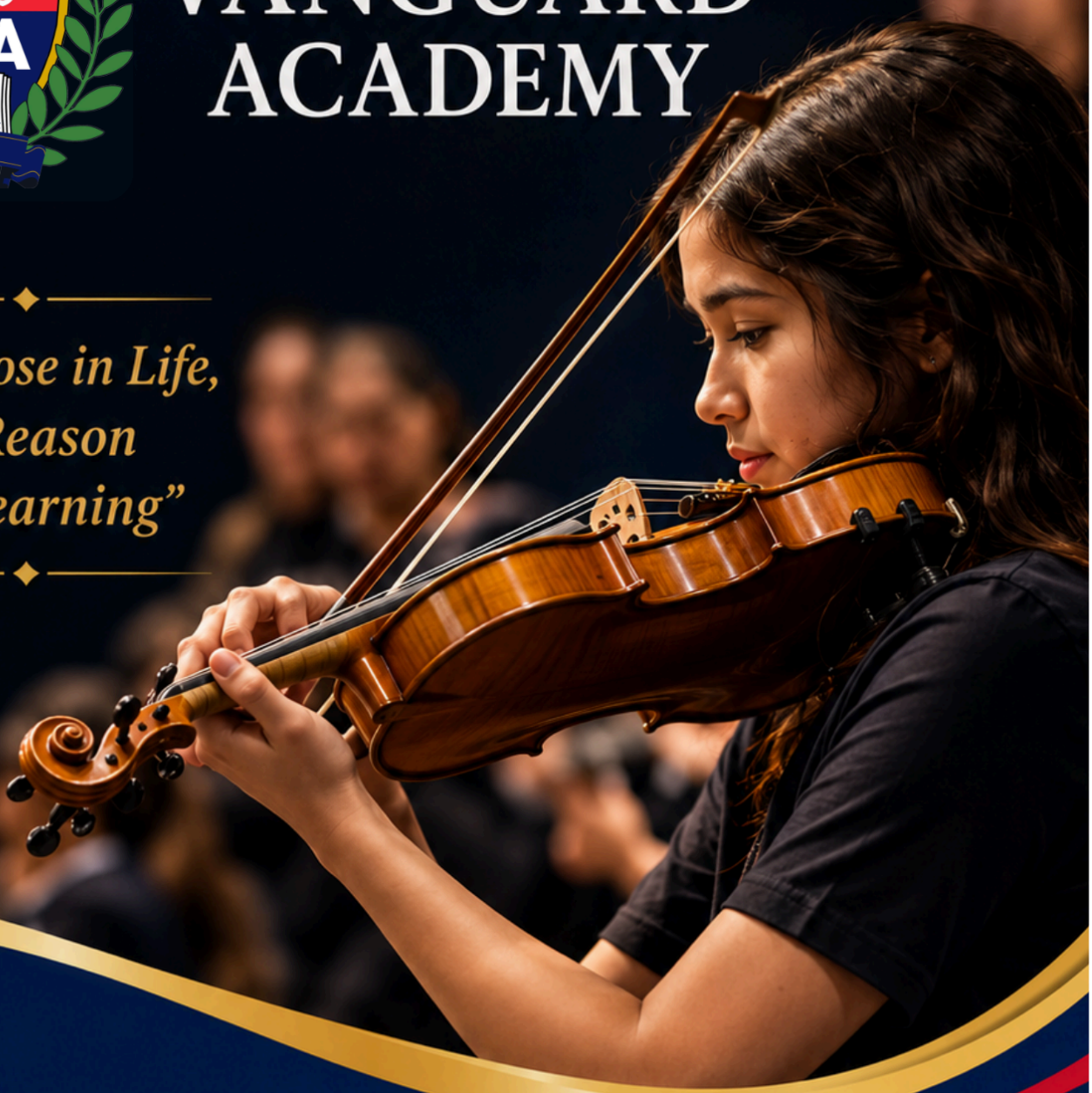
VANGUARD ACADEMY

"A Purpose in Life, A Reason for Learning"



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026–2027

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Preface

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to Vanguard Academy! We look forward to a productive and rewarding 2026–2027 school year. For each student to succeed, it requires the partnership and shared commitment of students, parents, and staff. This Student/Parent Handbook is a key resource to help us achieve that goal together.

The Handbook outlines our school's goals, services, expectations, and procedures. It serves as an essential guide for understanding what Vanguard Academy expects of its students and families, what you can expect from us, and how we will collectively support our educational mission.

At the heart of our campus culture are three core values that guide student behavior and community interaction: **Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible**. These principles are the foundation of a positive learning environment and are reflected throughout the policies and expectations detailed in this Handbook.

The Handbook is divided into five sections:

1. General school policies and procedures
2. Health and safety information
3. Academic and grading expectations
4. Parent rights and responsibilities
5. Notices on student records, technology use, and communication devices

Please note: the term "parent" refers to a student's parent, legal guardian, or other adult assuming school-related responsibility.

This Handbook is updated annually and aligned with policy set by the Vanguard Academy Board of Directors. In the event of a conflict, the most recent Board-approved policy will take precedence. Any significant updates will be communicated through newsletters or official notices.

We encourage all parents to review the Handbook with their students and to keep it handy for reference throughout the school year. For any questions, please contact your campus Principal.

Please complete and return the "Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook" form located at the back of this Handbook to your school office.

On behalf of the entire Vanguard Academy staff and community, we wish you a safe, respectful, responsible, and successful school year!

Warm regards,

Vanguard Academy Administration

"A Purpose in Life, A Reason for Learning"

Charter Schools

About Vanguard Academy

In February 1996, the Texas Legislature authorized the establishment of open-enrollment charter schools—independent public schools that operate with increased flexibility while remaining accountable for student performance and fiscal responsibility. Vanguard Academy, Inc. was incorporated on September 19, 2000, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It currently serves over 6,800 students across Edinburg, Mission, Pharr, and Alamo, with a dedicated staff of approximately 900 employees.

Vanguard Academy is governed by a four-member Board of Trustees and maintains its administrative offices at 2510 S. Veterans Blvd., Edinburg, Texas. While many state regulations for traditional public schools have been waived for charter schools, Vanguard Academy adheres to all state accreditation requirements and upholds high standards for academic and operational excellence.

As a school of choice, enrollment in Vanguard Academy is a privilege. All policies outlined in this handbook are expected to be followed to ensure a safe, supportive, and effective learning environment.

"A Purpose in Life, A Reason for Learning"

Elementary Campus Information

School Opens: 7:15 a.m.

Office Hours: 7:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Instructional Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

After School Program: 3:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Campus	Principal	Address	Phone
Beethoven Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 5th grade	Laura Sanchez	2215 S. Veterans Blvd Edinburg, TX 78539	(956) 318 – 0211
Monet Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 5th grade	Dr. Anna Gonzalez	1020 N. Los Ebanos Rd. Mission, Texas 78572	(956) 403-5020
Mozart Early Child Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 5th grade	Rosa Garcia	135 E. Business 83 Alamo, TX 78516	(956) 403-5030
Mozart Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 5th grade	Maria Cantu	155 E. Business 83 Alamo, TX 78516	(956) 702 - 2548
Picasso Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 5th grade	Sonia Martinez	901 S. Athol Pharr, TX 78577	(956) 702 - 0134
Rembrandt Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3 – 4th grade	Mayra Padilla	1200 E. Kelly Ave. Bldg. 1 Pharr, TX 78577	(956) 283 - 1700
Van Gogh Elementary Pre-Kindergarten 3– 5th grade	Aisha Loya	1407 W. Moore Rd. Pharr, TX 78577	(956) 403 - 5000
Palmview Head Start	Martina Garcia Director		(956) 583-4435

Secondary Campus Information

School Opens: 7:15 a.m.

