward; Inc.* Family Access is a secure, internet-based website that will allow tracking of your student's attendance, grades, schedule, progress, assignments, health record, and emergency information. Family Access will also allow you to subscribe to automatic email notifications for daily attendance information, student grades (low assignments, missing assignments, low averages), and daily/weekly/monthly progress reports. To register for Family Access, each parent/guardian must fill out the registration form and drop it by the WISD Administration Building on 411 North Gibson Street or at the front Office.

## **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

### **Students are expected to:**

- Bring paper, class notes and pencil/pen to class each day.
- **Complete ½ credit every three (3) weeks. Students may be withdrawn from the program for not meeting this expectation.**
- Stay focused and on task.
- Attend and participate in all EOC / STAAR tutorials and modules.
- Ask for help.
- Be on time for class (or you will be counted absent.)

## CHEATING/SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM

The definition of student academic dishonesty varies; however, it traditionally includes one or all of the following:

- Copying another student's homework or test answers with or without that student's permission.
- Using cheat notes during test.
- Having access to teacher's answer sheets or book.
- Obtaining test questions from students who have already taken tests.
- Copying themes and other written papers from other students or reference materials (plagiarism).
- Allowing another student to copy homework or test answers.
- Claiming work taken from the Internet as their own, using other student's log-in access, sharing personal passwords with others.
- Technology Policy violations.
- Use of cell phones or other electronic devices during test or class time to relay answers, photo a test, communicate with another person during this time, etc.

**PLAGIARISM** is the use of another person's original ideas or writing as one's own without giving credit to the true author. Plagiarism will be considered cheating, and the student shall be subject to disciplinary action and loss of course work or credit for the work in question.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Consequences for academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Student will lose course credit.
- Student receives a grade of zero on permanent transcript.
- The student may be withdrawn from HSoC.

## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

- **Students in the HSOC are not allowed on the WHS or Global High campus during school hours without prior permission from an administrator from both HSoC and the requested campus.**

- **Students are not permitted in any other parts of the building without permission from HSoC staff.**
- **When arriving and leaving school, students need to go directly to and from the HSoC.**
- **Students must report directly to class and not loiter outside the school or the room.**
- **Students must have a pass from the office to go to their cars during class hours. (This will only occur in cases of emergency.)**
- **Students are not allowed to sleep. Continuous violations will result in the student being sent home for the remainder of the class, possible suspension and an absence.**
- **ANY/ALL medication brought on campus must be in original container, turned in to the office upon arrival and have a written note from parent/guardian.**
- **Students will NOT be allowed to use any personal electronic devices including media players, cell phones, etc. during class time without prior permission from the principal. Policy will be posted in the class.**
- **Students will treat staff and classmates with respect at all times.**
- **Disruption of the learning environment will not be tolerated. It is a privilege to attend HSoC.**
- **Permission to leave class early must be obtained from the office and the counselor the day prior to the request.**
- **Other disciplinary infractions.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

Waxahachie High School of Choice students are subject to all rules and regulations outlined in the WISD *Student Code of Conduct*. The code can be found on the WISD district website: [www.wisd.org](http://www.wisd.org) under Parent/ Student Information. Violations of WISD or HSOC rules/guidelines may result in the student receiving a discipline referral, parent conference, suspension or expulsion (removal from the program). Attending this school is a privilege, and removal from this program is partially based upon the disciplinary needs of the student. **All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the HSoC principal or designee.**

## **CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR**

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The campus behavior coordinator is listed below:

Waxahachie High School of Choice: **Dr. Al Benskin**

## **BULLYING**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The principal may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district.



A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website.

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

[Also see Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, School Safety Transfers/Assignments, Hazing, Board Policy FFI, and the District Improvement Plan.]

## **DRESS CODE & GROOMING**

The Waxahachie Independent School District is committed to providing an excellent educational opportunity for each student in the district. Efforts are made to ensure the highest standards of performance for all Waxahachie ISD students and to promote a safe and secure environment.

