

TEXAS EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY
ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CHARTER SCHOOL
WWW.TEXASEMPOWERMENT.ORG

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ELEMENTARY CAMPUS



(512) 494-1076 MIDDLE SCHOOL OFFICE
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(512) 928-0118 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OFFICE
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STUDENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME

This handbook is to provide you with the guidelines that are followed here at the **Texas Empowerment Academy**. Every member of the staff is here to help you have a successful and enjoyable school year. Each student is urged to seek the aid of his/her principal and teachers if the need arises. **Read this book carefully**, as it will answer many questions about your needs and what will be expected of you at **Texas Empowerment Academy**.

2010-2011 STUDENT HANDBOOK

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INQUIRIES

The **Texas Empowerment Academy** office hours are 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The office phone number is (512) 494-1076 for the middle school and (512) 928-0118 for the elementary school. The school email address is www.info@texasempowerment.org

FOREWORD

The purpose of the **Texas Empowerment Academy** handbook is to provide general information about the policies, procedures, and regulations affecting student life while in the program. It is designed to provide general information on academic services as well as extracurricular activities available to the students.

It is the responsibility of the students to read and become familiar with the contents of this handbook. Failure to obtain a copy of this publication and to become acquainted with the stated policies, procedures, and regulations shall not be a reason to excuse any student from failing to observe and follow these regulations. The **Texas Empowerment Academy** reserves the right to modify or discontinue, without prior notice, any of the policies, procedures, and regulations contained in this handbook.

Through the use of this handbook, students are encouraged to participate in student activities and take advantage of the services and opportunities available to them.

Your student handbook has been prepared to help make your experience in the program go as smoothly as possible. Read it thoroughly and familiarize yourself with its contents. It is your guide throughout the academic program.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students profit more from school when they are regular in attendance and prompt to their assigned classes. Regular attendance in class is so closely associated with good scholarship that parents and students who cooperate with the school in keeping a fine attendance record will be amply repaid in the value received from school.

The parents or legal guardian should contact the school between 7:40 and 8:30 am on the day the student will be absent. The office telephone number is (512) 494-1076 for the middle school and (512) 928-0118 for the elementary school.

If the student must be absent all day, an excuse must be brought to the office on the day that the student returns. The excuse must be written by the student's parent or guardian. It should state the reason for the absence and the specific date the student was absent. An excused or unexcused absence will then be issued.

Students should not attend school activities on days that they are not in attendance unless prior permission has been secured.

Advanced Absences

If a student knows that he/she must be absent from school, he/she must provide a note from his/her parents or guardian stating the reason and the length of the absence. Teachers must be aware of the absence and students are to arrange to make up the missed work. School related absences are to be done following the same procedure, except for the note from a parent or guardian.

Excused Absences

Illness and emergencies will constitute an excused absence. When the student returns to school, he/she must pick up an absence form from the office. This form may be obtained by bringing a note from home stating the reason for the absence and signed by the parent or guardian. A student will not be allowed in class without an absence form. The student must present the form to each teacher at the beginning of class.

An excused absence to class will be granted for the following reasons:

- ❖ Individual illness (any student missing three consecutive school days may be required to present a doctor's excuse), serious illness, or death in the immediate family.
- ❖ Doctor and dentist appointments with a signed slip by the doctor or dentist.
- ❖ Absences approved by the school principal.
- ❖ Pre-arranged absences including emergency situations judged to require the student's attention or presence, legal appointments and reasonable parental requests.
- ❖ In-school suspensions.

A student who receives an excused absence form must make arrangements with each teacher to make up any missed work the first day he/she returns to school.

Any student who is absent for nine days within any six weeks grading period without a written doctor's excuse for those absences may be required to provide a written doctor's excuse for each subsequent absence for illness during the grading period or receive an unexcused absence form to class.

Unexcused Absences

Missing classes for the lack of sufficient reason will constitute an unexcused absence. An excused absence will be issued if an excuse is not brought to the office. On excused absences the following guidelines will be followed:

An unexcused absence to class will be issued for absences not previously described as excused. Some examples of unexcused absences in accordance with state attendance laws are:

- ❖ truancy
- ❖ skipping school
- ❖ suspension (out-of-school)
- ❖ missing your ride or oversleeping
- ❖ birthday or other celebration
- ❖ hair or barber appointment
- ❖ leaving school early without reporting to the office and obtaining a permit to leave the building.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

In order to make sure all students are informed and safe we are providing the following guidelines for our students and for parent awareness.

Visitors

All visitors are to report to the Principal's office upon entering the building. Anyone wishing to spend time visiting the school must pick up a visitor's pass at the office. While school is open, we do require that visitors abide by all school policies.

Drop off Time in the Morning

All children can be dropped-off as early as 7:15 am for the elementary school and 7:30 am for the middle school.

Pick-ups

All children are to be picked up by 3:00 pm for the elementary school and 3:45 for the middle school. **This only pertains to students not participating in the after school program.**

Medicine at School

The following are the guidelines for medication administration at **Texas Empowerment Academy**:

Medication will only be allowed at school when a failure to take medication could jeopardize the student's health and/or educational abilities. Medication should be limited to students with long term chronic illness or disability (including, but not limited to diabetes, attention disorders, asthma, seizure activity, epilepsy, cystic fibrosis, cardiac, neurological and endocrine disorders).

