



**Rhodes School**  
*for the Performing Arts*

**PARENT HANDBOOK  
& STUDENT CODE  
OF CONDUCT**

*[rhodesschool.org](http://rhodesschool.org)*

05/2023

# Parent Handbook & Student Code of Conduct

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**2023-2024**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help pave the way for a successful experience at Rhodes School for the Performing Arts of Performing Arts (RSPA). The policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook provide the governing structure for parents and students of RSPA.

Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those included have been summarized. In addition, other policies may be adopted as deemed necessary for the success of the school. **Changes to the handbook shall supersede any previous provisions that are not compatible with the change. Administration reserves the right to waive a policy or a procedure and to apply the most appropriate standard in enforcing a policy or a procedure.**

## District Information

### Our History

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is a fine art magnet school chartered by the Texas Education Agency and is a program of Kaleidoscope Youth Development Services (KYDS) Inc.

KYDS, Inc. began as a summer program called Sensational Summers in 1999. Sensational Summers offered fine arts programs to boys and girls in the Houston area for several years and served hundreds of children during its existence. High interest from parents, strong student success rates, and the lack of a comprehensive, integrated fine arts instructional program in the surrounding school districts resulted in KYDS, Inc.'s leaders submitting an application to the Texas Education Agency to operate the first-ever arts-based school in the North Channel Area. Thanks to a well-defined, clearly articulated vision, the Texas State Board of Education awarded KYDS, Inc. a charter, and Rhodes School for the Performing Arts held its inaugural year in the fall of 2007.

### Mission Statement

The mission of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is to produce critical thinkers with the character to lead.

The mission is accomplished through the provision of a classical, arts-rich, experiential learning model that is rigorous and relevant and which consistently meets or exceeds state and national standards. The accomplishment of our mission results in students who are academically superior, unafraid to take risks in order to achieve success, concerned about the world around them, and understanding that what you do when no one is watching tells the real story of who you are.

## **Our Purpose**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts exists to answer the call for a school program that recognizes that learning takes place in many forms and through various experiences and mechanisms that go beyond traditional approaches to education and that all students, regardless of their race or economic status, have something to offer the learning community. We offer a school environment that is welcoming, safe, and exciting and where students can grow and develop academically, socially, and emotionally.

## **Statement of Beliefs**

- We believe that children are a gift.
- We believe that every child is unique.
- We believe that every child has a right to be safe.
- We believe that every child has a right to be loved.
- We believe that every child has a right to be respected.
- We believe that every child has a right to learn.
- We believe that every child can learn.
- We believe that every child will learn when given the right tools.
- We believe that every child has a right to explore and develop his or her gifts and talents.
- We believe that every child has the potential for greatness.
- We believe that it is our responsibility as educators to help children realize their potential.

## **Board of Trustees**

Texas law grants the board of directors the power to govern and oversee the management of the school. The board is the policy-making body within the school and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

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The board of directors is elected to represent the commitment to a strong educational program for the school's children. Directors serve without compensation. Current board members include:

**Charles Russell, M. Ed, President**

**Michelle Harris M. Ed, Member**

**Chrishelle Palay, Member**

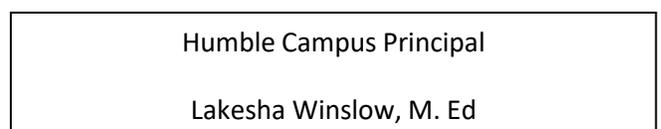
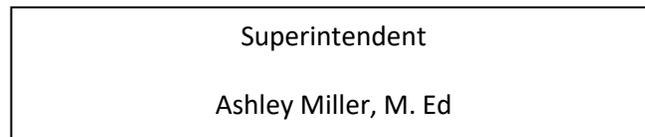
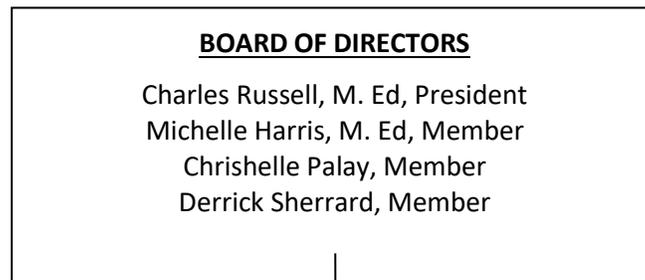
**Derrick Sherrard, Member**

**[boardservices@rhodesschool.org](mailto:boardservices@rhodesschool.org)**

The board meets as needed, and special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice will be posted at the administration building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed sessions may occur for things such as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real estate-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, terminations, security matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

### **Organizational Chart**



Math and Reading Curriculum Directors

Shanitra Winslow and Natasha Henderson

### **Equal Opportunity Education**

RSPA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or artistic ability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title VII; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. RSPA program admission procedures, facilities, job placement, student treatment, course curriculum, and graduation requirements are designed to eliminate discrimination.

RSPA will take steps to ensure that a lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in any educational or vocational program.

Questions or concerns related to discrimination of students or any of the bases listed above should be directed to the Principal or his or her designee.

#### **Accreditation**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is accredited by the Texas Education Agency, also known as TEA. TEA is the state accrediting agency that oversees all public schools in the State of Texas.

#### **Curriculum**

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is the foundational curriculum for Rhodes School for the Performing Arts. The TEKS was developed by the Texas Education Agency and is based upon proven measurable educational principles and objectives. The TEKS is the Curriculum of choice for Rhodes School for the Performing Arts because it ensures that our students are being taught the same skills as their public-school peers; it provides identifiable, measurable results-based objectives to help determine student progress and academic achievement; it keeps our students competitive when compared to others across the state; and it ensures that our students can be successful in any educational setting, public or private.

#### **School Calendar**

The school calendar is adopted by the board of directors on an annual basis in compliance with state law. The school calendar can be accessed at the school website, <http://rhodesschool.org>.

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### **Campus Contacts**

Northshore (PK – 6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
Principal, Sonya Akers  
13334 Wallisville Road  
Houston, TX 77049  
(281) 459-9797

Humble Campus (PK - 8<sup>th</sup> grade)  
Principal, Lakesha Winslow  
600 Charles Street  
Humble, Texas 77338  
(281) 319-9300

Office Hours:  
7:45 AM – 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday  
7:45 AM – 1:05 PM Friday

Office Hours  
7:45 AM – 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday  
7:45 AM – 1:05 PM Friday

### **Attendance & Admissions**

(All Campuses)  
Stacey Hairston, Coordinator  
(281) 458-4334  
[shairston@rhodesschool.org](mailto:shairston@rhodesschool.org)

### **Superintendent's Office**

Ashley Miller  
(281) 458-4334

### **Board Services**

Office Hours:  
281-458-4334  
Messages will be forwarded directly to  
board members at  
[boardservices@rhodesschool.org](mailto:boardservices@rhodesschool.org)

## Admissions

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is an open-enrollment charter school. We accept all students who live within the designated attendance zone.

**Attendance Zone:** Aldine, Alief, Channelview, Cleveland, Crosby, Cypress-Fairbanks, Fort Bend, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Humble, Katy, Klien, Magnolia, Pearland, Sheldon, Spring.

**Returning Students:** Returning students receive a Notice of Intent to Return Form the Friday before the Christmas holidays. This form asks students to state whether they intend to return the following school year and to identify any of their siblings who wish to attend the school the following school year. The form must be returned when the students return from the Christmas holidays. Currently, enrolled students who submit their Notice of Intent to Return Form by the deadline are automatically enrolled for the following school year. Vacancies in each class are then determined, and the siblings of returning students are given priority in admissions.

Applications for new students are accepted from February 1 through March 15 of each year. Applications may be submitted online, via fax, or in person. If the number of eligible applicants does not exceed the number of available slots, then all applicants who applied in a timely manner are offered admission. If there are more eligible applicants than available spaces in a class, then a lottery will be conducted. The lottery will be held on the second Friday in April. A name is drawn for each vacancy that exists, and each applicant whose name is drawn is offered admission. The remaining names are then drawn and placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn.

If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year or during the school year, the next individual on the waiting list with the lowest number of assignments will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list. If an application is received after the application period has passed, the applicant's name is added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who applied on time.

Applicants for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade must have reached the appropriate age on or before September 1st of the school year for which they are applying. Three and four-year-old pre-kindergarten students must also meet certain income and/or language requirements to be eligible for attendance.

***A student who has a documented history of a criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC Chapter 37, Subchapter A may be excluded from admission in accordance with TEC, 12.111 (a)(6)***

### CREW COMMITMENT (SCHOOL COMPACT)

Parents, students, and staff at Rhodes School for the Performing Arts recognize that we are **CREW, NOT PASSENGER**. This means that learning and student success happen best when there is a team effort and when all stakeholders are actively involved in the process. As a team, we commit to the following actions to ensure that all Rhodes School Students succeed and are able to demonstrate scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and good character in their public and personal lives.

#### *As a School*

- We will provide a safe, clean, caring place to learn and work;
- We will keep our parents informed of their children's progress;
- We will ensure that all staff members are highly qualified;
- We will be responsive to parents by addressing parent concerns promptly.

Principal: (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *As an RSPA Teacher,*

- I will come to work on time every day prepared to teach my students;
- I will treat all my students, my parents, my colleagues, and school administration with respect;
- I will participate in staff development activities that will help make me a more effective teacher;
- I will provide opportunities for my students to demonstrate their intelligence in various ways;
- I will keep my parents informed of their children's progress on a regular basis;
- I will return parent phone calls promptly within 24 hours of receiving them;
- I will get to know my parents so that I will best know how to help them help their children at home;

Teacher: (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *As an RSPA Parent*

- I will make sure my child is in school on time every day;
- I will make sure my child is properly groomed by providing clean clothes, making sure that he or she bathes and brushes his or her teeth, and combing/brushing his or her hair.
- I will respect the school policies and procedures, the teachers, school staff, and the school administration;
- I will teach my child to respect the school policies and procedures, the teachers, school staff, and the school administration;
- I will teach my child to do his or her best in school;
- I will make sure that my child completes his or her homework;
- I will take the time to read notes and letters that my child brings home from school;
- I will attend parent conferences to stay informed of my child's progress;
- I will support my child by attending school events and activities as often as possible;
- I will ask the school or others in my support system if I need help to keep my part of this commitment.