The district's dress code is used to promote grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, help avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. In addition, dress and grooming standards shall promote community values and good citizenship, enhance a safe orderly educational environment, and not infringe on any individual's religious beliefs or protected free speech.

The desire of the district is to present changes in a positive format; however, the most effective manner in which to explain the changes is to list the prohibited dress and/or grooming practices. Even though the Dress Code is restrictive, students continue to have a wide variety of choices. The cooperation of parents and students and the consistent and fair enforcement of this policy by teachers and administrators are essential to the effectiveness of the Code. The campus administrator has the final decision as to what constitutes appropriate school attire. Administrators shall have the discretion to determine the appropriateness of attire and grooming for religious and/or medical necessities.

### ***The Following Modes of Dress or Grooming Are Prohibited:***

#### ***General***

- Any aspect of a student's appearance or attire that is sloppy or likely to distract or disrupt the learning environment, including images or messages that are illegal, inappropriate, lewd, vulgar, sexually suggestive, containing profanity, or promoting violation of school rules (i.e., promoting drugs, tobacco use, alcohol, violence, gangs, death, sex, profanity, or hate).
- Holes or tears in jeans, pants, or shorts above fingertip length with arms in normal position (i.e., arms hanging naturally as student is standing straight and upright).
- All camouflage, all black, all red, all blue, all yellow, etc. attire.

#### ***Shirts, Tops, and Blouses***

- Sleeveless shirts or blouses that are not hemmed.

- Spaghetti straps, halter tops, basketball jerseys, tank tops, tube tops, unbuttoned shirts and blouses and overalls (unless worn over appropriate garments), and strapless tops.
- Exposed midriff or cleavage.
- See-through clothing (e.g., thin or mesh) (unless worn over appropriate garments).
- Backless tops.

### ***Dresses, Skirts, Shorts, and Pants***

- Dresses, shorts, skirts, or slits in skirts shorter than fingertip length with arms in normal position (i.e., arms hanging naturally as student is standing straight and upright) and strapless dresses.
- Pants, shorts, and skirts worn below waist (i.e., “sagging” garments).
- Underwear as outerwear or exposed underwear or nightwear.
- Leggings, leotards, or hosiery worn with only a blouse, sweater, or dress that is shorter than fingertip length with arms in normal position (i.e., arms hanging naturally as student is standing straight and upright).
- Secondary Level: Wind shorts or pants, gym shorts (with or without a drawstring) and sweatpants during academic classes or the main halls during the school day.  
*\*Exception: Grades 6-8 may wear athletic shorts that are longer than fingertip length with arms in normal position (i.e., arms hanging naturally as student is standing straight and upright). Athletic shorts that are finger-tip length but are hemmed with a rise on the side of the leg that is above the fingertip may be worn with slider style shorts or tights underneath that are finger-tip length.*

### ***Outerwear***

- Trench coats, dusters, and one-piece jump suits.

### ***Accessories***

- Jewelry, which displays music groups, sex, violence, drugs, tobacco, profanity, professional wrestling, alcohol, death, or that promote hate and/or violence.
- Chains on clothing or wallets.
- Studs or earrings on young men. (Female students may wear earrings in their ears. All other visible pierced jewelry is prohibited. Students may not wear band-aides, gages, plastic spacers, sticks, etc. to conceal piercings.)
- Heavy or spiked jewelry (e.g., dog collars, spiked bracelets or belts, etc.).
- Writing on body.
- Visible tattoos deemed disruptive or inappropriate (must be covered at all times).

### ***Footwear***

- House shoes, skate shoes, bare feet, shoes with metal cleats, or shoes with wheels.

### ***Grooming***

- Sunglasses (except with a signed note from the school nurse).
- Sweatbands during the school day.
- Hats, caps, bandannas, or other head coverings.
- Hairstyles that are disruptive (e.g., spikes, Mohawks, etc.).
- Non-natural colored hair (e.g., green, blue, purple, orange, etc.).