Any other type of illness which requires medication should be scheduled to be given by the parents or guardian either before or after school hours. If a student must take medicine at school, the following guidelines will be observed:

- ❖ Written orders are to be provide by the physician with:
 1. Name of student.
 2. Type of disease or illness.
 3. Name of drug, dosage and time of interval in which medication is taken.

- ❖ Parent or guardian must provide a written request authorizing the administration of the medicine at school. No eye or ear drops will be administered at school.
- ❖ Medication shall be brought to school in a container labeled by the pharmacy or the doctor, including the date of the prescription.
- ❖ No over the counter medicine will be allowed at school without direction from the doctor.
- ❖ At the end of the school year any remaining medication will be discarded if it remains in the office after all students have left. A new release form must be signed each year.

Personal Items

Students are asked to be extremely careful about leaving valuables unattended in desks, classrooms, and unlocked lockers.

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

Valuables

All articles and valuables are brought to school at the owner's risk. Money and valuables should not be kept in lockers.

School Closing

On days when school must remain closed because of the weather, an announcement will be made on the voicemail at (512) 494-1076 for the middle school and at (512) 928-0118 for the elementary school. Also listen to the local television station in your area for updates.

Promotion and Retention of Students

A student will be retained in his current grade at the end of the school year if:

- ❖ The superintendent determines that the student has not maintained an overall average of at least 70 percent in Mathematics, English, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies; and
- ❖ The superintendent deems it in the best interest of the student to remain in his/her current grade.

Letter Grade Determination

Grading Scale

The percentage scale suggested for teacher use to determine letter grades on report cards as is follows:

100-90 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

69- Below = F

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued every six weeks period. Parent conferences will be held throughout the year regarding student progress when necessary.

Textbooks

Textbooks are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Be sure your name is written inside the cover of each book. Unreasonable damage and wear to textbooks will result in fines. At the end of the school year the student must return the same book that was loaned at the beginning of the year.

CAMPUS GUIDELINES

Dressing and Grooming

Our dress code standards are designed to promote an appropriate environment for individuals who are preparing themselves for life. We ask that students **not wear** the following.

- ❖ Any clothing that reveals undergarments.
- ❖ Skirts/Shorts that are not within 1 inch of the students fingertips when their arms are extended by the side.
- ❖ Any clothing that reveals a student's stomach.
- ❖ Spaghetti straps, halter tops, tank tops, tube tops, half shirts, see through blouses or backless apron garments.
- ❖ Clothing, accessories, or tattoos with references to alcohol, drugs, sex, tobacco, vulgar language, violence, gang related affiliation or other symbols that distract from the learning environment.
- ❖ Caps, hats, stocking caps, wave caps, or bandannas unless in instances of extreme weather or with prior administrative approval during special campus activities.
- ❖ Clothing, jewelry, shoes, chains, or other accessories that would endanger student's safety or distract from the learning environment are not acceptable.
- ❖ Any bedroom attire is prohibited; pajama tops or bottoms, slippers, etc...

If a student's personal appearance or form of dress violates these standards, the student will be allowed to correct the problem. If the issue is not corrected the student will be sent home until the school and family can resolve the situation. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action. Many details and styles of clothing cannot be covered in the dress code; therefore the administration of the **Texas Empowerment Academy** reserves the right to make final determination concerning appropriateness of a student's attire.

School Lockers

- ❖ A student's school locker is the property of the school and must be used for the purposes intended: storage is for books, school supplies, and outdoor garments. If school officials have reasonable suspicion that the student has placed illegal

substances in the locker, school officials may then search the locker, with or without the student's knowledge or consent. In brief, students should not keep anything in their lockers that they would not want anyone to find.

- ❖ Law enforcement officers who wish to search lockers should possess valid search warrants.
- ❖ Lockers are assigned by the school and are not to be changed without permission. Locks are distributed by the school. If a lock is lost, another is to be purchased by the student for \$3.00 so the lock can be replaced.

Computer and Internet use

Use of computers is a privilege. Violation of any rules listed in this section may result in revocation of computer and/or internet privileges and the Superintendent or designee may deem any other disciplinary consequences as appropriate:

- ❖ Students are prohibited from erasing, renaming, or making unusable anyone else's computer files, programs, or disks.
- ❖ Students are prohibited from using someone else's password or e-mail account.
- ❖ Students may not use the computers to make purchases of any kind or to advertise any products for purchase or sale.
- ❖ Students may not use the computers for any unlawful purpose such as illegal copying, plagiarizing, or illegal installation of software.
- ❖ Introduce any computer code designed to self-replicate, damage, or hinder the performance of the computer's memory or filing system (i.e. introduction of a computer virus, "spamming" the e-mail system, etc).
- ❖ Students are prohibited from using the computer to annoy or harass others with inappropriate language, images or threats.
- ❖ Students are prohibited from accessing any internet sites containing obscenities or sexually explicit materials.
- ❖ Students are prohibited from assembling or disassembling computers, computer networks, printers, or other computer equipment except as part of a class assignment or with permission of a classroom teacher.