Teacher: (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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***As an RSPA Student,***

I will be responsible for my own learning by working hard in school and doing my very best in all subjects all the time;

I will show respect for all teachers and staff members, and other students at my school;

I will learn and follow the school rules;

I will make sure that I give my parents any notes or messages from the school as soon as possible; I will talk to my parents about school and ask them to visit my school for programs and to volunteer;

I will demonstrate scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and good character, at all times.

Student: (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SCHOOL HOURS/INSTRUCTIONAL DAY SCHEDULE

The specific school hours/instructional days are 7:55 AM – 3:25 PM Monday through Thursday and 7:55 AM – 1:00 PM on Fridays. The specific school hours/instructional day schedules for each campus are also posted on the school website and provided to parents prior to the start of each school year.

Parents may bring students to school as early as 7:15 a.m.

### Arrival and Pick Up

Students may not arrive at school before their scheduled class time unless they are eating breakfast. Students who eat breakfast may not arrive prior to 7:15 AM.

Students should be dropped off inside the school gate near the front entrance. Parents should wait to ensure that students are in the building before driving away.

All students must be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. The school is not staffed to provide custodial care after the school day. Students whose parents fail to pick them up within ten minutes after the school day ends will be taken to the Children's Protective Services Youth Services Center located at 6300 Chimney Rock.

**If student transportation arrangements change for the day (e.g., the student is normally a bus rider but will be a car rider for the day), the school must be notified by 2:00 PM.**

### ■ Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an important part of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts. Many benefits are reaped because parents are involved during the school year. Parental involvement provides an atmosphere of fellowship among families as they work together on an event or project and as parents get to know their children's teachers and classmates by spending time in the classroom.

Additionally, education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school. It is a partnership that thrives on communication. Parents are partners with teachers, administrators, and the board and are encouraged to:

- Put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides for their child;
- Review the information in the Parent and Student Handbook with their child, and sign and return the acknowledgment form(s);
- Contact their child's teacher or principal when they have a question or concern;
- Become familiar with all of their child's school activities and with the academic programs offered in the school. Discuss with the principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, and the options available to their child. Monitor their child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed.

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- Participate in the PTO through volunteerism and involvement.

### **School-Home Communication**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts uses a five-point communication plan. Parents can obtain important school information via the monthly parent bulletin, the school website, the Remind 101 text messaging, teacher emails, and the parent portal.

The Remind 101 system is used to inform parents of emergencies or to distribute information in a short period of time. The website is updated regularly and contains a monthly calendar which details upcoming events, activities, and deadlines. Parents should visit the site frequently. Other important newsflashes and information are also posted on the website under the News and Events tab.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Open communication with parents is welcomed and encouraged. It is the desire of the administration and faculty to be of service to both parents and students.

It is important that teacher conferences be made by definite appointment with the teacher at a convenient time after-school or during a planning period. Please avoid impromptu conferences, which include during the school day, at functions, or in public places.

Teachers will contact parents by telephone, email, or a note requesting a conference should there be a need to discuss a student's work or conduct. For a conference with an administrator, the same procedure should be followed.

Parents wishing a conference should contact the teacher by note, phone, or email or by scheduling an appointment online through the online appointment scheduler. Teachers' school email addresses will be posted in the Warrior's Way. Parents are asked not to engage or try to conference with teachers during instructional time.

### **Student Led Conferences**

At least twice each school year Rhodes School for the Performing Arts conducts Student Led Conferences for students in grades K and above, more commonly known as SLEDs. SLEDs are an opportunity for parents and students to interact and discuss student progress in a more meaningful way than what is normally afforded through traditional parent-teacher conferences. Students share a personal portfolio with their parents, which contains both teacher and self-selected work samples that chart a student's academic progress. While teachers are present at the time, they only get involved in the SLED if a student needs assistance or if a parent has a question that the student cannot answer. SLED conferences may also be scheduled online. Parents are provided with the necessary link to the online scheduler at the appropriate time.

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SLEDs are an opportunity for students to shine and demonstrate personal awareness and take ownership of their learning. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. In some very special instances, the school may be able to provide a student with transportation to a parent's job or home in order to conduct his or her SLED. Parents who believe they have a unique situation that warrants this type of support should advise the teacher, who will, in turn, advise school administration.

### **Pre-School Showcases**

Twice annually, pre-school students present a showcase to give parents an in-depth view of what students have learned during their time in the pre-school program. Students share highlights of concepts and skills they have learned and provide interactive demonstrations for parents to help them understand the goals and expectations for RSPA pre-school students.

### **School Visits**

We welcome parents/grandparents who wish to visit or eat lunch with their child(ren). We do urge, however, that any visit to a classroom be made by appointment with the office.

- Parents are free to consult with the school office regarding any problems or questions that concern their child. It is the desire of the administration and the faculty to be of service to both parents and students, and each teacher welcomes a visit from any parent. If you would like to meet with a teacher, please call before you come and make an appointment during the teacher's planning period.
- Visitors are to report to the school office immediately upon arrival, where they will receive a visitor's badge.
- Visitors to our campus are expected to follow all school rules and policies.
- A request for friends to join students for lunch must be made in the school office at least one day in advance.
- Visitors are welcome to attend classes; however, they must call the school office in advance to receive permission from the administration.

Classroom visitors are expected to wear appropriate clothing for Rhodes School for the Performing Arts. This attitude of respect is very important in training our children.

**Examples of Inappropriate Attire When Visiting the School Include the Following:**

Extremely low-cut blouses with exposed cleavage

Clothes that reveal strings from thong underwear of any kind

Clothing that has vulgar messages or messages that use profane language

Shorts that expose the cheeks of the buttocks

Pants that are dropped so far below the waist as to expose undergarments

The Learning environment is very fragile and easily disrupted. Any change to the classroom routine may be distracting. Therefore, parents are asked to limit their visits to classrooms to no more than 15 minutes per visit.

During visits, parents should sit **quietly** at the back of the classroom and be as inconspicuous as possible, and refrain from engaging in conversation with the teacher and/or other students in the classroom, even his or her child.

**Parents who choose not to respect the classroom visitation guidelines will be asked to leave the classroom. Under no circumstance should parents attempt to talk to the teacher or students in the classroom repeatedly. Parents who choose not to respect the policy will be prohibited from visiting the classroom without an administrator present in the future.**

**Tobacco Free Environment**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is a tobacco-free environment. The use of tobacco products on campus is prohibited by staff, students, parents, and any other persons.

**Parental Misconduct Policy**

The Parental Misconduct Policy provides a description of a broad range of behavior considered to be parental/guardian misconduct. The behavior described should be viewed as representative of the misconduct that most frequently causes a disruption to the orderly educational and social processes. The acts of misconduct listed are not inclusive. The parent/guardian(s) who commits acts of misconduct will compel administrative disciplinary action, which may lead to expulsion.

**When and Where These Rules Apply**

The policies and administrative procedures concerning parental conduct apply to actions of parents on school property, and in some cases, for conduct occurring off of school property. Additionally, the rules apply to the actions of parents at all school-sponsored or school-related activities or events, such as field trips, sporting

events, programs, assemblies, fairs, or evening school-related activities. Parents should be aware that the commission of any felony offense, whether at school or away from school, may result in expulsion. Finally, parents should be aware that administrators who are made aware of activity deemed inappropriate by Rhodes School for the Performing Arts, including criminal activity, whether on or off campus, will make a report to appropriate law enforcement agencies and that, in addition to these administrative rules, parents may be subject to criminal charges for violation of the law.

**Rationale:**

The Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is committed to ensuring the safety and overall well-being of all parents, students, faculty, and staff, and volunteers. All parents are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner consistent with the values of integrity, open communication, and mutual respect. Parents shall always model positive and responsible behavior and communicate in an ethical manner.

**General Acts of Parental Misconduct**

- Cheating/ Doing student's coursework
- Taking unauthorized students out of the classroom or school grounds without the permission of school personnel and/or parent or guardian
- Using behavior or comments which are profane, insulting, harassing, sexist, racist, abusive, disrespectful
- Threatening the safety of school personnel, students, visitors, volunteers, and/or other parents
- Posting or distributing unauthorized materials on school grounds
- Failure to abide by rules and regulations at extracurricular activities or at co-curricular activities such as field trips
- Loitering in unauthorized areas
- Failure to maintain financial responsibility regarding school functions and activities
- Any other acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or the school
- Accessing materials and sites on the Internet that are deemed to be inappropriate by Wonderland, Inc
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate e-mails, including e-mails containing offensive language, untruthful statements, junk e-mails, chain letters, or jokes
- Using behavior or making unbecoming comments on social media and/or website

## **General Enforcement Guidelines**

When enforcing policy, Rhodes School for the Performing Arts personnel shall adhere to the following general guidelines:

1. Enforcement shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain essential order and discipline.
2. Parents/guardians and students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Enforcement shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Factors that must be considered in each decision concerning suspension, expulsion, or involving the City of Houston and/or Harris County Law Enforcement Agencies, regardless of whether the decision concerns a mandatory or discretionary action, include such factors as:
  - a. seriousness of the offense
  - b. intent when engaged in the conduct
  - c. parent's history with faculty and staff
  - d. parent's attitude
  - e. potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment
  - f. state law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences
  - g. whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment
  - h. whether the student has a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct
3. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of misconduct.

## **Attendance Requirements**

To receive the maximum benefit from RSPA's proven instructional program, students must be present and on time to school each day. When students are absent or arrive late to school, they are put in the position of having to play catch up and often do not acquire all the information needed in order to successfully complete assignments that were missed during their absence. Parents should make every effort to ensure that the school is kept informed of special circumstances that prevent students from being at school on time each day. Students who fail to come to school at least 97% of the scheduled school days are considered in violation of the Code of Student Conduct, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. School attendance is a part of the RSPA Code of Student Conduct. Students who have more than five unexcused absences in a school year are considered truant and will be disciplined according to the Code of Conduct.