***Exemptions*** Parents or guardians seeking an exemption from the Dress Code for their student must complete a Waxahachie ISD Dress Code Exemption Request Form. This form is

available upon request by mail or in person in the main office. The form is also available on the Waxahachie ISD website. The form must be completed in full and returned to the campus principal. The parent or guardian will be asked to discuss with the campus principal the reasons and goal of the policy and the nature of the objections to the Dress Code. This meeting shall be held within ten days after receipt of the form. Based on the information provided in the Exemption Request Form and the interview with the parent, the campus principal will make a determination as to whether the exemption is granted. This decision shall be provided to the student or parent within ten days following the conference. Parents with more than one student enrolled in the district must fill out a separate Waxahachie ISD Dress Code Exemption Request Form for each student. Any appeal of the campus principal's decision will be treated as a student/parent or guardian complaint under Waxahachie ISD Board Policy FNG(LOCAL). Unless otherwise approved by the campus principal, the student must continue to comply with the Waxahachie ISD Dress Code pending the outcome of the Exemption Meeting.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

### **POSSESSION AND USE OF PERSONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES, INCLUDING MOBILE TELEPHONES**

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal Mobile telephone; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunication devices such as notebooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The student or parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office. Continued violations could result in the student not bringing the device inside the building.

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. (See **Searches** on page 16 and policy FNF.)

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

## **POSSESSION AND USE OF OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel.

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

## **INSTRUCTIONAL USE OF PERSONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

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

## **ACCEPTABLE USE OF DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

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

## **UNACCEPTABLE AND INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

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

otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as “sexting,” will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

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.

## **SEARCHES**

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

### **SEARCHING STUDENTS’ DESKS, LOCKERS, AND CARS**

Students’ desks, lockers and cars parked on WISD property are under school jurisdiction 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, lockers and cars. Searches of desks, lockers, or cars may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

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

### **SEARCHING ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

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

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

[See Board Policy FNF (LEGAL) for more information.]

### **SEARCHING VEHICLES ON CAMPUS**

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. Students will park on the South side of the parking lot, last row. [See also the Student Code of Conduct.]

### **USE OF TRAINED DOGS IN SEARCHES**

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal

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

## **COUNSELING**

### **ACADEMIC COUNSELING**

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teachers, and principal in order to learn about the curriculum, course offerings, and differences between graduation programs. Students who are interested in attending a college, university, or training school, or pursuing some other advanced education should work closely with their counselor so that they take the high school courses to best prepare them for further work. The counselor can also provide information about entrance examinations required by many trade schools, colleges and universities, as well as information about financial aid and housing.

### **PERSONAL COUNSELING**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional, academic, or substance abuse needs. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address personal concerns. Students are encouraged to see their counselor as needed.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Curriculum is offered through APEX. It consists of tutorials, applications and tests. Numerical grades will be given for courses.

### **CLASS RANK POLICY**

Students will not receive a class rank.

### **COLLEGE IMPLICATIONS**

Students who graduate from the Waxahachie High School of Choice will be eligible to apply for entrance to junior/community college. Some four-year colleges may consider Waxahachie High School of Choice graduates for admission; however, they will generally expect the student to have taken SAT/ACT. The student's scores may determine eligibility or Armed Forces service.

# GRADUATION

## GRADUATION PROGRAMS

### Foundation Graduation Program

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

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

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

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement</b>
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English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4*
Science	3	4
Social Studies, including Economics & Government	3	3 or 4
Physical Education**	1	1
Language other than English***	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Electives	5	7
Miscellaneous		Available Endorsements****: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Business and Industry Public Services Arts and Humanities Multidisciplinary
TOTAL	22 credits	26 credits

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

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

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

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

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

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student who is subject to the requirements of the foundation graduation program. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement



and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Please also review TEA's Graduation Toolkit, available here:  
<http://tea.texas.gov/communications/brochures.aspx>.

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

Graduation Date and Time: TBD

- Options
  - Individual Ceremony at a designated board meeting
  - HSoC Graduation ceremony