Office Hours: 7:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Instructional Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

After School Program: 3:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Campus	Principal	Address	Phone
Beethoven Early College High School 6th Grade - 12th Grade	Jose Gonzalez	2215 S. Veterans Blvd Edinburg, TX 78539	(956) 318 – 0211
Mozart P-TECH Early College High School 6th Grade – 12th Grade	Angelica Martinez	154 E. Crockett Ave. Alamo, TX 78516	(956) 223 - 2030
Rembrandt P-TECH Early College High School 5th Grade – 12th Grade	Dina Cano	1200 E. Kelly Ave. Bldg. 2 Pharr, TX 78577	(956) 283 - 0600
Van Gogh Secondary 6th Grade – 10th Grade	Vanessa Gonzalez	1407 W. Moore Rd. Pharr, TX 78577	(956) 403 - 5000

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Mission

At Vanguard Academy, we are dedicated to cultivating multilingual learners who are fully prepared to excel in college, career, and beyond. Our mission is rooted in a commitment to elevated standards, achieved through unwavering rigor, high expectations, and robust support systems, ensuring our students are well – equipped for success in an ever-evolving world.

1.2 Vision

Vanguard Academy aspires to be at the forefront of educational leadership. We are dedicated to preparing multilingual learners for success in a global society and economy. Our vision is to lead the way in fostering cultural competence, academic excellence, and adaptability, ensuring our students are equipped to thrive in an interconnected world.

1.3 Board of Directors

Dr. Luzelma Canales, ***Chair***
Mr. Arnaldo Gonzalez, ***Vice Chair***
Mr. Timothy Brown, ***Secretary / Treasurer***
Dr. Paula Garcia, ***Member***

1.4 About the School

Vanguard Academy is a tuition-free public charter school district with over twenty years of experience in cultivating great minds and excellent leaders. In 2001, the first Vanguard Academy campus was founded with 32 students in Pharr, Texas. Today, Vanguard Academy is proud to serve nearly 6,800 students, grades PreK3 through 12th on 10 different campuses throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

1.5 Statement of Non-Discrimination

Vanguard Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. Vanguard Academy complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"); Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

As required by Title IX, Vanguard Academy does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement applies to admission to and employment with Vanguard Academy. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to Vanguard Academy Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Any questions or concerns about Vanguard Academy's compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements:

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding sex-based discrimination is Human Resources Executive Director, Mr. Abraham Gallegos and can be reached at (956) 781-1701 or by email or

agallegos@vanguardac.net or agallegos@vanguardacademy.net. The office is located at 2510 S. Veterans Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78539.

- The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Director of Special Programs, Francisco Faticati who can be reached at (956) 781-1701 (ext. 1042) or by email at ffaticati@vanguardacademy.net. The office is located at 1407 W. Moore Rd., Pharr, TX 78577.

- The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Human Resources Executive Director, Mr. Abraham Gallegos and can be reached at (956) 781-1701 or by email agallegos@vanguardac.net or a.gallegos@vanguardacademy.net. The office is located at 2510 S. Veterans Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78539.

- All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Human Resources Executive Director, Mr. Abraham Gallegos and can be reached at (956) 781-1701 or by email agallegos@vanguardac.net or agallegos@vanguardacademy.net The office is located at 2510 S. Veterans Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78539.

1.6 General Admissions and Enrollment Information

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. Additionally, as allowed by Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code, Vanguard Academy may admit a child of a school employee regardless of whether the child resides in the geographic area served by Vanguard Academy. The total number of students enrolled in Vanguard Academy shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by Vanguard Academy based on occupancy limitations, code compliance and staffing requirements as deemed necessary.

In accordance with state law, Vanguard Academy does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.

Exclusion from Admission

As authorized by the Vanguard Academy charter and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), Vanguard Academy may exclude from admission those students who have:

1. Engaged in conduct outlined in Education Code 37.006 related to placement in a disciplinary alternative education program or a juvenile justice alternative education program;
2. Engaged in conduct outlined in Education Code 37.007 related to expulsion; or
3. Been convicted of a criminal offense or have a juvenile court adjudication.

Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery

Students wanting to attend Vanguard Academy must submit an application during the school's open enrollment period, which is designated by the school administration. Applications for admission are available at the central office or campus main office and online through the Vanguard Academy website.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission. If Vanguard Academy receives more applications than it has spots available in any grade level, it will conduct a random lottery. Each applicant selected during the lottery (up until all open seats are filled) will be offered admission. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the next school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment 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 will be added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who timely applied.

Families offered an enrollment seat will be sent a registration packet with instructions for registering. Families must complete and return the registration packet by the published deadline in order to secure enrollment. If an enrollment offer is declined or if you do not complete the registration packet by the established deadline, your child's seat will be offered to the next potential student on the waiting list.

Exceptions to Lottery Process: Federal guidelines permit Vanguard Academy to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending Vanguard Academy; siblings of students already admitted to or attending Vanguard Academy; and children of Vanguard Academy's founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of Vanguard Academy's total enrollment.

Transfer of Students Who Are Children of Peace Officers

On the request of a peace officer who is a parent of an enrolled student, the Board shall permit the transfer of the student(s) to another Vanguard Academy campus, pending available seats at the requested transfer school.

Transfer of Students Who Are Children of Service Members

On request of a service member (meaning an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, or the Texas National Guard) who is the parent of an enrolled student, the Board shall permit the transfer of the student(s) to another Vanguard Academy campus, pending available seats at the requested transfer school.

1.7 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001

Homeless children and youth are ensured specific educational rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001. "Children and youth who are homeless," as defined by this federal law, means and includes children who:

- Are abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain policies and procedures, including proof of residency requirements; immunization requirements; educational program placement; award of credit; eligibility requirements for participating in extracurricular activities; continuing enrollment in the "school of origin" or enrollment in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing; graduation requirements; and other related matters.

Questions concerning assistance offered to homeless students can be obtained from the Director of Mental & Behavioral Health & Wellbeing and McKinney-Vento Liaison, Maria Luisa Elizondo and can be reached at (956) 781-1701 or by email maelizondo@vanguardac.net. The office is located at 2510 S. Veterans, Edinburg, TX 78539.

1.8 Student Information

Any student admitted to Vanguard Academy must have records, such as a report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended, to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in Vanguard Academy for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in Vanguard Academy, the parent and school in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. Students will not be denied enrollment if they fail to meet this requirement.

Vanguard Academy will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parents' consent.

Food Allergy Information

Parents should notify Vanguard Academy when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

Students with special dietary needs due to food allergies or students who need other food modifications must have a physician complete a special dietary needs form available from Vanguard Academy.

Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board of Directors' policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

Establishing Identification

Any of the following documents are acceptable proof of identification and age: birth certificate; driver's license; passport; school ID card; records, or report card; military ID; hospital birth records; adoption records; church baptismal record; or any other legal document that establishes identity.

Undocumented Students

Enrollment may not be denied to children who are not legally admitted into the United States.

Residency Verification

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in Vanguard Academy, each student's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation, and other means, including, but not limited to:

1. A recently paid rent receipt,
2. A current lease agreement,
3. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
4. A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
5. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,

6. Visual inspection of the residence,
7. Interviews with people with relevant information, or
8. Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1st of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only).

Residency for Parents under Child Safety Placement Agreement: A parent or guardian who is the subject of a parental child safety placement agreement under Family Code 264.902 may establish residency by providing to Vanguard a copy of a letter from the Department of Family and Protective Services indicating that the child is the subject of such an agreement and that the address of the child's residence during the agreement is within Vanguard's boundaries.

Residency for Service Members: A person whose parent is an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, may establish residency by providing Vanguard Academy a copy of a military order requiring the parent's transfer to a military installation in the school's geographic boundaries. Proof of residence in Vanguard Academy geographic boundaries shall be provided not later than the 90th day after the arrival date specified in the order. "Residence" includes residence in a military temporary lodging facility.