School hours are 7:55 AM - 3:25 PM. RSPA's official attendance time (ADA) is 9:45 AM. Any student that arrives at school between the hours of 8:00 AM and 9:40 AM will be considered tardy.

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A student must be in class at 9:45 AM to be counted as present for that day. If a student has a doctor's appointment and is not present at 9:45 but returns to school the same day with a doctor's note, the student will be counted as present.

Excused absences are outlined below:

- 1) Illness/hospitalization as verified by a medical physician. Students must bring in a note from the doctor indicating that he or she was under the doctor's care for the days missed.
- 2) Death of immediate family member (mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent).
- 3) Family emergency (illness of parent as verified by a medical physician. Students must bring in a note from the doctor indicating that the parent was under the doctor's care for the days that the student was forced to miss due to the parent/guardian's illness; the parent called away for military duty – handled on a case-by-case basis; fire or some other such disaster or uncommon event. Such emergencies will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.)

**Students who are out of class due to participation in school-sponsored events are not considered absent.**

### **Tardies**

Three tardies constitute one absence. Absences resulting from tardiness will be counted toward the five maximum allowable absences in a school year.

### **Early Departures**

Students may be checked out by a parent or guardian or someone authorized by the parent or guardian with appropriate identification prior to the end of the school day. To avoid disrupting the learning process, if students are testing or engaged in a presentation, they will not be released until the test is over or until their presentation is complete unless there is an emergency. Parents who wish to pick students up from school prior to the end of the school day must arrive at least 60 minutes prior to the scheduled dismissal time. Parents who arrive less than 60 minutes prior to the scheduled dismissal time will be asked to wait until students are dismissed according to the regular dismissal schedule. **Regular early pick-up of students is not allowed.**

### **Release of Students**

At no time will a student be released to an individual without having provided proof that the person has the authority and permission to assume responsibility for the child and take the child from the building.

The school reserves the right to withhold the release of a student if it feels it is in the best interest of the student to do so.

**Students may be released to:**

- 1) Legal authorities such as police, CPS, etc., providing appropriate identification has been provided;
- 2) Person(s) other than parent, guardian, or emergency contact(s) providing parent or guardian has notified the school in writing granting permission for the person to take the child from the school. In these cases, signatures need to be compared and verified. If questionable, school personnel will contact the parent to confirm he/she sent the note or is aware of the request.

For situations that create questions or concerns, please contact the school's central office.

NOTE: Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is not staffed to provide care for students beyond the end of the school day or after school activities have ended. Students who are not picked up from school on time may be transported to the Children's Protective Service Youth Services Center at 6300 Chimney Rock, Houston, Texas. If a child must be transported to the Chimney Rock Center, CPS requires that a neglect report be filed and an investigation is opened.

**Transporting Students in Private Vehicles**

It is the policy of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts not to transport students in private vehicles; however, it may be necessary for a student to be transported in a personal vehicle in emergency situations. Age-appropriate car restraint systems will always be utilized, and students will only be transported by persons having valid driver's licenses and insurance coverage.

The school will make every effort to notify parents of a child being transported by private vehicle prior to said transportation occurring. In instances where the school is not able to reach the parent, a note will be sent home.

**Withdrawal**

If it should become necessary for a student to withdraw from school, the school office must be notified. After notification of withdrawal, a minimum of 24 hours' notice will be required before withdrawal papers are issued.

- Withdrawing students should have their withdrawal forms completed by the office and their homeroom teachers.
- The student must return all books to the library, return all textbooks and technology to the office, and pay all debts to the school.

Until all the above steps are completed, grades, transcripts, or other school records will not be released to the parents or any other school.

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Upon request from officials of other schools or school systems in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, a copy of the student's records will be forwarded to the requesting school official.

Students are expected to return all library books and pay for the replacement of lost or damaged textbooks.

### **Student Activity Fees**

While Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is a non-tuition public school, and there is no cost to attend, students are required to pay allowable fees for participation in certain activities, such as learning lab experiences/field trips, instrument rental, and costume cleaning fees. These fees are very nominal and vary depending upon the activity the child participates in. Parents should check the monthly parent bulletin and the school website for opportunities. Scholarship funds may be available to assist parents who cannot afford to pay the fees; however, parents must notify the school as soon as possible if they believe they need a scholarship. Funds are extremely limited, vary in available amounts from year to year, and are not guaranteed.

### **Student Account Program**

My School Bucks is a convenient way for parents to add funds to a student's meal account if needed and pay for any other student fees. Parents should visit the school website at [www.rhodesschool.org](http://www.rhodesschool.org) and click on the appropriate link to set up an account using the student's school i.d. number.

### **Student Nutrition Program**

#### **Meals**

Breakfast and lunch are offered on campus daily. RSPA is a CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) school district that offers all RSPA Scholars free breakfast and lunch each school day. Parents do not have to complete a school meal application for the 2023-2024 school year based on RSPA's participation in the CEP program.

Students are not allowed in the school kitchen, nor are they allowed to use materials or utensils from the kitchen, **including the microwave**. Our campuses are NUT-FREE FACILITIES. No nuts of any kind are permitted on the campuses including peanut butter.

Due to Safety & COVID concerns, campus visits will be limited & require prior approval from the campus administrator. All outside visitors must have prior permission, conform to RHODES SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS Dress Code, and first report to the school office.

#### **Meal Prices**

RSPA is a CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) school district that offers all RSPA Scholars free breakfast and lunch each school day. Parents do not have to complete a school meal application for the 2023-2024 school year based on RSPA's participation in the CEP program.

### **Transportation**

School transportation is a privilege and not a right. To ensure that they are able to take advantage of school transportation services, students must practice safety and courtesy at all times when getting on and off the bus/van. Students should form an orderly line to help avoid congestion. Students are to board and unload only at designated stops. The following rules will apply to student conduct on school transportation:

- Always follow the driver's directions
- Board and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop
- Stay seated while the vehicle is moving
- Seat belts will be worn at all times
- Students are not allowed to use cell phones while on the bus and will be confiscated from the student if caught. In the event of an emergency, the driver will allow the student to call their parents.

### **Telephone**

Students are encouraged to take care of all business and other arrangements before and/or after school. Students are not to use the office telephone except for emergencies and with official permission. All other telephones are off-limits.

- **Telephone messages from parents to students should only be for emergencies**, which could not have been handled before coming to school.
- Classes will not be interrupted for messages. There could be a delay before a student returns a call because of testing, etc.
- Permission to use the telephone must be given by the office, and calls will be monitored.
- Telephone emergency use is restricted to important situations such as canceled practices, missed carpool rides, or special projects, **not routine homework** left at home.
- Telephones located in hallways, rooms, or other areas are for adult use and are off-limits to students.
- Incoming calls from one student to another are not permitted.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts allows students to possess cell phones while on school property or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities on or off school property. Cell phones and other electronic devices must remain turned off and out of sight during the instructional day, including bus transportation to and from school. The consequences are as follows:

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1. First Infraction - the phone is taken up, the student receives a "loss of privilege," parents are notified and must come to school to pick up the phone.

2. Second Infraction - the phone is taken up, the student receives a Code of Conduct violation form in their student file, and parents are notified and must pay a \$25 fine to retrieve the phone.

3. Third Infraction - the phone is taken up, the student is suspended for one day for repeated violation of the code of student conduct, and parents are notified and must pay a \$50 fine to retrieve the phone.

Parents will have ten school days to retrieve the phone after notification. If after ten days the device has not been retrieved by parents, the phone will be disposed of.

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts will not be responsible for the recovery of lost or stolen cell phones or electronic devices. The Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct are being updated to reflect this policy.

### **Corporal Punishment Policy**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts administers corporal punishment with parental permission only. Typically, corporal punishment is used only after other discipline methods (detention, time out, loss of privileges) have been utilized; ***however, the administration does reserve the right to skip these methods if deemed appropriate.***

The members of the administrative team (principal, campus directors, and assistant principals) are the only persons permitted to administer corporal punishment.

In the event that the administration deems it necessary to use corporal punishment, the effort will be made to notify parents beforehand of the nature of the infraction and how many swats will be administered. If the parent is not notified beforehand, a note will be sent home with the student advising the parent that corporal punishment was administered.

Swats are administered to a student's buttocks only. At no time will swats be administered to any other area of a student's body. A second school staff member will be present to witness the corporal punishment being applied.

### **Gifts to School Personnel**

Students and their parents are discouraged from presenting expensive gifts to school employees. The value of gifts should not exceed \$25.00.

## SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS

### Academic Integrity

Students pledge to demonstrate academic integrity. Students found to have engaged in a lack of academic integrity shall be subject to disciplinary and/or academic penalties. A lack of academic integrity includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communications between students. The determination that a student has engaged in a lack of academic integrity shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students. Such action shall be determined by the teacher and administrator working collaboratively.

- Everyone who submits written work in the school must be the author of his/her own work. When a student uses facts or ideas originating with others, he/she must make clear what is and what is not his/her facts and ideas.
- Failure to make such a distinction is to be guilty of offering as one's own what is, in fact, someone else's (plagiarism). To misrepresent one's own work knowingly is to defraud the school and, more seriously, the Lord. Plagiarism is a form of cheating.

### Grading Policy

The emphasis of the grading and reporting system is to keep parents informed of student progress. In addition to the regular report cards made available online, RSPA employs a variety of creative methods to enhance communication.

By attending Meet the Teacher Night at the beginning of the school year, parents will receive valuable information. In these meetings, teachers will explain their classroom procedures and what is to be accomplished for the school year. Personal notes written by the teacher are very helpful in the communication process. A copy will be maintained in the student's records. Parents may also receive email communications and/or phone calls from teachers regarding students' progress.

### Progress Reports

Parents can monitor student progress by using the Parent Portal, which may be accessed through the Parent Connections section of our school website. The student's personal identification number is provided to parents at the beginning of each school year with instructions on how to set up an account in the parent portal. Here, parents can view grades on student assignments, download copies of report cards, and view electronic progress reports at any time they choose.

### Report Cards

The purpose of report cards is to inform parents of a child's progress in the established

course requirements/objectives. Communication will be made with parents for the purpose of offering additional help for students making unsatisfactory progress. Report cards can be accessed online through the Parent Portal. Parents who would like a paper copy of their child's report card should make a request through the school registrar for their campus.