Students are prohibited from removing any software, hardware, or computer technology from the school without expressed permission of the campus principal.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Classroom Behavioral Management Plan

1st Verbal Warning

2nd Name will be placed on board

3rd The student will be removed from the class (for the remainder of the day)

- ❖ A letter will be sent home (that will need to be signed by the parent/guardian).
- ❖ If a student is removed from class 3 times in a six week period they will be suspended for 3 days.
- ❖ We will set up a parent/guardian, student conference before the student will be allowed to return.
- ❖ If a student has been suspended 3 times in a semester, the student will be removed from the school for the remainder of the year.

Suspension

Any student enrolled at TxEA will be placed on suspension for a determined period for the following reasons:

Fighting (automatic 3 day suspension)

If a student is suspended 2 times for fighting they will be expelled for the remainder of the year.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating **will not** be tolerated. Cheating includes, but it is not limited to, copying from another student's test or quiz paper. If students are caught cheating by any staff member, they will be placed on probation by TxEA, and the parent will be notified in writing and a conference will be set up.

Disciplinary Procedures

Any violation of the TxEA rules and regulations and the code of student conduct will be documented by any TxEA staff witnessing the commission of the particular act, conduct, or behavior, which will be submitted to the TxEA Principal. The TxEA principal will then take recommendations for further action.

Student Complaints

Students who have a complaint should first bring the matter up with the person with which the complaint is directed in a rational and calm manner for discussion.

However, if the outcome of that discussion is not satisfactory, the student may request a conference with them, the TxEA instructors, or Coordinator. If the student is still not satisfied at that level, he/she may request a conference with the TxEA Principal.

General Rules and Regulations

The following is a list of rules and regulations for the **Texas Empowerment Academy**. Each participant is expected to adhere to these rules as set forth by TxEA. Failure to comply with these rules will result in disciplinary action and possible termination from TxEA.

1. All students can participate in academic tutorials and study skills sessions.
2. All participants who have been issued textbooks are responsible for taking them to every class meeting. Paper, pencil, dictionary, and backpacks are the responsibility of the student. Your success depends on your participation.
3. Treat faculty, staff, and students with respect. Foul language and gestures are not allowed. Fighting, alcohol, and drugs ARE NOT PERMITTED. Any infraction of the following will result in immediate suspension or expulsion.
4. Smoking is not permitted.
5. Participants will not loiter in the hallways or the grounds of the **Texas Empowerment Academy**.
6. Do not litter in the restrooms.
7. Hats, pagers, headsets, cellular phones, compact disc players, radios, jam boxes, and other distractions are not allowed.
8. Food, drinks, gum, etc. are not permitted inside the classroom.
9. Participants may not use the **Texas Empowerment Academy** offices as a gathering place. Use of the telephones is strictly limited to emergency use only and may only use the telephone in the office unless otherwise instructed.

In the event that a certain conduct, act, or behavior should occur which is not covered by the present code of conduct, the **Texas Empowerment Academy** principal and/or coordinator have the authority to issue supplementary rules as the need arises.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN

- A. Start each day right; a calm beginning at home makes the school day much better.
- B. Encourage your child to have a good breakfast and lunch. Make certain that your child sleeps at least eight hours each night.
- C. Praise your child each day for something he/she has done. Have a special place to put school work or things brought home.
- D. Laugh and talk with your child about school experiences and listen to what is said about your child's school day experiences.
- E. Stress attendance. If the child is ill, home is the best place; otherwise, your child needs to be at school.
- F. Keep open the lines of communication open between yourself and your child's teacher. Inform the teacher of any family situation which could influence your child's behavior. Also, if he/she is reluctant to go to school, let the teacher know so that together you can find the reason.
- G. Take your child to the library and encourage reading for pleasure.
- H. Stress organization of school notebooks, materials, etc...
- I. Provide pencils, glue, scissors, paper, and all other required school supplies for your child to use.
- J. Work at home with skills taught at school.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

We welcome your requests for conferences. It is very important that you know what is going on with your child at school. Please schedule all conferences by calling the office at (512)-494-1076 for the middle school and (512) 928-0118 for the elementary school. At this time, someone will assist you in arranging a conference with your child's teacher and/or principal.

To assist you in conducting a productive conference, the following guide is available for your use:

Before the Conference

Decide what you want to ask the teacher. Discuss the forthcoming conference with your child to see if there is anything he/she would like you to talk about with the teacher. Discuss concerns with your spouse. Ideally, both parents/guardians should attend the conference, to make certain all concerns are addressed.

Determine what you can tell the teacher about your child. The teacher sees only one side of your child and there may be things you know that could help the teacher better understand certain behaviors or problems.

After the Conference

Discuss the conference with your child. Be positive. Point out the problems before discussing areas that may have been identified for improvement.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students who have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May need Special Education.

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. The written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of procedural Safeguards- Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

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

Contact Person: Special Education Coordinator

Phone Number: (512) 494-1076