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

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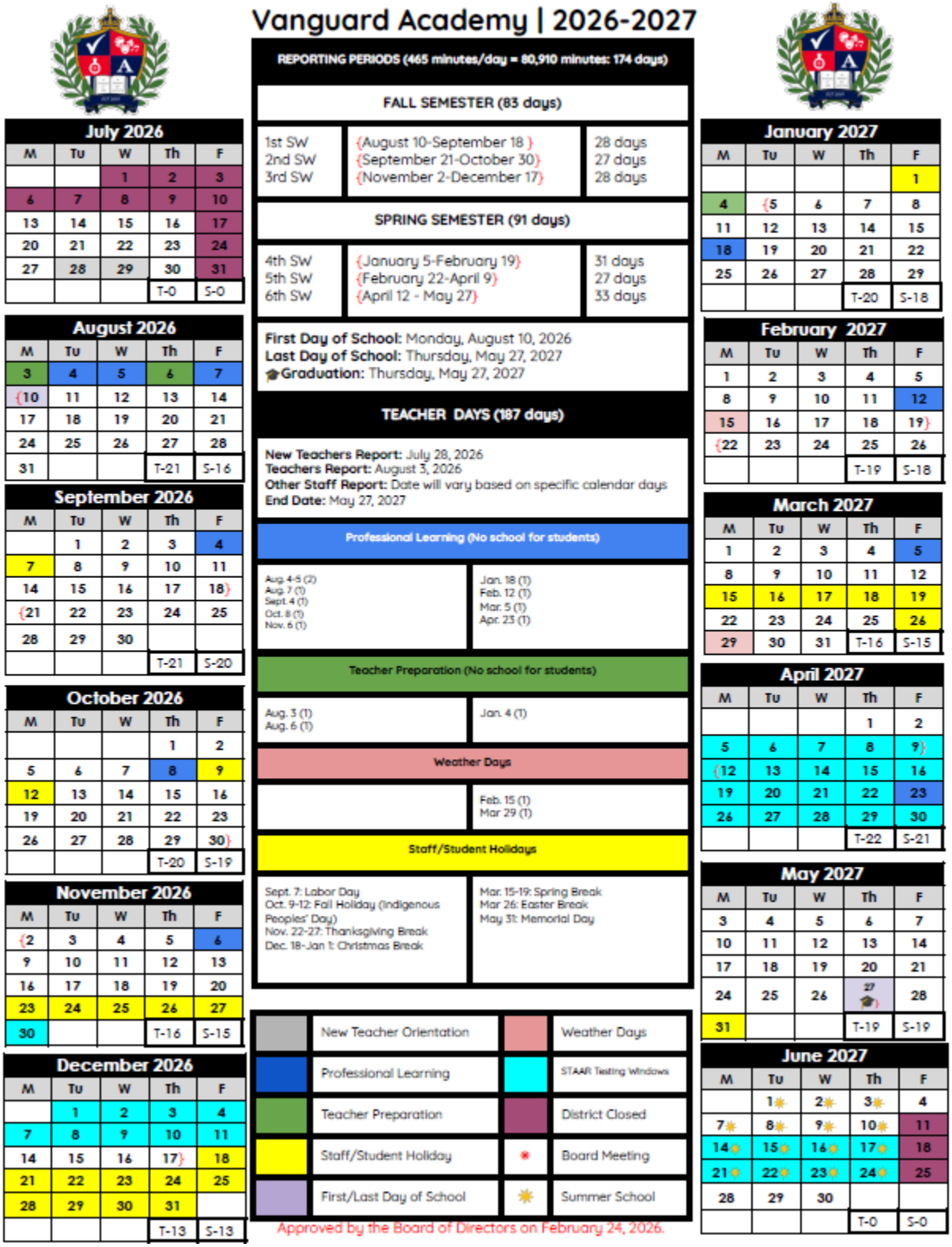
1.9 School Calendar



1.10 School Day

Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. and are dismissed at 3:45 p.m. Students may be dropped off as early as 7:15 a.m. They will be supervised, but there are no organized activities before the instructional day begins. Students enrolled in after-school programming or who are signed up for academic supervision may be on campus after the end of the school day.

1.11 Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Parents are not allowed past the front office foyer. Parents will not be allowed in classrooms once instruction begins at 8:00 am. Parents must drop-off their children at designated areas. For the safety of children and staff, parents are not allowed to walk their child/ren to their classroom.

Students are expected to be picked up promptly at dismissal time at 3:45 pm. Parents shall observe designated procedures for pick up and remain in their vehicles when picking up students. Students who are not picked up on time will be sent to the campus front office. Parents must sign their child/ren out in the campus front office when picking up after the dismissal time.

Refer to campus policies/parent volunteer policies for specific campus procedures.

Students participating in extracurricular or school-sponsored activities are also subject to the Student Pick-Up and Supervision After School-Sponsored Activities requirements found in Section 3.11 of this Handbook.

1.12 Student Drivers and Parking

Parking passes are for Juniors and Seniors only. Parking in designated student parking areas is available through parental/guardian permission and administrator approval. Parking is a **PRIVILEGE**, not a necessity, and may be revoked for failure to comply with school rules or parking guidelines set forth by Vanguard Academy. *Vanguard Academy is **NOT** responsible for any damage or loss of contents incurred to a vehicle on school grounds*. The student must possess the following requirements:

- A student's valid driver's license (not a learner's permit) and student ID (when available) **of the student that will be driving and parking on campus**.
- Proof of insurance, to include the student, must be presented in order to receive a parking pass.

Copies will be kept on record for the duration of the school year. Student parking passes are allocated on a year-to-year basis.

1.13 Attendance

Consistent school attendance is an essential component of each student's education. Absence from school will affect a student's ability to succeed in class; therefore, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Additionally, state law mandates compulsory school attendance for children of a certain age, and Vanguard Academy policy deals with attendance for course credit and a student's final grade. These laws are discussed below.

Texas Compulsory Attendance Law

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

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

Ages 6–18

State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended-year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

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

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 19 years of age or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, Vanguard Academy may revoke the student's enrollment, except that Vanguard Academy may not revoke the enrollment on a day on which the student is physically present at school. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. Prior to revoking the student's enrollment, the school shall issue a warning letter to the student after the third unexcused absence stating that the student's enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking enrollment, Vanguard Academy may impose a behavior improvement plan.

Tracking Student Attendance

Vanguard Academy staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered "truant" and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. Vanguard Academy may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

> *Notice to Parents*:
> Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093; and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a), and the student is subject to expulsion/disenrollment in accordance with the Vanguard Academy's Student Code of Conduct
>
> Vanguard Academy shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent is needed to discuss the absences.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether the absences were due to extenuating circumstances and how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade.

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absence:

1. All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered, with consideration given to special circumstances as defined by the Texas Education Code.
2. For a student transferring into Vanguard Academy after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
3. In reaching consensus about a student's absences, the Attendance Review Committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
4. The Attendance Review Committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
5. The Attendance Review Committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
6. The Attendance Review Committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
7. The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the Attendance Review Committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the Attendance Review Committee determines there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the Attendance Review Committee's decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent or designee. The appeal notice must be postmarked to the following address within 10 days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied: Vanguard Academy Charter Schools, 2510 S. Veterans Blvd., Edinburg, TX 78539.

The appeal notice will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors' meeting. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

1.14 Absence and Tardiness

When a student must be absent from school, parents are asked to call the school each day the student will be absent. Upon returning to school, the student must bring a note, signed by the parent, or a medical excuse signed and dated by a provider that describes the reason for the absence. Notes should be submitted to the data attendance specialist and may be scanned and emailed, submitted through the Vanguard Academy website, or faxed to the school. If a note is not received within three school days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.

The note must include the following:

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

Vanguard Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

Excused Absences

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

- A junior or senior student may be absent for up to two days per school year for purposes of, respectively, visiting a college or university and/or for a career investigation day for the purpose of determining the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, so long as the student obtains permission for the visit from the principal or designee, follows the school's procedures to verify the visit, and makes up any work missed due to the absence.
- Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.
- Absences of up to four days of school for a high school student who is 17 years of age or older to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that Vanguard Academy verifies the student's activities relating to pursuing enlistment.
- Absences of up to two days in a school year for service as an early voting clerk, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal prior to the absence and informs his or her teachers of the absence.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship.
- An absence for a student in 6th through 12th grade who misses school for the purpose of playing "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in Texas for a deceased veteran.
- An absence for a student who is 15 years of age or older to visit a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner license, provided that more than one day of school may not be excused during the period the student is enrolled in high school for the purpose of (i) obtaining a driver's license or (ii) obtaining a learner license, and the school verifies the student's visit to the driver's license office in accordance with procedures adopted by Vanguard Academy.
- An absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's parent provides on a form adopted by Vanguard Academy a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in Texas specifying the following information, as determined by the physician:
    - The student's illness;
    - The anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment; and
    - A statement that the illness makes the student's attendance infeasible during the anticipated period of absence.
- Documented and temporary absence resulting from health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders or appointments with mental health professionals, if the student either begins classes or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus.
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who need to attend:
    - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
    - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.
- On request from a parent, and in accordance with requirements under Education Code 25.0875, absence for at least one but not more than five hours a week to attend a release time course in religious instruction offered by a private entity.
- Religious or holy day observances. For purposes of excusing a student from attending school to observe a religious holy day, Vanguard Academy may not require documentation from a clergy member or other religious leader, and shall accept a note from the student's parent verifying the purpose of the student's absence.
- Required court appearances.
- Service as an election clerk.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and service as an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by Vanguard Academy.