### **Accelerated Grade Placement**

A student must be five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in kindergarten, but a student younger than five years of age is entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program if:

- 1) the student performs satisfactorily on the assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023(a) to students in the third grade; and
- 2) the district has adopted a policy for admitting students younger than five years of age.

### **Assessment Policy**

In addition to identifying strengths and weaknesses of students, student assessment is also a tool to identify weaknesses in instruction. There will be times when the class as a whole fails a test. This may tell us that the test was too difficult, that perhaps it did not test what was taught, or that we failed to teach what we intended to teach. The solution would be to review, re-teach, and retest the students. Research and best practice suggest that re-teaching should occur any time more than 20% of the students in a class fail a particular test or assignment.

Teachers will coordinate test dates to avoid conflict, i.e., too many tests on any given day. Any and all bonus points are to be made available to all students. Tests will be announced at least one week in advance. Students absent the day prior to the test will still be expected to take the test on the assigned date. Students absent the day of a test will be expected to take the test the day they return to class. **Tests needing to be signed that are not returned the next day will result in two (2) points off the test grade for every day not returned.**

### **Honor Roll**

*The Scholar's List recognizes students earning all A's in every subject every grading period and no less than an S in conduct every grading period.*

THE A & B HONOR ROLL recognizes students with no grade below 80 in **every subject each grading period** and no less than an "S" in conduct every grading period.

### **Achievement Testing**

- A. State Standardized Test
- B. Stanford 10 Test
- C. TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory)
- D. Campus Based End of Course Assessments based on RSPA Promotional Standards

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The grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
75-79	C
70-74	D
Below 69	F

- E Excellent progress signifies that the student is making excellent progress in mastering course objectives and is working at a high level of performance and effort, often going beyond minimum requirements.
- S Satisfactory progress means that regular, continuous progress is being made in mastering course objectives. Student effort and performance meet but seldom exceed course requirements.
- N Improvement needed means that the student's progress is minimal and/or inconsistent. Student effort and performance are less than adequate and/or below ability level.
- U Unsatisfactory progress means that a student shows little or no progress and does not meet the minimum standards of objective mastery.

**Grades will be determined based on the following scale: Elementary**

**Test 50% (Including Projects, Presentation, CBA, Unit Test, Labs) – 4 required with each grading period)** (Students should complete at least one project per grading period)

**Daily 40% (Classwork, short quizzes, journals, book reports) – 14 required with each grading period)**

**Homework 10% (Ex. Reading logs)**

**Grades will be determined based on the following scale: Middle School 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

**Test 60% (Including Projects, Presentation, CBA, Unit Test, Labs) – 4 required with each grading period)** (Students should complete at least one project per grading period.)

**Daily 20% (Classwork, short quizzes, journals, book reports) – 14 required with each grading period)**

**Homework 20% (Ex. Reading logs)**

RSPA policy allows teachers to give students a minimum grade of 50 - even when the student has not earned that grade for all grade levels. This policy was put in place to prevent some students from losing a sense of hope in the classroom. The district minimum policy is part of a strategy to prevent dropouts by giving students a mathematical shot at passing a course - if they earn high enough marks in other

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grading periods. For example, a student who received a 30 grade for the first nine weeks but passed the next three with 76s would still fail the course with a 64. But, if the school gave the student a 50 instead of a 30, the cumulative grade would be passing.

Teachers must update students' grades in Web-Smart grading system, at minimum, once each week. This process will allow parents/guardians to have an accurate indication of their child's progress. The academic grade is not tied to discipline.

### **Grading Guidelines**

The RSPA Grading Guidelines, which outlines the District's philosophy of student grading and grade reporting, was developed and is reviewed annually by the Instructional Leadership Committee, which is comprised of professional representatives from each campus. The guidelines include the following belief statement and good grading practices:

Belief Statement Grading is the reporting of information about a student's mastery of the curriculum to the students, parents, other campuses, universities, and employers.

Good Grading Practices Grading is a video rather than a snapshot. A final grade is a collection of data that has been gathered during a grading period. Grades (what is reported to parents) are to reflect a student's mastery of the skill and knowledge of what has been taught. Teachers may deduct up to five points on an assignment for a taught skill that a student fails to demonstrate (i.e., putting a name on a paper or putting a title on a paper). Campus and grade levels should set expectations. Points may be deducted only when expectations for these skills have been taught and clearly communicated.

Homework is a non-observable activity and is not to be used to determine minimum mastery. Homework is to be evaluated and/or graded and may apply to a student's grade. Guided practice is to precede assessments for which grades are given.

Teachers may have students exchange work (non-major grades only) to be graded when this practice is used as an instructional tool. Students should not mark a numeric grade on another student's paper. Students acting as classroom aides may not grade student papers. Academic grades are not tied to discipline.

Redo Assignments/Retaking Tests A student shall be permitted a reasonable opportunity to redo an assignment or retake a test for which the student received a failing grade. Reasonable opportunity is defined as one chance to redo an assignment or retake a test for which a student received a failing grade. In the event of a failing grade, students will have, from the date they receive the grade, three school days to redo daily assignments and five school days to retake tests. A student shall not receive a grade higher than a 70 upon redoing a class assignment or retaking a test for which the student had received a failing grade. Teachers may exercise the following options: a) reteach and retest, b) retest, c) offer tutorials and d) assign an alternative assignment over the same content. Semester and final exams are exempt from these retake guidelines.

### **Failure Criteria**

1. Parent/guardian must receive contact if students are receiving a failing grade on the progress report or report card or the grade drops from passing to failing.
2. Teachers are required to use School Approved communication (via Google) to document parent contact or a face-to-face conference (A note shall be added in Google).
3. A conference shall be scheduled with a parent/ guardian of a student who fails during the grading period or has a significant average drop.

### **Retention Policy**

#### **Promotion and Retention**

#### **Promotion and Retention**

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

#### **Elementary Grade Levels**

##### **First & Second Grade:**

A student in first through second grade whose literacy level and/or math level is sufficient for success in that grade is promoted to the next grade. Promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70, in each subject, on a scale of 100 based upon course-level and grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in reading and math. A student whose literacy and/or math level is not sufficient for success in the next grade should have his or her progress reviewed by the campus Grade Placement Committee (GPC) with the decision for placement or retention based on developmental readiness and academic skills. Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.

##### **Third, Fourth, & Fifth Grade**

A student is promoted when:

- The final grade for reading/language arts is 70 or above, AND
- The final grade for mathematics is 70 or above, AND
- Final grade average for reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies is 70 or above.
- A student who does not meet the above promotion criteria will be referred to the GPC. Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.
- Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 who fail to meet the above requirements shall attend summer school and successfully master the requirements prior to being promoted.

#### **Middle School Grade Levels**

**In sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, a student is promoted when:**

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- The final grade for reading/language arts is 70 or above AND
- The final grade for mathematics is 70 or above, AND
- Final grade average for reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies is 70 or above.
- A student who does not meet the above promotion criteria will be referred to the GPC. Students who are not working on grade level do not meet promotion requirements.
- Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 who fail to meet the above requirements shall attend summer school and successfully master the requirements prior to being promoted.

### **Gifted and Talented Program**

Students are placed in the gifted and talented program based on their scores on the Gifted and Talented Assessment. Students who are placed in a gifted and talented classroom prior to being formally assessed may be reassigned to a regular instructional program if they do not attain the minimum score required.

### **Required Projects**

Beginning with Pre-K 4, all students are required to complete one major project per grading period. Teachers will provide information about the projects at least two weeks before the projects are due. The projects are considered part of the student assessment program, and their timely completion is mandatory. Students who submit incomplete or late projects are in danger of failing the grading period.

### **Learning Labs/ Learning Lab**

Learning Labs provide Rhodes School for the Performing Arts students the opportunity to broaden their understanding of the world around them and gain an increased understanding of real-life applications for skills and concepts taught in the classroom. Students generally participate in at least one off-campus Learning Lab each month. The State of Texas does not provide funding for these experiences; however, since they are such an important part of student learning, we ask parents to partner with us by helping to cover the cost via an annual Learning Lab Fee of \$200.00. The fee may be paid in installments. Parents who demonstrate a financial need for assistance to cover the fee may be eligible for assistance and should contact the campus principal regarding possible financial assistance while available. Students who do not attend Learning Labs are provided with a campus-based instructional program for the day.

**Students who are prohibited from participating in Learning Labs due to poor behavior or switch schools are not eligible for a refund.**

In many instances, specialized, out-of-town, and other Learning Labs are offered for upper-grade students for additional costs. The deposits for these experiences are non-refundable. A record of excellent behavior is a criterion for participation in these Learning Labs, **and students who are prohibited from participation due to inappropriate**

**behavior are not eligible for a refund of any kind.**

**Deposits for Learning Labs are non-refundable, regardless of the reason that a student does not participate.**

### **Student Portfolios**

In addition to regular class work and required projects, students will also create individual academic portfolios. The portfolios are designed to provide parents with a more meaningful review of skills and concepts covered and student progress in mastering those skills and concepts over the course of the school year.

The student portfolios will contain a variety of work samples and student reflections. Students will self-select portfolio entries that represent a variety of learning stages. Teachers will select entries to include as well. Some entries will show how students progressed from one level of learning to the next, and other work will show areas where students still need assistance or where they are still working to master a skill, and still others will show areas where the student is exceeding expectations.

Parents will have an opportunity to view student portfolios at designated times during the school year through the Student Led Conference Process (See page 13 for more on Student Led Conferences).

### **Assignments/Late Work**

The following guidelines will be followed for late class work, homework, term papers, and projects:

1. All assigned class work, homework, term papers, and projects must be completed and turned in on time. Failure to turn work in on time will affect the grade. This work is evidence that the student has mastered the skills and concepts and is operating on grade level.

One day late	= 25-point penalty
Two days late	= 50-point penalty
More than two days late	= <b>NO CREDIT MAY BE RECEIVED</b>

2. After an absence, students have five school days to make up work. The teacher will provide the parent and/or the student with the make-up work list, which will indicate the day and the date by which the work must be completed. Parents should review and sign the make-up work list. **Failure of the student to complete make-up work from an excused absence within five days following an absence will result in a zero for those assignments. Longer absences due to extended illness will be treated on a case-by-case basis by the team leader and teacher.**

## Homework

Homework is an integral part of the school program. The length of homework time will vary from student to student. Preparation of classes and written assignments outside of the school day is reasonable.

1. Homework prepares the student for class the next day.
2. Homework forms good study habits that will help students in college.
3. Homework aids in teaching responsibility.
4. Homework for drill: most students require solid drilling to master material essential to their educational progress.
5. Homework for practice: following classroom explanation, illustration, and drill on new work, homework is given so that the material will be mastered.
6. Homework for remedial activity: as instruction progresses, various challenge points in a student's grasp of a subject become evident. Homework following instructions is given to overcome such challenges.
7. Homework for special projects: book reports, compositions, special research assignments, and projects are some of the activities that are frequently the subject of homework attention.

In seeking parents' full cooperation in seeing the assignments are completed, students learn lessons about integrity from what their parents sign and fulfillment in completing a job. Repeated delinquent homework could result in failure to perform well on tests, thereby resulting in a lower grade.

Homework assignments always have a real meaning for the student, and the purpose should always be clearly understood by the student. Assignments are carefully planned and presented. Homework is designed to provide extra practice and extra time to master new skills and become more adept with previously acquired ones. It is not a means of punishment, nor is it simply a time filler.

As a general guideline, allow the amount of time shown below to complete ALL homework for ALL subjects each night homework is assigned.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
<b>First/Second</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
<b>Third</b>	<b>40 minutes</b>
<b>Fourth/Fifth</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>Sixth/Seventh</b>	<b>1 hour</b>

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Additionally, students must complete at least 20 minutes of reading at least three times per week, plus weekends. Teachers use the reading verification sheet and should have parents initial to indicate their child has completed the at-home reading assignment.

As a general rule, homework is not scheduled on nights when there are school events.

**Homework is never assigned on a skill or topic which has not been taught in class.**

**\*\*All students will be required to keep an assignment book.**

**Parents are asked to check their child's assignments upon completion and initial them below the teacher's signature.** This joint effort will reinforce the importance of homework and of teachers and parents working together.

### **Textbooks**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts provides textbooks at the beginning of the school year. Students should not lose or abuse textbooks or supplies. School-purchased textbooks are the property of the school. It is the responsibility of parents and students to ensure proper care of all school-issued textbooks.

Whenever a book is lost, it must be paid for before a replacement book is given. Payment is to be given to the school finance office. Report cards or transcripts will not be issued until the student's book record is clear. Students will be charged the replacement cost of the book. If a book is damaged beyond normal wear and tear, the cost of the book will be charged.

At the end of the year, or whenever a student leaves Rhodes School for the Performing Arts, the condition of books will be evaluated. Students will be required to pay for damaged or lost textbooks.

### **Lost and Found**

All lost items found will be placed in the lost and found area located in the school cafeteria. All items not claimed at the end of the month will be given to mission projects. It is helpful if jackets, uniform clothing, and other articles have name tags or some form of identification on them.

### **ANIMALS**

Animals may be brought on campus only at the invitation of a teacher in conjunction with a specific class project. Pets should not be brought from the car during after-school dismissal. This puts the safety of both the children and pet in jeopardy.

## Student Health and Safety

### Emergency Drills

RSPA conducts monthly fire drills and bi-annual disaster drills. All persons in the building at the time of a drill are required to participate in the drill. Staff should review the procedures outlined in the Emergency Preparedness Plan to ensure they are familiar with and understand the expectations for those involved.

### School Closings

RSPA may close schools because of bad weather or other emergency reasons. When such conditions exist, the superintendent/principal will make the official decision concerning the closing of RSPA facilities he or she deems most appropriate to ensure the safety of **BOTH** students **AND** staff.

In the event it becomes necessary to cancel class or close school early, the One Call Automated Alert System will be implemented. Parents should ensure that they maintain accurate, working telephone numbers on file with the school. Local media stations (channels 2, 11, 13, and 26) will also be alerted to any school closings, and parents should monitor these stations for updates.

### Immunizations

The Texas Education Code and the Texas State Department of Health mandate that all school-age children be properly immunized against certain communicable diseases. RSPA is required to have a copy of each child's immunization record on file, and must be submitted at time of registration.

Parents will be advised of any missing immunizations, and they should provide the school with the most recent copy of the student's immunization records whenever immunizations are updated. Parents should visit the state health and human services website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#schools> to obtain the most current information about required immunizations.

In certain instances, parents may elect to request that their child be exempted from receiving the required immunizations. Information about exemptions may also be found on the above website. The State Department of Health is the entity that has the legal authority to decide whether to grant an exemption. No student may be admitted to school prior to receiving the required immunizations or producing a state-authorized exemption.

### Hearing/Vision Screening Information

Each student enrolled in our facility that is four years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> or older must be screened for vision and hearing within 120 days of admission. Students in grades 1,

3, and 5 must be screened at least annually. There is no cost to parents for hearing and vision screening. Additionally, there are often grant funds available to cover the cost of prescription eyewear in the event the screening reveals it is needed.

### **Illness**

Students with contagious symptoms such as diarrhea, sore throat, vomiting, or fever will not be allowed to attend school that day. Pursuant to state licensing regulations, students may not attend school on days where any of the following conditions exist:

1. A child has an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in routine school activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of other students.
3. The student has one of the following:
  - (A) Oral temperature above 101 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - (B) Rectal temperature above 102 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - (C) Armpit temperature above 100 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
  - (D) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the student may be severely ill; or
  - (E) A healthcare professional has diagnosed the student with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
4. A fever during the previous 24-hour period
5. Has a severe cold
6. Has a heavy green nasal discharge
7. Has symptoms of a communicable disease (ringworm, conjunctivitis – pinkeye, etc.)
8. Has an unexplained rash
9. Has open or running sores

If a student should become ill during the day, the parents will be contacted to pick up the child. Until the child is picked up, he/she will be isolated from other students to prevent the spread of germs. Parents must notify the office if a student has a communicable disease such as chicken pox, streptococcal throat infection, meningitis, or impetigo. A note from the child's doctor stating when he/she may return to the program is required on the day the child returns.

## **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency, first aid will be administered to the child immediately. The emergency numbers given on the registration forms will be called in an attempt to reach a parent. If necessary, the emergency release will be utilized to provide medical care, including transport to the nearest hospital by ambulance. ALL EMERGENCY INFORMATION MUST BE KEPT CURRENT.

## **Administering Medication to Students**

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, non-prescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. The parent must bring in the medication and sign additional paperwork as well as submit paperwork from the doctor. If over-the-counter medicine is being administered, the parent must send a written, signed note indicating the time of the most recent dosage given to the student by the parent.

## **Student Records**

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The administration department will promulgate an annual list of students whose parents have declined permission. Due to the confidential nature of the records, teachers, and staff should make certain to check this roster to ensure that the school is authorized to post pictures and other limited information about the student in a location where it will be seen by others (internet, television, newsletter) prior to doing so. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- a) Parents: married, separated, or divorced, unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- b) The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)
- c) School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

According to the Board Policy directory, information includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date/place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities/sports, weight/height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, the most recent school attended by the student, and other similar information.

Parents must be notified that directory information is subject to release (the handbook for parents contains such a notice), and they must be given an opportunity to refuse to

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permit release (there is a yes/no blank to check on the enrollment card).  
For many reasons, **information about students or parents is never given to a party telephone caller.**

Due to the custodial situations in which many of our students are involved, even the fact that a student's enrollment is not acknowledged by a telephone caller. Refer inquiries

— written or verbal — for information about students/parents to the principal (including any from persons claiming to be employees of agencies such as Children's Protective Services, the Houston Police Department, etc., for which identification must first be properly verified).

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by Texas Family Code and includes any sexual conduct involving an educator and a student or minor. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. All school personnel shall participate in a staff development program to become acquainted with child abuse and neglect laws and the procedures to be followed in dealing with such cases.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Employees are not required to report their concerns to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

### **Allegations Involving School Personnel**

When a parent or student makes an allegation of abuse, neglect, or harm involving RSPA personnel, the building principal and school counselor shall conduct an investigation, gather the facts and then make a determination as to whether a report to the local police authority is warranted. This procedure creates an environment of

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fairness and equity for all parties involved, including the accused employee, while still protecting students.

### **ADDRESSING PARENT CONCERNS**

The RSPA Board is the governing body of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts. Members volunteer their services to promote the goals and vision of the school. The board should only be contacted for assistance after every effort has been made to resolve an issue at the lowest level possible. It is only in the most extreme cases that the board will become involved in an issue that has not first gone through the steps outlined below:

- 1) Conference with the teacher involved
- 2) Conference with the teacher and the grade-level team leader
- 3) Conference with the campus coordinator or principal
- 4) Conference with the principal
- 5) Conference with the superintendent
- 6) Written letter to the Office of Board Services requesting assistance. The letter should include the specifics of the incident in question, the dates, times, and names of persons involved in steps one through five, a requested remedy, and why the parent feels the requested remedy is reasonable and warranted.

The most common topics the board addresses involve the following:

1. Grievances concerning disciplinary action received by a student.
2. Specific allegations of unlawful acts by school employees.
3. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination or retaliation on the basis of a student's exercise of constitutional rights.
4. Specific allegations of violations of the Educator's Code of Ethics.
5. Specific allegations of improper calculations of grades.

The board will review the information provided to determine whether board involvement is warranted. If it is determined that board involvement is warranted, the board will conduct an investigation and render a decision on the matter. The board will make every effort to render a timely decision, usually within fifteen business days of the initial decision to take action, but in no case shall a decision be rendered more than 30 days beyond the date the board the decision to take action. The decision of the board is final and may not be reversed.

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**Board Contact Information:**

Board of Directors  
Rhodes School for the Performing Arts  
P.O. Box 542132  
Houston, Texas 77254  
(281) 458-4334  
[boardservices@rhodesschool.org](mailto:boardservices@rhodesschool.org)

**DRESS CODES**

**Parent Dress Code**

Parents are expected to model appropriate public social behavior for their students. The school seeks to partner with parents in this effort. To that end, Rhodes School for the Performing Arts has a parent dress code that all parents are expected to follow when on campus. The following represents inappropriate campus dress for parents and other visitors. Parents who choose not to comply with campus dress code policies may be asked to leave the campus.