The only additional excused absences are for personal illness, death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, or member of the immediate household), a school-related absence or an absence approved in advance by the principal due to extenuating circumstances.

- Illness – After three consecutive days missed, the school must have a doctor's excuse. Doctor's excuses from another country will not be accepted. Excuse needs to be turned in within three days or absences will remain unexcused.
- Death of an immediate family member – immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, and sibling of the student or person living in the home (parent note required). Contact the campus attendance staff for information.
- Emergency/Illness in immediate family members - immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, and sibling of the student or person living in the home (parent note is required).

All appointments must be accompanied by an excuse. It is recommended that doctor's appointments be made after dismissal. Any doctor's excuse that has been altered will result in an unexcused absence. To be considered temporarily absent, the student must begin classes or return to class on the same day of the appointment. The appointment must be supported by a document, such as a note, from the health care professional. In the event of an unclear excuse or unusual circumstances, the Principal or designee will make the final determination.

Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the principal due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence. Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law, Vanguard Academy reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

Tardiness and Late Arrival

Nearly all tardiness is avoidable. If a student arrives late to school, a parent must report to the school office to complete a tardy slip. Repeated tardiness will result in a parent conference with a campus administrator to discuss possible solutions.

Make-Up Work

If a student misses class for any reason, a teacher may assign make-up work that incorporates the instructional objectives for the class and that will assist the student to master the essential knowledge and skills necessary to meet subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. Teachers will provide students and parents with additional information regarding penalties for failure to complete make-up work within the time allotted, and the process for making up tests missed due to absence.

Driver's License Attendance Verification

The Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") is required to verify the attendance records of a student between the ages of 16 and 18 that is seeking to obtain or renew a driver's license. In order for DPS to access this information or, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the attendance information to DPS, written parental permission must be obtained. Students may obtain the required Verification of Enrollment form from the school office.

Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

1.15 Release of Students from School

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and in accordance with campus sign-out procedures. Additionally, state rules require that parental consent be obtained before a student under the age of 18 may leave campus at any point in the school day.

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments or meetings with other professionals should be scheduled at times when the student will not miss instructional time, if possible.

1.16 Closed Campus

Students are not permitted to leave campus for lunch. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria. Parents may only bring lunch for their own children. Students or adults may not bring or give away food to other students during lunch times.

Interior/Exterior Doors Locked

To increase the safety and security of school facilities for staff, students, and visitors, Vanguard Academy has mandated the following:

- All interior/exterior doors at each facility will be kept locked at all times.
- Staff are to conduct regular and frequent inspection sweeps of the interior and exterior doors to each facility. It is the goal of these regular and frequent inspection sweeps to identify and remedy vulnerabilities to the safety and security of all Vanguard Academy facilities.

1.17 Withdrawals

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student under 18 years of age may be withdrawn from school only by a parent, a legal guardian or a person standing in the parental role. Vanguard Academy requests notice at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. Parents may obtain a withdrawal form from the main office. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled, and must sign the withdrawal request to document that the student will continue to be enrolled in a school as required by compulsory attendance laws.

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

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records.

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

Involuntary Withdrawal

A student under the age of 19 may be withdrawn ten days after he or she last attended school if his or her whereabouts are unknown.

Additionally, Vanguard Academy may revoke the enrollment of a student 19 years of age or older who has more than five unexcused absences in one semester.

1.18 Dress and Grooming

The purpose of the Vanguard Academy District Dress Code is to foster a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment that promotes academic success and minimizes distractions. The dress code encourages personal responsibility, reflects high standards of professionalism, and prepares students for future educational and workplace settings. By establishing clear expectations, we aim to support equity, enhance school spirit, and ensure that all students and staff are dressed in a manner that aligns with the values and vision of Vanguard Academy. Students must come to school clean and neatly groomed and wearing clothing that will not be a health or safety hazard to the student or others, and that will not distract from the educational atmosphere of the school. Students are required to arrive in proper attire every day.

As authorized by state law and the Vanguard Academy charter, students are required to wear uniforms to school. Parents must provide their student(s) with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. Vanguard Academy may provide a uniform for economically disadvantaged students. A request for school assistance for purchasing uniforms must be made in writing to the principal or designee and include evidence of the inability to pay. Further details are available in the principal's office. A parent may choose for his or her student(s) to be exempted from the requirement of wearing a uniform if the parent provides a written statement that, as determined by the Board of Directors, states a bona fide religious or philosophical objection to the requirement.

Students who do not follow the school's guidelines for personal attire and appearance may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, a parent will be contacted to bring an acceptable change of clothing to school.

Vanguard Academy students are expected to dress in a manner that conveys respect for their learning community and communicates a message of personal confidence and pride. To help prevent loss and make it easier to identify belongings, all clothing must have the student's name clearly written on a sewn-in or attached tag. The following specific guidelines must be adhered to and students will be written up for not following these guidelines.

Determination of dress code violations is at the discretion of the administration. Furthermore, administrators will conduct inspections for compliance to dress code.

All Students

1. Vanguard Academy students are required to attend each school day in full uniform, starting on the first day of school and continuing through the last day of school.
2. A parent/guardian will be required to bring a change of clothing for any child not wearing the school uniform.
3. All students must wear a Vanguard Academy logo uniform shirt that must be purchased from the school or school approved vendor and may not be substituted with plain color polo shirts or dry fit polo shirts.
4. No sweaters, cardigans and sweatshirts without logos may be worn over or under the uniform.
    - If a sweater, cardigans, or sweatshirt is worn, the school uniform top must be worn.

5. Hoodies may not be worn and may not be sold by any campus organization.
6. No hats, caps, hoods, sweatbands, or shower caps, etc. will be worn inside the school building. No bandanas may be worn or tied around the body.
7. No sunglasses are permitted to be worn inside the building.
8. **Leggings, Joggers, Yoga Pants, Spandex, Jeggings, Cargo Pants, Black Jeans and torn/faded blue jeans are not allowed or are allowed as substitute pants for the school uniform. The following are not allowed as school uniform pants: leggings, joggers, yoga pants, spandex, jeggings, cargo pants, black jeans, or torn/faded blue jeans.**
9. Tattoos and gang-related symbols are not allowed and must be covered at all times while
10. on school property or at school-sponsored events.
11. No torn or tattered clothing is allowed.
12. Shoes which are noisy, and/or present a safety concern are not allowed. Steel-toed footwear, clogs, flip flops and shoes with heels are not allowed.
13. Oversized, ill-fitting pants and other similar articles of clothing are not allowed
14. Not allowed. Trench coats, dusters and overcoats are not allowed. Warm-up type of pants with or without fasteners down the legs are not permitted.
15. School uniform jackets can be purchased through the school or designated vendor, and these will be the only jackets that will be allowed to be worn with the school uniform.
16. Jewelry that is excessively distracting or disrupts the learning environment is not permitted. This includes visible body piercings such as nose rings or other facial piercings.
17. Pants must be worn in a proper manner, on the waist. Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
18. Footwear such as sandals, slippers, slides, or Crocs are not allowed. Students must wear closed-toe shoes appropriate for a school setting.
19. **Hair Color and Hairstyles**
    a. Hair coloring and highlights are permitted when the finished color is a naturally occurring hair color. Bright or non-natural colors—including green, pink, yellow, blue, purple, orange, or bright red—are prohibited. Hair that has been bleached and left with a bright yellow, orange-yellow, or unfinished brassy appearance must be corrected to an allowable hair color.
    b. Prohibited hairstyles include mohawks, spiked hair, rat tails, and hairstyles containing etched, shaved, dyed, or painted designs. Prohibited designs include lines, zigzags, stars, letters, logos, symbols, and other identifiable patterns, whether created with one or multiple colors.
    c. Hairstyles featuring shaved sides with substantially longer hair on the top or back are prohibited.
    d. These requirements apply consistently to all students. Campus administration will address hair colors and hairstyles specifically prohibited by this section.
20. **Cosmetics and Facial Decorations**
    a. Students may wear cosmetics and makeup. Facial markings, drawings, decorative designs, symbols, face paint, or similar adornments that materially and substantially disrupt the educational environment, interfere with school operations, create a health or safety concern, or impede student identification may be prohibited or require modification by campus administration.