**Examples of Inappropriate Campus Dress**

Extremely low-cut blouses with exposed cleavage

Clothes that reveal strings from thong underwear

Clothing that has vulgar messages or messages that use profane language

Shorts that expose the cheeks of the buttocks

Dresses or blouses that are see-through and which reveal a lack of undergarments

Pants that are dropped so far below the waist as to expose undergarments

**Student Dress Code**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts assumes responsibility for the general welfare of its students while at school. Appropriate and becoming clothing and hairstyles aid school discipline and contribute positively to the mental and emotional attitudes of the entire student body. Each student is required to maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness and is urged to develop grooming habits that will complement his or her physical appearance and personality. There is a sense of pride and tradition in being readily identified with our school. A standard code of appearance will be in force for all students, thereby creating a structured, controlled atmosphere conducive to learning.

Parents will be contacted to pick up student(s) or bring proper clothing if the student arrives at school improperly groomed or attired.

**I. Student Uniforms:**

Students not conforming to the uniform policy are subject to disciplinary action, beginning with the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) violation. For each occurrence, an appearance code violation form will be sent home for parent's signature. Repeated and unresolved violations may result in loss of privileges, in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion.

Fridays, students should wear their official RSPA T-shirts with blue jeans or uniform pants/shorts.

**II. Non-Uniform Events and Special Dress Theme Days**

Occasionally RSPA celebrates special theme days or hosts activities that do not require regular uniforms (i.e., after-school sporting events, special fundraising events, etc.). Clothing that is obviously inappropriate for RSPA activities must not be worn. The decision of the administrator will determine the appropriateness of dress appearance.

**Proper non-uniform attire for girls:**

- 1) The length of skirts, splits, skirts, and dresses must approach the knee and allow one to walk, stoop, kneel, and sit without their underwear being seen or without the hem of the garment rising above the mid-thigh.
- 2) Tops must have shoulder straps. Spaghetti straps are not acceptable. Shoulder straps should be at least 3 inches wide.
- 3) Tube tops are acceptable only if worn over another shirt or blouse that covers the mid-drift.
- 4) Sheer clothing must be worn with an opaque camisole or slip. Low-cut clothing is not permitted.
- 5) Girls wearing boy's or men's shirts that are not square cut must be tucked in.
- 6) Form-fitting leggings/tights may not substitute for pants, and shirts worn with leggings/tights must be long enough to cover the buttocks.
- 7) 7. Sweatshirts may have hoods, but hoods may NOT cover the head while on campus, either inside or outside the building.

**Proper attire for boys (uniform & non-uniform):**

- 1) Hair length may not extend more than ½" below the top of a regular shirt collar (when unbraided or un-banded, if applicable). No ponytails, mohawks, or designs cut into the hair are allowed.
- 2) Sideburns must be neatly trimmed to extend no lower than the tip of the earlobe.
- 3) If applicable, facial hair must be clean-shaven at all times.
- 4) Earrings and studs may not be worn and must not be brought to school.
- 5) Shirts must be tucked into pants.

### **III. General Student Clothing, Jewelry, & Accessories Guidelines**

- 1) Hair must be neat, clean, and well-groomed. Extreme hairstyles, which include hair that is dyed an unnatural color, will not be permitted. Hairstyles (cut (Mohawks, extreme head designs, and color) that adversely affect the educational atmosphere of the school will not be permitted. Hair must be out of the eyes.
- 2) Hair curlers and/or rollers are not to be worn to class.
- 3) Hats, caps, headbands (worn across the forehead), head coverings of any kind, and bandannas must not be brought to school unless they are part of a school sports-uniform, in which case they may be worn only during the appropriate time. Administrator discretion may be used for caps or hats worn in inclement weather or other school-related activities where hats are appropriate as a part of uniform attire.
- 4) Appropriate undergarments must be worn at all times.
- 5) Clothing, makeup, jewelry, patches, or designs on clothing must be in good taste and must not reflect or suggest in any manner drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, vulgar language, gang affiliation, violence of any sort, death, or satanic ideology. Shoestrings must be tied.
- 6) Shirts/blouses are not to be unbuttoned lower than the top two buttons. Zippered tops must be closed to the same degree as buttoned shirts.
- 7) Shoes must be worn at all times. Shower thongs, slides, house slippers, and shoes with cleats are prohibited. Safe walking should be the guide for slippery-surfaced shoes and heels.
- 8) Any noise-making articles that are distracting must not be worn or brought to school.
- 9) Pants and shorts with belt loops must be worn securely with a uniform belt at the proper height around the waist. No oversized apparel is permitted.
- 10) Cut, torn, frayed, or ripped clothing is prohibited.
- 11) Nose studs are prohibited. The only visible body piercing allowed is earrings for girls.

Students are discouraged from bringing expensive watches, bracelets, or other items that may be lost or stolen.

### **Rhodes School for the Performing Arts**

#### **Appropriate Use Policy for Electronic Services for Students**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts understands the educational value of electronic services and its ability to support curriculum and student learning by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

The availability of the Internet gives students valuable access to information they would not otherwise be able to obtain. While the purposes of the school are to use electronic resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students from electronic services in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages.

But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Rhodes School for the Performing Arts has implemented filtering and/or blocking software to restrict access to Internet sites containing pornography, obscene depictions, or other materials harmful to minors under 18 years of age. Additionally, content and spam filtering software is applied to all external e-mail correspondence on RSPA's electronic mail system. The software will work by scanning for objectionable words or concepts, as determined by RSPA. However, no software is foolproof, and there is still a risk a user may be exposed to a site or message containing such materials. A user who incidentally connects to such a site or receives inappropriate communications must immediately disconnect from the site and notify a teacher or supervisor. If a user sees another user accessing inappropriate sites or engaging in inappropriate communication, he or she should notify a teacher or supervisor immediately. To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the school's computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" and other unlawful activities, and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network, and the code of conduct applies. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources. Students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

**Privacy**—Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review communications to maintain system integrity to ensure that students are using the system responsibly. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use, and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may close an account at any time as required. The administration, faculty, and staff of RSPA may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.

**Illegal copying**—Students shall never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks unless they have written permission from the network administrator. In addition, students should not copy other people's work or intrude into other people's files.

**Inappropriate materials or language**—No profane, abusive, or impolite language shall be used to communicate, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behavior. A good rule to follow is never to view, send, or access materials which you would not want your teachers and parents to see. Should students encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately.

**These are rules to follow to prevent the loss of school network privileges.**

- Do not use a computer to harm other people or their work.
- Do not damage the computer or the network in any way.
- Do not interfere with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware.
- Do not violate copyright laws.
- Do not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Do not share your password with another person or offer access to any person via your account.
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers or those of other students or colleagues.
- Do not waste limited resources such as disk space or printing capacity.
- Do not trespass in another's folders, work, or files.
- Do notify an adult immediately if, by accident, you encounter materials which violate the rules of appropriate use.
- BE PREPARED to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges if the Rules of Appropriate Use are violated. The code of conduct outlines consequences for failing to comply.

**Code of Student Conduct**

Attendance at Rhodes School for the Performing Arts is truly a privilege and not a right. Students may forfeit this privilege if they fail to conform to the standards and ideals of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts as expressed through school policies and expectations. The lack of knowledge of a particular policy will not excuse a student from the responsibility of obeying it. We recognize this handbook is imperfect and silent on some issues that may arise. In cases of disagreement about a particular interpretation, the administration will attempt to render decisions that are fair and in the best interest of both the student and the school.

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts offers and allows students who attend a persistently dangerous school or a student who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of the school that the student attends, the right to attend a safe public school within the charter district. If another campus is not available, the school will provide other types of services to ensure the safety of the student.

Maintaining control and good discipline in the classroom is a necessary ingredient for learning and is the expected 'norm' for RHODES SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS. Discipline and teacher control are accomplished through positive methods -- using the 'inside voice,' encouraging, praising, humor, etc. The 'outside voice' (i.e., very loud, harsh, screaming, yelling, etc.) is not an acceptable method of discipline at Rhodes School for the Performing Arts.

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The *Code of Student Conduct* provides a description of a broad range of behavior considered to be student misconduct. The behavior described should be viewed as representative of the misconduct that most frequently causes a disruption to the orderly educational process.

The acts of misconduct listed in Levels I, II, III, IV, and V are not all-inclusive. The student who commits an act of misconduct that may be classified into any of the five levels will be subject to disciplinary action by the classroom teacher and/or principal.

All students will be responsible for their conduct toward each other, their language, dress, and manners. Proper conduct is expected at all times, both individually and in groups. Students shall comply with student regulations and shall recognize the authority of the teachers and administration.

### **When and Where These Rules Apply**

The policies and administrative procedures concerning student conduct apply to actions of students on school property and school buses and, in some cases, for conduct occurring off of school property or within 300 feet of school property. Additionally, these rules are applicable to students placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Under state law, a student may be expelled by Rhodes School for the Performing Arts for Level V misconduct that occurs on the property of another school district within Texas. Additionally, the rules apply to the actions of students at all school-sponsored or school-related activities or events, such as field trips, sporting events, stadium assemblies, fairs, or evening school-related activities. Students should be aware that the commission of any felony offense, whether at school or away from school, may result in placement of the student in a DAEP or in expulsion. Finally, students should be aware that administrators who are made aware of criminal activity, whether on or off campus, will make a report to appropriate law enforcement agencies and that, in addition to these administrative rules, students may be subject to criminal charges for violations of the law.

An RSPA student should set an example for others by displaying the following:

#### **1. IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE**

An RSPA student responds positively to any instruction given by those in authority.

#### **2. HONORING AUTHORITY**

An RSPA student gives honor to all those in authority in both attitude and action.

#### **3. BEING A PERSON OF INTEGRITY**

An RSPA student never lies, deceives, misleads, or fails to tell the truth, EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING.

#### **4. COMPLETE DEPENDABILITY**

An RSPA student keeps his word and accepts the necessary responsibilities.