Dress Code – School Uniforms Required

Boys

1. For safety and to minimize distractions, visible body piercings (including earrings, nose studs, or other facial piercings) are not permitted on school premises or at school-sponsored events. This applies to all students and includes the use of plastic spacers or placeholders.
2. Hair must be clean and neatly combed out of the eyes and face; this includes the forehead which is part of the face.
3. Sideburns and mustache must be kept trimmed and should not exceed ½ inch in width or extend beyond the earlobe.

4. Beards, goatees, and mustaches are permitted but must be neatly groomed and closely trimmed to the face.
5. Layering shirts under or over the school uniform is permitted; however, all additional layers must be in neutral colors such as black, white, gray, or navy to maintain a consistent and professional appearance.
6. Leggings, joggers, yoga pants, spandex, jeggings, cargo pants, black jeans, or torn/faded blue jeans cannot be worn as uniform pants

Girls

1. Shorts must reach at least two inches above the center of the kneecap. Shorts must be worn appropriately at the waist and may not be rolled or altered to shorten the length.
2. Layering shirts under or over the school uniform is permitted; however, all additional layers must be in neutral colors such as black, white, gray, or navy to maintain a consistent and professional appearance.
3. Leggings, joggers, yoga pants, spandex, or jeggings, cargo pants or jeans **cannot** be worn as pants.
4. Revealing, form fitting and bare midriff uniform tops/shirts are not allowed.
5. No body piercing, except for ears (must not be distracting) is permitted.

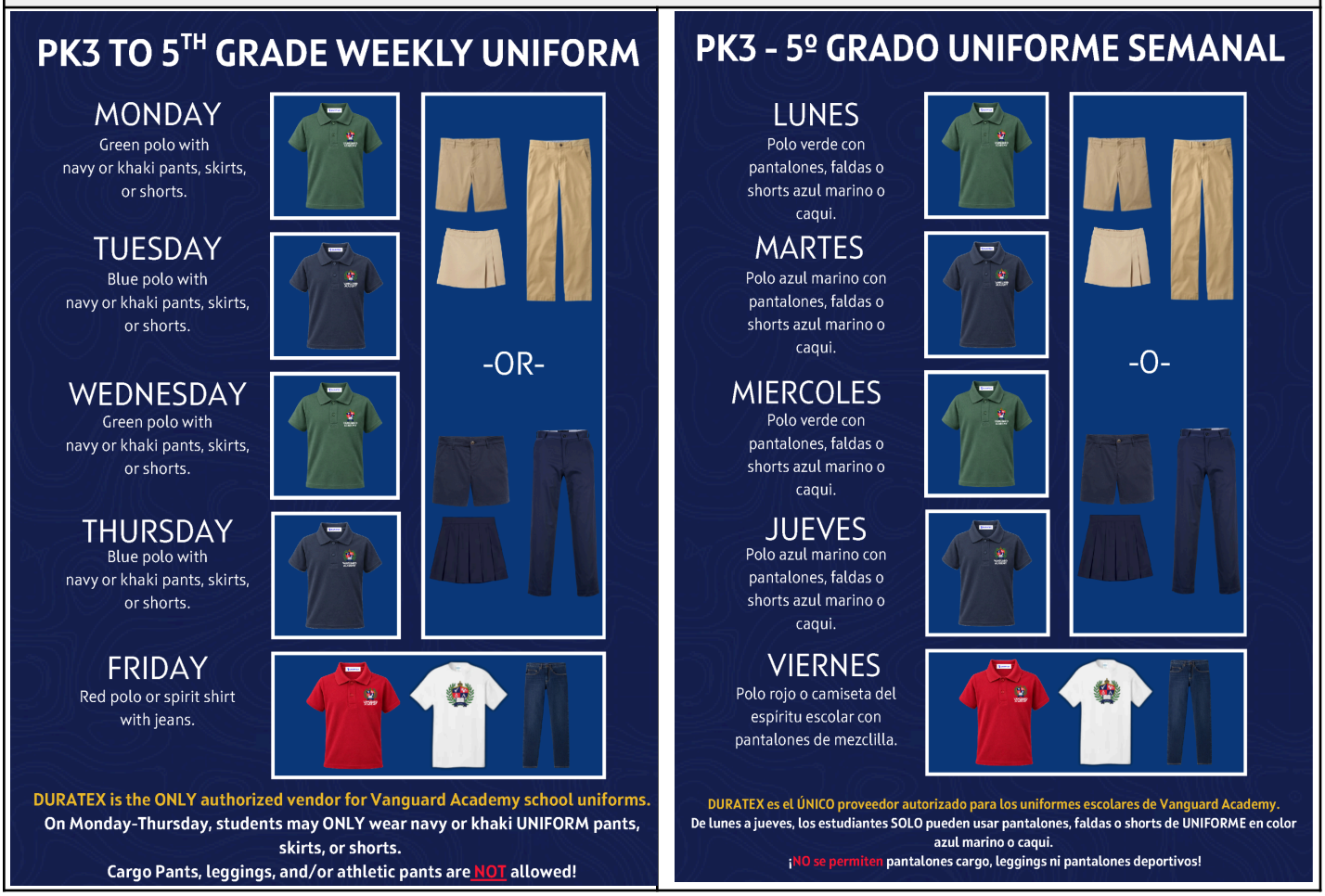
****Administrative review will be the final decision on all of the above items.***

Vanguard Academy's dress and grooming policy, including any dress or grooming policy for extracurricular activities, will not discriminate against a hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

Vanguard Academy will periodically review its dress and grooming policies, and make changes as needed.

While it is inevitable that there will be differences of opinion as to the appropriateness of dress, grooming, and/or determining whether or not a student's attire is disruptive or distracting to the educational environment of the school, the final determination will be made by the principal or designee. Any student who does not comply with the dress code will be removed from the regular school setting until the student complies with this code.

Pre-Kinder 3 - 5th Grade Students



Friday College Shirt Day—Head Start and Elementary Students

Effective September 2, 2026, Head Start and elementary students may wear a college or university shirt with jeans on Fridays. Shirts and jeans must comply with the district dress code.

Viernes de Camisetas Universitarias—Estudiantes de Head Start y Primaria

A partir del 2 de septiembre de 2026, los estudiantes de Head Start y primaria podrán usar una camiseta de una institución de educación superior con pantalones de mezclilla los viernes. Tanto la camiseta como los pantalones deberán cumplir con el código de vestimenta del distrito.

Head Start Students





***Friday College Shirt Day—Head Start Students**
Effective September 2, 2026, Head Start students may wear a college or university shirt with jeans on Fridays. Shirts and jeans must comply with the district dress code.

***Viernes de Camisetas Universitarias—Estudiantes de Head Start**
A partir del 2 de septiembre de 2026, los estudiantes de Head Start podrán usar una camiseta de una institución de educación superior con pantalones de mezclilla los viernes. Tanto la camiseta como los pantalones deberán cumplir con el código de vestimenta del distrito.

9th – 12th Grade Students
(NO shorts or skirts permitted at any Secondary campuses)

9TH TO 12TH GRADE WEEKLY UNIFORM

MONDAY
Red polo with navy or khaki pants.