##### **General Discipline Guidelines for Assessing Penalties**

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

1. Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain essential order and discipline.
2. Students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Administrators should use caution and should ordinarily consider developmentally appropriate interventions for very young children who engage in misconduct. Factors that will be considered in the administration of student discipline and factors that will be considered in determining the length of any suspension, placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, or expulsion may include such factors as:
  - a) seriousness of the offense
  - b) student's age and intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct
  - c) student's disciplinary history
  - d) student's attitude
  - e) potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment
  - f) state law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences
  - g) whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment
  - h) whether the student has a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct
3. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, school transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II or higher misconduct. An administrator may find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense. The School reserves the right to administer the disciplinary action it deems most appropriate, regardless of whether a single incident is considered an offense at a particular level. Further, the behaviors outlined in the Levels of Offenses section are not intended to be all-inclusive

## **Confiscating Student Items**

***A teacher or staff member has the right to confiscate from a student any item that is considered a disruption to the learning environment or in violation of school policies. However, the item may not be destroyed or disposed of in any manner.***

An item of value, or potential value, should be maintained in the office safe or in a locked storage place for safekeeping. Parents should be notified and allowed to pick up the item from the school, or the item is to be returned to the student at the end of a class period, the end of a school day, when the student withdraws, or at the very latest, at the end of the school year.

An item considered to be a danger to the student and/or jeopardizes the safety of others is to be immediately turned in to administrators.

## **No Bullying Zone**

Rhodes School for the Performing Arts has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. Students who are found to have engaged in bullying will be disciplined according to this policy. The administration reserves the right to administer a higher level of discipline if it deems appropriate to protect the safety and well-being of any and all students.

## **Levels of Offenses/Overview**

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

### **Level I—Violation of Classroom Rules**

Offenses that generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher and may include behavior such as:

- Violations of rules or procedures established by the teacher
- Refusal to participate in classroom activities
- Unexcused tardiness to class
- Failure to bring required classroom materials or assigned work to class
- General misbehavior, such as eating in class, horseplay making excessive noise, or violating campus dress codes
- Any other act that disrupts the classroom or interrupts the operation of the class
- Failure to deliver or return written communications between home and school
- Disruptive or non-compliant behavior on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Failure to protect individual computer-account passwords from disclosure

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

**Level II—Administrative Intervention:**

• Offenses that are more serious in nature or a continuance of Level I misconduct. Some infractions will result in a referral to an administrator. The disciplinary response depends on the offense, previous actions, and the seriousness of the misbehavior. Level II acts of misconduct include those student acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or in the school. A teacher who observes a student engaged in Level II or higher misconduct will fill out a discipline/referral form for the principal or other appropriate administrator. The principal will forward an oral or written report to the parents.

**Level II Acts of Misconduct Include Such Behavior as:**

- Repeated violation of classroom or transportation rules under Level I
- Cheating, plagiarism, or copying the work of other students
- Leaving the classroom or school grounds without the permission of school personnel
- Cutting class or other forms of truancy
- Possession of matches or other flammable materials • Inappropriate display of affection
- Posting or distributing unauthorized materials on school grounds
- Failure to abide by rules and regulations at extracurricular activities or at co-curricular activities such as field trips
- Loitering in unauthorized areas
- Use or operation of paging devices, including beepers, cell phones, electronic pagers, or any other type of electronic communication system on school campuses or at functions during school hours. Such devices may be used at a time and place as

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determined by the individual campus in coordination with the campus Shared-Decision-Making Committee (SDMC). In addition to disciplinary action, the unauthorized use or operation of paging devices will result in confiscation. The principal or another administrator will notify the parent and pager company of the serial number and of intent to dispose of the device after 30 days. A \$15 administrative fee is payable to Rhodes School for the Performing Arts and will be charged if the device is claimed within 30 days. Paging devices not claimed will be sent to Property Management for disposal.

- Possession of iPods, Mp3 players, personal radios, or personal music devices at school, with final determination of the limits made at the individual campus level
- Cafeteria disturbance

**Possible Disciplinary Options/Responses:**

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

**Procedures:**

1. Referral to an administrator by way of written report not to exceed one page in length
2. Administrator confers with the student and/or teacher to establish appropriate action.
3. Written or oral notification of action is sent to parent. A notification is sent to the teacher indicating action taken.
4. Discipline Referral Form is retained by the administrator.
5. Level II behavior violations and Discipline Options/Responses are not limited to those provided.

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6. Repeated violations shall result in a more severe response and/or referral to Level III. Certain physical acts against a student by school personnel (such as choking, kicking, punching, pinching, hitting with an inappropriate object, etc.) are not authorized and will be considered as a violation of the corporal-punishment policies.

**Level III—Suspension and/or Optional Removal to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program:**

- Offenses that seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or at school-related activities, or a continuance of repeated Level I, II, or III misconduct.

A finding that a student has engaged in a Level III offense may constitute a serious offense.

- Disruptive behavior on a school bus or at a school bus stop
- Any other acts that interfere with the orderly educational process in the classroom or the school
- Accessing materials and sites on the Internet that are deemed to be inappropriate by Rhodes School for the Performing Arts.
- Sending or forwarding inappropriate e-mails, including e-mails containing offensive language, untruthful statements, junk e-mails, chain letters, or jokes. Level III acts include misconduct for which an administrator may suspend the student, place the student into in-school suspension, or, if the administrator finds the Level III misconduct to be serious or persistent as defined in this Code, refer the student to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). The principal or other appropriate administrator makes the disciplinary determination on the basis of the severity of the misconduct. The period of suspension is limited to three days per occurrence.

**Suspension/Optional Removal to a DAEP**

Suspension is limited to three days per occurrence and is authorized for the conduct listed below. Additionally, the principal or other appropriate administrator may suspend a student for up to three days pending placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

A decision to suspend a student is final and may not be appealed. A student may be suspended, placed into in-school suspension, or, if serious or persistent behavior occurs, removed from the regular classroom and placed in a DAEP for engaging in the following conduct at school or at a school-related event:

- Chronic or repeated disciplinary infractions of Level I and/or

Level II offenses

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- Fighting
- Gambling
- Misdemeanor stealing/theft of property, including computers and related equipment, in an amount under \$750
- Truancy
- Possession of a knife
- Persistent disruptive behavior on a school bus
- Smoking, using, or possessing tobacco or tobacco products
- Interfering with school authorities
- Aggressive, disruptive action or group demonstration that substantially disrupts or materially interferes with school activities. This includes such acts as boycotts, sit-ins, trespassing, and walkouts.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests of school personnel and/or defiance of the authority of school personnel
- Changing school records or documents or signing a parent's name on school documents
- Failure to adhere to terms of behavior contracts
- Indecent/unsolicited sexual proposal/sexual harassment
- Harassment, including threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another student, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health
- Selling or soliciting for sale any merchandise on the school campus without the authorization of the building principal
- Display of disrespect toward school personnel or campus visitors
- Participation in activities by groups such as gangs and cults
- Wearing dress or attire signifying gang affiliations
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures
- Possession or use of fireworks, "poppers," smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device that may be used to disrupt the educational process

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- Possession of laser pens or laser pointers
- Possession of live ammunition or bullets
- Engaging in threats or other acts of intimidation that interfere with another student's desire or willingness to participate in the educational process
- Any verbal abuse or bullying of others, including but not limited to slurs, name-calling, or derogatory statements to another person because of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, physical/personal appearance, or sexual orientation. Bullying is defined as any act or speech that subjects persons to indignity, humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse, or threat of physical abuse, social or other isolation, shame, or disgrace.
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury (Section 22.01(a)(2), Penal Code

**Level IV—Placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program:**

- Criminal offenses as defined in Level IV. This may include any felony, whether school-related or not unless it is one for which expulsion is required. A finding that a student has engaged in an offense listed under Level IV constitutes a finding that the student has engaged in serious misbehavior. Felony conduct. There are three instances of felony conduct for which a student must be referred to a DAEP. The placement made in accordance with this section shall be for any period considered necessary on the basis of the circumstances and facts known; however, the student shall still receive a review of the placement at intervals not to exceed 120 days. The circumstances include:

Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony on campus, at a school-related function or activity, or within 300 feet of the school property line

While enrolled in Rhodes School for the Performing Arts and regardless of the location of the offense, receiving a finding by a court or jury of delinquent conduct under the Family Code, or the reasonable belief of the principal that the student has committed a felony under Title 5 of the Penal Code, which includes criminal homicide; murder; capital murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; false imprisonment; kidnapping; aggravated kidnapping; indecency with a child; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; injury to a child, elderly individual, or disabled individual; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding suicide; or tampering with a consumer product, regardless of where the offense occurs.

Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony other than one defined in Title 5 of the Penal Code that occurs more than 300 feet from the campus and is not related to a school-based activity or function if the principal reasonably believes that the student has engaged in such felony and the principal also determines that the continued presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students

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or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process

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

- Engaging in assault, which is defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another and which may include causing bodily injury by recklessly or intentionally pointing a laser pointer or laser pen at another student or a staff member (Section 22.01(a)(1) and Section 1.07(a)(8), Penal Code)
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled drug, or other controlled substances (Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.), unless punishable as a felony
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a dangerous drug (Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code), unless punishable as a felony.
- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol
- Selling, giving, or delivering an alcoholic beverage to another person
- Committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to an abusable, volatile chemical or possession, delivery to a minor, or possession of paraphernalia used with volatile chemicals (Sections 485.031 through 485.034, Health and Safety Code)
- Engaging in conduct that contains elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure, defined to include offenses against chastity, common decency, morals, and the like

(Sections 21.07 and 21.08, Penal Code) • Felony stealing/theft of computer equipment or any other property in an amount greater than \$750

- Burglary of Rhodes School for the Performing Arts facility
- Defacing of school property with graffiti or other means that results in a loss or destruction of property in an amount less than \$20,000 (Section 28.08, Penal Code)

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

- Knowingly making a false report against a staff member that is later determined to be unsubstantiated at the conclusion of any investigation initiated as a result of the report
- Engaging in assault not involving bodily injury, which is defined as intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another when the person knows or should

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reasonably believe that the other will regard the contact as offensive or provocative (Section 22.01 (a)(3), Penal Code)

- Participation in an illegal organization such as a fraternity, sorority, secret society, gang, cult, or other criminal combination prohibited by law that is defined as an organization composed at least in part of students and that seeks to perpetuate itself by recruiting members from the students enrolled in school on the basis of the decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a student in the school who is qualified by the rules of the school to fill the special aims of the organization (Section 37.121, Texas Education Code). Participation includes indirect participation such as recruiting and indirect guidance or leadership of the activities of gangs, cults, secret societies, and fraternities and sororities.
- Possession of ammunition or bullets
- Possession of BB guns, pellet guns, or air rifles
- Possession of electric stun guns or other protective devices designed to administer an electric shock
- Possession of replicas of guns that are sufficiently similar in appearance to a real gun such that, if pointed or shown to another person, a reasonable person may believe the student to be in possession of a firearm
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Use of computers or any other means to access and to tamper with RHODES SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS records, including grade books or any other public-school records or any other records of a school-related activity maintained by RHODES SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS (Sec. 37.10, Penal Code)
- "Hacking" or breach of computer security or unauthorized access to school computer systems that result in loss or damage in an amount greater than \$500. A finding that the student accessed a school computer system constitutes a finding that the conduct occurred on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity (Sections 33.02 and 33.03, Penal Code).