TUESDAY
Navy blue polo or royal blue polo with navy or khaki pants.

WEDNESDAY
Red polo with navy or khaki pants.

THURSDAY
Navy blue polo or royal blue polo with navy or khaki pants.

FRIDAY
Red polo, college shirt, or spirit shirt with jeans.



DURATEX is the ONLY authorized vendor for Vanguard Academy school uniforms.
On Monday-Thursday, students may ONLY wear navy or khaki UNIFORM pants.
Cargo Pants, Leggings, and/or athletic pants are NOT allowed!

9º A 12º GRADO UNIFORME SEMANAL

LUNES
Polo rojo con pantalón azul marino o caqui.

MARTES
Polo azul marino o polo azul rey con pantalón azul marino o caqui.

MIERCOLES
Polo rojo con pantalón azul marino o caqui.

JUEVES
Polo azul marino o polo azul rey con pantalón azul marino o caqui.

VIERNES
Polo rojo, camisa universitaria o camiseta escolar con pantalon de mezclilla.



DURATEX es el ÚNICO proveedor autorizado para los uniformes escolares de Vanguard Academy.
De lunes a jueves, los estudiantes SOLO pueden usar pantalones de UNIFORME azul marino o caqui.
¡No se permiten pantalones cargo, leggings ni pantalones deportivos!



1.19 Student Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, notebooks, calculators, headsets, etc. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep, if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials;
2. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities;
3. A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies or equipment;
4. A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide the student's own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety;
5. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.;
6. A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan;
7. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the school;
8. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student;
9. A parking fee;
10. A fee for replacement of a student identification card;
11. A fee for an optional course offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on campus or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school's regular staff;
12. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue library books; or

13. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

Vanguard Academy may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver must be made in writing to the Superintendent or designee, and include evidence of inability to pay. Details for the fee waiver are available in the campus office.

Families are responsible for paying all fees associated with extra-curricular programs, including clubs, parking, athletics, fine arts, University Interscholastic League ("UIL") academics, and academic supervision prior to participation.

1.20 Textbooks and Curriculum Materials

State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class, except for dual credit courses. Materials must be used by the students as directed by the teacher and treated with care. A student who is issued damaged materials should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. However, a student will be provided textbooks and educational materials for use during the school day. Vanguard Academy may reduce or waive the payment requirement if the student is from a low-income family. Release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged textbooks.

A parent is entitled to request that Vanguard Academy allow a student to take home any instructional materials used by the student. Vanguard Academy will honor the request, subject to availability of the instructional materials. A student who takes home instructional materials must return the materials to school at the beginning of the next school day if requested to do so by the student's teacher. Vanguard Academy must provide the instructional materials to the student in printed format if the student does not have reliable access to technology at the student's home. Vanguard Academy also is not required to purchase printed copies of instructional materials that the school would otherwise not purchase; Vanguard Academy may provide the student with relevant electronic instructional materials.

1.21 Review and Reporting of Library Materials

Vanguard Academy will comply with current guidelines issued by the Texas Education Agency concerning the review and reporting of library materials that are rated as sexually relevant material under Texas Education Code §35.002(a) by a library material vendor.

1.22 Food Service

Vanguard Academy participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches. Guidelines set by the Texas Department of Agriculture ("TDA") and United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") are followed to meet the nutritional needs of all students. Menus may be obtained at the school office.

Free breakfasts and lunches are available to all students in the district.

Students will have a designated lunch period. Breakfast and lunch meals will be provided at no charge. The Health Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 required schools to implement nutrition standards for school breakfast, lunch and a la carte foods. All meals are planned to meet the caloric needs of students in different age/grade groups. Meals are lower in sodium, saturated fat, trans-fat free and include whole grain rich products. In addition, meals include a variety of colorful fruits, vegetables, and milk that is fat-

free or low fat.

Lunch brought from home should include a non-carbonated beverage, such as water or 100% juice. **Energy drinks, sports drinks, and carbonated beverages are not allowed.** Parents are allowed to bring prepared lunch meals to school for students to consume. Students are not allowed to share these types of meals with other students to avoid behavioral situations and/or allergy related issues.

Expectations for appropriate student conduct in the cafeterias will be upheld. Vanguard Academy campuses are closed campuses and students are not allowed to leave the campuses for lunch.

Classroom Parties
Classroom celebrations offering foods and beverages will be allowed at schools during the five nutrition exemption days for special event days per year. These events must be pre-approved by the **Superintendent** and be submitted to the CNP. All established meal programs and mealtimes must be maintained and all students provided access to participate. Campus administration will be responsible for ensuring the safety of students. The following days have been selected:

- **Christmas** – Last day of school before Christmas vacation
- **Valentine's Day**
- **Easter** – Last day of school before Easter vacation
- **Cinco de Mayo Celebration**
- **Last Day of School**

All schools are expected to comply with these guidelines. In celebration of students' birthdays, balloons, flowers and stuffed animals can be taken to the school's front office; the office will deliver the items to the students at 2:45 p.m. to minimize classroom disruptions and/or damaged gifts.

State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines
The TDA places strict limits on any food or drink provided or sold to students other than through Vanguard Academy's food and nutrition services. More detailed information may be obtained at the school office or online at www.sqaremeals.org.

Beverage Policy Statement
To promote a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment, Vanguard Academy does not permit students to bring coffee, carbonated beverages, or energy drinks onto campus or into classrooms. Students are encouraged to bring water or other approved beverages that support health and wellness.

Sales for Personal Financial Gain
Students, parents, and visitors may not sell, distribute, or solicit the purchase of food, beverages, candy, snacks, desserts, or other consumable items on school property for personal financial gain. All fundraising activities involving the sale of food or beverages must be officially sponsored by a Vanguard Academy campus, department, student organization, club, athletic program, or other school-approved group and must receive prior administrative approval. Unauthorized sales of food or beverages on school property or at school-sponsored events are prohibited.

1.23 School-Sponsored Trips / Field Trips

Vanguard Academy periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

Vanguard Academy may ask a parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask a parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

Vanguard Academy may (as allowed by law) require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, students will not be denied participation because of financial need.

1.24 Transportation

Vanguard Academy does not provide regular transportation to and from school, unless required by a student's Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") for a student with disabilities.
However, Vanguard Academy may provide transportation in school vehicles for educational field trips and participation in athletic and other extracurricular events.

Riding a school vehicle is a privilege. Drivers have the authority to maintain discipline and require seating charts. When riding a school vehicle, students are held to behavioral standards and core values (Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be Safe) established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

Students will:

Be Respectful

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Treat the bus, the driver, and all passengers with respect.
- Respect bus property—vandalism is prohibited.
- Keep the bus clean and pick up after yourself. Deposit trash in the garbage can at the front of the bus.
- Respect the personal property of other students at bus stops and on the bus.

Be Responsible

- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly fashion.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Ensure the vehicle and its equipment remain free from drawing, writing, or any defacement or destruction.

Be Safe

- Arrive at your designated bus stop at least five minutes before the scheduled arrival time.
- Keep a safe distance from the bus until it comes to a complete stop.
- Load and unload in an orderly manner.
- Use Level 2 voice (only the person in your seat should hear you).
- Remain seated unless entering or exiting the vehicle.
- Keep head, hands, arms, legs, and objects inside the vehicle at all times.
- Wait for the driver's signal before leaving or crossing in front of the vehicle.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in the vehicle. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities.

If a student with a disability is receiving school transportation as a result of an IEP, the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee will have the discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences related to inappropriate behavior in a school vehicle.

1.25 Transcripts and Academic Achievement Records

Vanguard Academy maintains an academic achievement record (or transcript) for each student enrolled. Transcripts list personal student data, give complete scholastic grades, and report student activities,

honors, and scores on standardized achievement tests. Requests for transcripts should be made to the campus counselor. Students are provided with free official transcripts.

Official transcripts may be picked up from the campus registrar five business days after the request is submitted except at the end of the semester. Grade point averages and class rank are recalculated at the end of each semester and updated transcripts are not available until the end of the third business week after the end of the semester.