Level IV additionally includes the following, regardless of whether the offense occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity:

- Conduct involving a public school that contains the elements of the offense of false alarm or report (Section 42.06, Penal Code) or terroristic threat (Section 22.07, Penal Code). A terroristic threat is defined as threatening to commit violence or harm to any person or property with intent to cause an emergency response, or that places any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or interrupt the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access by threats

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of violence or other means, or causing impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, the public water, gas, etc.

Repeated truancy

**Level V—Expulsion for Serious Offenses:**

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

**Level V Acts of Misconduct Include the Following Acts That May Result in Expulsion:**

A student may be expelled from Rhodes School for the Performing Arts and placed in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or, if not expelled, shall be referred to a DAEP under Level IV for engaging in the following misconduct while on school property, within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

- Repeated Violations of Levels I-IV of the Code of Student Conduct
- Defiance of Authority
- Failure to Parents to respect the authority of school staff
- Harassment of School staff by parents of a sexual nature
- Harassment of school staff by parents via intimidation
- Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled drug, or other controlled substances (Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.) (2) Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of a dangerous drug
- (Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code) (3) Selling, giving, delivering to another person, possessing, using, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, as defined by Section 1.04, Alcoholic Beverage Code (4) Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to an abuseable volatile chemical or possession of inhalant paraphernalia (Sections 485.031 through 485.034, Health and Safety Code) (5) Possessing a knife, which includes razor blades, utility knives, X-ACTO knives, or other objects that are designed to cut and that are reasonably determined under the circumstances to have been possessed by the student for use as a weapon (6) Engaging in assault, which is

defined as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to a staff member or volunteer (Section 22.01(a)(1), Penal Code) (7) Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of deadly conduct (Section 22.05, Penal Code) (8) Possession of a firearm as defined by 18 U.S.C. §921 off of school property and not at a school activity but within 300 feet of the school property line (9) Engaging in any conduct listed under Required Expulsion off of school property and not at a school activity but within 300 feet of the school property line Regardless of whether the offense takes place at a school-related activity, on school property, or more than 300 feet from the school property line, the student may be expelled if:

- The student engages in assault (Section 22.01(a)(1), Penal Code) against a school-district employee or a volunteer as a result of or in retaliation for the person's employment or association with the district
- The student engages in conduct that contains the elements of criminal mischief (i.e., vandalism) and the destruction of property of an amount greater than \$1,500 or is punishable as a felony (Section 28.03, Penal Code)
- The student engages in conduct against another student that contains the elements of aggravated assault (Section 22.02, Penal Code), sexual assault (Section 22.011, Penal Code), aggravated sexual assault (Section 22.021, Penal Code), murder (Section 19.02, Penal Code), capital murder (Section 19.03 Penal Code), or criminal attempt to commit capital murder (Section 15.01, Penal Code)
- The student engages in conduct involving a public school that contains the elements of the offense of false alarm or report (Section 42.06, Penal Code) or terroristic threat (Section 22.07, Penal Code). A student may also be expelled from Rhodes School for the Performing Arts and placed in the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program or, if not expelled, may be referred to a DAEP under Level IV for engaging in the following misconduct while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:
  - Continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates this *Code of Student Conduct* on campus while placed in a Chapter 37 DAEP. Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, RHODES SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS transportation, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II and higher misconduct. An administrator may find, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of the case, that a Level III offense constitutes a serious offense.

# Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need 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 behavioral 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 system 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

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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: Terrell Hutchinson-Smith  
Phone Number: 346-326-7763

### 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: Terrell Hutchinson-Smith  
Phone Number: 346-326-7763

## Additional Information:

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

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

## **Cómo ayudar a aquellos estudiantes que tienen dificultades de aprendizaje o precisan servicios de educación especial o de la Sección 504**

Para aquellos estudiantes que tienen dificultades en el salón de clases normal, todos los distritos escolares y las escuelas autónomas de inscripción abierta deben contemplar servicios de tutoría y compensatorios, y otros servicios de apoyo académico o conductual que estén disponibles para todos los estudiantes, incluido un proceso basado en la Respuesta a la Intervención (RtI). La implementación de la RtI tiene el potencial de impactar positivamente en la capacidad de los distritos y escuelas autónomas de satisfacer las necesidades de todos los estudiantes con problemas.

Si un estudiante está experimentando dificultades de aprendizaje, sus padres pueden comunicarse con la(s) persona(s) mencionada(s) más abajo para obtener información sobre el sistema general de remisión o control de la educación general de la escuela para los servicios de apoyo. Dicho sistema vincula a los estudiantes con una variedad de opciones de apoyo, entre las que se encuentra la remisión para que se realice una evaluación de educación especial o una evaluación de la Sección 504 con el fin de determinar si el estudiante necesita asistencia, adaptaciones o servicios específicos. Los padres pueden pedir una evaluación para los servicios de educación especial o de la Sección 504 en cualquier momento.

### Remisiones de educación especial:

Si los padres solicitan, por escrito, al director de servicios de educación especial o a un empleado administrativo del distrito escolar o de la escuela autónoma de inscripción abierta que se realice una evaluación inicial para recibir servicios de educación especial, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben responder dentro de los 15 días lectivos después de haber recibido la solicitud. En ese momento, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben entregar a los padres notificación previa por escrito respecto de si están de acuerdo o no en evaluar al estudiante, además de enviarles una copia de la *Notificación de salvaguardas procesales*. Si el distrito escolar o la escuela autónoma están de acuerdo en evaluar al estudiante, también deben darles a los padres la oportunidad de prestar su consentimiento por escrito para la evaluación.

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Por favor tenga en cuenta que una solicitud para una evaluación de educación especial puede hacerse verbalmente y no necesita hacerse por escrito. Los distritos y escuelas "chárter" deben seguir cumpliendo con todas las notificaciones previas por escrito y los requisitos sobre las salvaguardas procesales de la ley federal para identificar, localizar y evaluar a los niños que se intuya puedan ser niños con alguna discapacidad y que necesite educación especial. Sin embargo, una petición verbal no requiere que el distrito o la escuela "chárter" respondan dentro del periodo establecido de los 15 días escolares.

Si el distrito o la escuela autónoma deciden evaluar al estudiante, deben completar la evaluación inicial y el informe de la evaluación dentro de los 45 días lectivos posteriores al día en que reciban el consentimiento por escrito de los padres para evaluar al estudiante. Sin embargo, si el estudiante se ausenta de la escuela por tres días lectivos o más durante el período de evaluación, dicho período se extenderá la misma cantidad de días lectivos que el estudiante haya faltado.

Existe una excepción al plazo de 45 días lectivos. Si un distrito o una escuela autónoma reciben el consentimiento de los padres para la evaluación inicial entre los 35 y 45 días lectivos previos al último día de clases del año, deben completar el informe escrito y proporcionarles una copia del mismo a los padres, a más tardar, el 30 de junio de dicho año. No obstante, si el estudiante falta a la escuela tres días o más durante el período de evaluación, no se aplica la fecha límite del 30 de junio, sino que se aplica el plazo general de 45 días lectivos más prórrogas por ausencias de tres días o más.

Al completar la evaluación, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben proporcionar a los padres una copia del informe de evaluación en forma gratuita.

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Hay disponible información adicional sobre educación especial del distrito o la escuela autónoma en el documento complementario titulado *Guía para padres sobre el proceso de admisión, revisión y retiro*.

[Persona de contacto para las remisiones de educación especial:](#)

La persona designada para contactar en relación con las opciones para un estudiante que experimente dificultades de aprendizaje o en relación con una remisión a evaluación para recibir servicios de educación especial es:

Persona de contacto: Terrell Hutchinson-Smith

Número de teléfono: 346-326-7763

[Remisiones de la Sección 504:](#)

Cada distrito escolar o escuela autónoma debe tener estándares y procedimientos en vigor para la evaluación y colocación de estudiantes en el programa de la Sección 504 del distrito o la escuela autónoma. Además, los distritos y las escuelas autónoma deben implementar un sistema de salvaguardas procesales que incluya una notificación, una oportunidad para que los padres o tutores examinen los registros relevantes, una audiencia imparcial en la que puedan participar los padres o tutores y en la que haya representación por parte de un abogado, y un procedimiento de revisión.

[Persona de contacto para las remisiones de la Sección 504:](#)

La persona designada para contactar en relación con las opciones para un estudiante que experimente dificultades de aprendizaje o en relación con una remisión a evaluación para recibir servicios de la Sección 504 es:

Persona de contacto: Terrell Hutchinson-Smith

Número de teléfono: 346-326-7763

[Información adicional:](#)

Los siguientes sitios web ofrecen información y recursos para los estudiantes con discapacidades y sus familias.

- [Marco legal del proceso de educación especial centrado en el niño](#)
- [Red de colaboradores y recursos](#)
- [Centro de Información de Educación Especial](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