1.26 Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, & Other Original Work

Teachers may display student work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, Vanguard Academy will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Vanguard Academy website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. Vanguard Academy will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

1.27 Distribution of Materials or Documents

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for Vanguard Academy may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the Superintendent or designee. Such items may include school posters, brochures, murals, etc.

Non-School Materials

Students must obtain express prior approval of the superintendent or designee before distributing, posting, selling, or circulating written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials on campus.

Non-school literature shall not be distributed by students on Vanguard Academy property if:

- The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
- The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
- The materials promote illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances.
- The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.
- The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
- The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
- The materials are hate literature or similar publications that scurrilously attack ethnic, religious, or racial groups or contain content aimed at creating hostility and violence, and the materials would materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of others.
- There is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others.

Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials over which Vanguard Academy does not exercise control shall not be sold, circulated, or distributed by persons or groups not associated with Vanguard Academy or a school support group on school premises unless the person or group obtains specific prior approval from the superintendent or

designee. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual. The requestor may appeal to the superintendent or designee's decision in accordance with Board policy.

1.28 Electronic Devices and Technology Resources

Definitions

A "personal communication device" includes: (i) a telephone; (ii) a cell phone, such as a smartphone or flip phone; (iii) a tablet; (iv) a smartwatch; (v) a radio device; (vi) a paging device; or (vii) any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication. (ex. Meta Glasses) A personal communication device does not include an electronic device provided to a student by Vanguard Academy.

"School property" means anywhere on a Vanguard Academy campus or in a Vanguard Academy facility where instruction is provided, including but not limited to: classrooms, hallways, gyms, cafeterias, band halls, and all other extracurricular spaces; outdoor fields, tracks, and other athletic areas; transportation provided by Vanguard Academy during the school day; all breezeways, courtyards, playgrounds, and other outdoor areas, specifically including all school parking lots. The term "school property" does not include off-site education locations where the facility is subject to rules outside the control of Vanguard Academy. This includes off-site dual credit college course attendance. While at an off-site location, students must follow any communication device requirements in place for that location.

"School day" means the time of day beginning with the first bell of the day and ending with the last bell of the day. (8:00 am to 3:45 pm) Before or after-school activities as part of Vanguard Academy's extracurricular offerings are not part of the school day.

"Use" means a device in possession of a student that is turned on and capable of receiving or sending a communication signal.

"Possession" means being on the person of the student, directly held, in pockets, in a backpack, in a pouch, or otherwise accessible and under the control of the student directly.

Use of Personal Communication Devices Prohibited

Vanguard Academy prohibits students from using personal communication devices while on school property during the school day.

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

Guidelines for Possession of Personal Communication Devices

Students may bring a personal communication device to school; however, all personal communication devices must be powered off, remain unused, and stored in the student's backpack. Students are prohibited from powering on or using their personal communication devices during the school day, and should not have a device in their hands at any time during the school day.

During state testing, all cell phones must be turned off and placed in the designated phone storage box to maintain a secure, distraction-free testing environment.

Confiscation and Disciplinary Consequences

Each Vanguard Academy campus will designate an appropriate secure location in the school where confiscated student personal communication devices will be kept, and a process to ensure the school can identify which student is the owner of each device that is confiscated.

All Vanguard Academy administrators and campus staff are authorized to confiscate a personal communication device used in violation of this policy. If a staff member confiscates a device, the staff member should bring the device to the designated storage location when convenient during the day, and the staff member remains responsible for the device until then.

If a student uses a personal communication device on school property during the school day, the device will be confiscated. School officials may power on and search the device if the student and parent have signed a Personal Communication Device Commitment Form permitting the student to possess an electronic communication device at school and there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation.

Personal communication devices also are never to be plugged into Vanguard Academy's wired network (e.g., computers, wall jacks, or other school technology equipment). Vanguard Academy also does not provide technical support for personal communication devices.

Disciplinary consequences for students who use a personal communication device while on school property during the school day will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including any progressive sanctions for ongoing violations.

Consequences for violations of this policy may consist of:

- **1st Offense** – Return confiscated device to the student at the end of the school day. The offense will be recorded in DMAC using the cell phone violation action code.
- **2nd Offense** – Return confiscated device to the parent or guardian at the end of the school and a warning issued to student and parent/guardian about further consequences. The offense will be recorded in DMAC using the cell phone violation action code.
- **3rd Offense** – Return confiscated device to the parent or guardian at the mandatory meeting. The offense will be recorded in DMAC using the cell phone violation action code.
- **4th Offense** – See the Student Code of Conduct

Exceptions for Authorized Use

Vanguard Academy authorizes the use of a personal communication device:

1. Necessary to implement an individualized education program or a plan created under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or a similar program or plan.
2. By a student with a documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician. The directive must be provided to the campus principal. A qualified physician shall mean a physician licensed to practice in Texas. The directive must state the conditions under which the student would need access to and use of the personal communication device during the school day on school property. The parent may be asked to sign consent for school staff to contact the physician should the school require additional information to comply with the directive. Use authorized under this provision will be conducted in a manner that minimizes disruption to instruction and the school environment, and may be subject to reasonable limitation on time, place, and manner as determined by the campus principal or designee. Authorization under this section can be revoked if the device is being used in a way that is found to disrupt the learning environment.
3. Necessary to comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of Vanguard Academy's safety protocols. If the Superintendent determines that a legally required health or safety requirement would authorize or require the use of a personal communication device, the Superintendent shall notify all appropriate staff of the circumstances in which this would be authorized or required. The Board must vote to approve any use under this exception.

Campus principals are authorized to use discretion in permitting student use of personal communication devices in emergency circumstances. Any use permitted under this exception must be reported to the Board during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

A student who is provided an exception in accordance with the above remains subject to disciplinary measures if the student uses a personal communication device outside the scope of the documented authorized use.

No Responsibility for Devices

If a personal communication device is in the possession of Vanguard Academy, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device stored and free from damage. However, Vanguard Academy is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen personal communication devices. Neither parents nor students will be compensated for devices that have been in Vanguard Academy's possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

Acceptable Use of Technology Resources

School-owned technology resources for instructional purposes may be issued to individual students. Use of these technological resources, which include Vanguard Academy's network systems and use of school equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form regarding use of these school resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

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

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child the "*Before You Text*: Sexting & Bullying Prevention, Education & Intervention Course," a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology and A Parent's Guide to School Safety Toolkit | Texas School Safety Center (txstate.edu).

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

1.29 Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the superintendent or designee to excuse their student from reciting a pledge.

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

1.30 Celebrate Freedom Week

For all public schools in Texas, the week of September 17 is designated as "Celebrate Freedom Week." During that time, social studies classes will provide instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and students in grades 3 and above will recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence. A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, Vanguard Academy determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation of the Declaration of Independence, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

1.31 Prayer and Meditation

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

1.32 Period of Prayer and Reading of Religious Text

In accordance with Board-approved policy, Vanguard Academy has elected to provide students the opportunity to participate in a voluntary period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text.

Participation in this activity is voluntary and requires written parental consent. Students will not be required to participate, and students whose parent or guardian has not provided written consent will not participate in the activity.

The period of prayer and reading of religious text will occur outside of instructional time and will be supervised by school personnel in accordance with district safety and supervision procedures. Participation may occur individually, in small groups, or in larger group settings as permitted by district procedures.

Students participating in the activity remain subject to all expectations outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and Student/Parent Handbook.

Parents or guardians may revoke consent for participation at any time by providing written notice to the district. Additional information regarding participation procedures and consent requirements is available through the district administration.

Section 2: Student Health and Safety

2.1 Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

The 89th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 12, requiring public schools to obtain written permission from a parent/guardian before providing health-related services to a student. A public school may only provide life-saving care without written consent. To receive all other health-related services, parents/guardians must provide written consent.

School health-related services are most often provided by the school nurse. However, additional school staff may also provide first aid and care to ill or injured students. These staff members may include, but

are not limited to, teachers, athletic trainers, administrators, counselors, clinic assistants, and other staff who supervise children.

Once written consent is given, it is effective immediately and remains in effect for the 2026–2027 school year. The law requires public schools to obtain this consent annually. Permission may be revoked or granted by the parent/guardian at any time with a written, signed request, which will take effect immediately upon receipt. When a guardian does not provide written consent, their child will not be able to receive health-related services except for life-saving care and will be called to pick up their student if he/she complains of feeling unwell at school.

Medical Documentation and Accommodations

Parents/guardians requesting medical accommodation or ongoing health-related support during the school day must provide current written documentation from a licensed healthcare provider. This includes, but is not limited to, unrestricted restroom access, activity restrictions, special seating, mobility assistance, dietary accommodations, and other medically necessary supports.
Medical documentation must include:

- The student's name;
- The date the documentation was issued;
- The specific accommodation or restriction being requested;
- The medical reason or need for the accommodation, when appropriate;
- The date the accommodation begins; and
- The date the accommodation ends or a statement that the medical need is ongoing or permanent.

Documentation that does not identify the duration of the accommodation will be considered incomplete.

The district may request clarification or updated documentation from the healthcare provider before establishing the duration of the accommodation.
Medical documentation submitted during a previous school year will not automatically carry over into a new school year unless the healthcare provider's documentation specifically states that the accommodation is ongoing or permanent. When documentation contains an expiration date, updated documentation must be submitted if the accommodation is needed beyond that date.

The district may provide an accommodation temporarily while updated or clarifying documentation is being obtained. Temporary implementation does not establish that the accommodation is permanent or eliminate the requirement for complete medical documentation.

Nothing in this provision replaces or overrides an accommodation contained in a student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan. Accommodations included in an IEP or Section 504 plan will remain in effect according to the terms of that plan.

Mental and Physical Health Resources

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

Campus	*School Nurse*	*Counselor*	*Phone #*
Beethoven Elementary	Maria Garza, LVN Giovanni Amaro, RN	Nelson Aguilar Kim Garza Jessica Jurado	(956) 318 - 0211
Beethoven ECHS	Cristina Garcia, LVN	Julie Ramos Patricia Salinas Ruben Salinas	(956) 403 - 5050
Monet Elementary	Cristina Guzman, CMA	Marlen Ruiz	(956) 403 - 5020
Mozart ECC	Claudia Corrales, BSN RN Gabriela Serna NRCMA	Mayra Enriquez	
Mozart Elementary	Claudia Corrales, BSN RN Gabriela Serna NRCMA	Gina Sanchez Maria Rubio	(956) 702 - 2548
Mozart P-TECH ECHS	Marlene Lopez, LVN	May Lynn Blanco	(956) 223 - 2030
Picasso Elementary	Rosie Mesquitic, LVN	Nayely Leal Jeanette Resendez	(956) 702 - 0134
Rembrandt Elementary	Estela Borrego, BSN RN Monique Garces, LVN (ECC)	Liliana Jimenez Karen Gonzalez	(956) 283 – 1700 (956) 403-5012
Rembrandt P-TECH ECHS	Abigail Garcia, RN Nora Rojas, CMA	Lizett Lozano Stefany Strickland Norma Perales	(956) 283 - 0600
Van Gogh Elementary	Maria Elena Garza, RN Cris Balderas, CMA	Adrian Mejorado Erica Y. Garza	(956) 403 - 5000
Van Gogh Secondary	Maria Elena Garza, RN Cris Balderas, CMA	Dr. Crystal Prado	(956) 403 - 5000

- The local public health authority, Hidalgo County Health Department, may be contacted at (956) 383-6221.

- The local mental health authority, Tropical Texas Behavioral Health can be contacted at 1-877-289-7199.

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health

Vanguard Academy has adopted Board policies that promote student physical and mental health, including:

- Food and nutrition management,
- Wellness and health services,
- Physical examinations,
- Immunizations,
- Medical treatment,
- Communicable diseases,
- Crisis intervention,
- Trauma-informed care,
- Student safety,
- Child abuse and neglect,
- Dating violence,
- Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and
- Freedom from bullying.

Vanguard Academy has also developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement these policies. Please contact your child's campus nurse for information on these policies and procedures.

The school health advisory council ("SHAC") met {4 of times} during the 2025-2026 school year.

Physical Activity Requirements

Vanguard Academy will ensure that students in full-day pre-kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day, 135 minutes per week, or 225 minutes during each period of two school weeks, in accordance with the school's wellness policy and state law.

Vanguard Academy will ensure that students in middle school engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters, in accordance with the school's wellness policy and state law.

Counselors and Nurses

Campus	Full-Time School Nurse	Full-Time School Counselor
Beethoven Elementary	Yes	Yes
Beethoven Secondary/ECHS	Yes	Yes
Mozart ECC	Yes	Yes
Mozart Elementary	Yes	Yes
Mozart Secondary/P-TECH ECHS	Yes	Yes
Picasso Elementary	Yes	Yes
Rembrandt Elementary	Yes	Yes
Rembrandt Secondary/P-TECH ECHS	Yes	Yes
Van Gogh Secondary/ECHS	Yes	Yes

Campus	Full-Time School Nurse	Full-Time School Counselor
Monet Campus (MCC)	Yes	Yes

*At the time of publication, nursing services at Monet Campus (MCC) are being provided through a rotation of qualified Vanguard Academy nursing personnel. The district intends to assign a full-time school nurse to the campus. Parents and guardians may contact the campus administration office for current information regarding nursing services.

2.2 Alcohol-Free School Notice

To provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Vanguard Academy property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

2.3 Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, giving, or delivering any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) as defined by Section 161.081 of Health and Safety Code, or any form of smokeless tobacco or electronic vaporizing product while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

2.4 Drug-Free School Notice

Vanguard Academy believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, Vanguard Academy prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Vanguard Academy also prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of look-alike substances and/or synthetic substances designed to imitate the look and/or effects of illicit drugs. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

2.5 Asbestos Management Plan

Vanguard Academy works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings and has developed an Asbestos Management Plan. If you have any questions or would like to examine the school's plan in more detail, please contact Chief Javier Rodriguez at (956) 781-1701.

2.6 Bacterial Meningitis Information

State law requires Vanguard Academy to provide the following information about bacterial meningitis:

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

Bacterial meningitis can be caused by multiple organisms. Two common types are Streptococcus pneumoniae, with over 80 serogroups that can cause illness, and Neisseria meningitidis, with 5 serogroups that most commonly cause meningitis.

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

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with bacterial meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

How serious is Bacterial Meningitis?
If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. If left untreated or treatment is delayed, bacterial meningitis can be fatal, or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

How is bacterial meningitis spread?
Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes) or when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose.

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

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?
Vaccination: Bacterial meningitis caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* may be prevented through vaccination. The vaccine which protects against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is called pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV. This vaccine is recommended by the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for children in the first year of life. *Neisseria meningitidis* is prevented through two types of vaccines. The first is a meningococcal conjugate vaccine which protects against 4 serogroups A, C, W, and Y and is referred to as MCV4. The second is a vaccine against *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B and is referred to as MenB.

The ACIP recommends MCV4 for children at age 11-12 years, with a booster dose at 16-18 years. In Texas, one dose of MCV4 given at or after age 11 years is required for children in 7th-12th grades. One dose of MCV4 received in the previous five years is required in Texas for those under the age of 22 years and enrolling in college. Teens and young adults (16-23 years of age) may be vaccinated with MenB. This vaccine is not required for school or college enrollment in Texas.

Vaccines to protect against bacterial meningitis are safe and effective. Common side effects include redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops about 1-2 weeks after the vaccines are given and lasts for 5 years to life depending on the vaccine.

Healthy Habits: Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Wash your hands. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not having close contact with people who are sick, also helps.

Who is at risk for Bacterial Meningitis?
Certain groups are at increased risk for bacterial meningitis caused by Neisseria meningitidis. These risk factors include HIV infection, travel to places where meningococcal disease is common (such as certain countries in Africa and in Saudi Arabia), and college students living in a dormitory. Other risk factors include having a previous viral infection, living in a crowded household, or having an underlying chronic illness.

Children ages 11-15 years have the second highest rate of death from bacterial meningitis caused by Neisseria meningitidis. And children ages 16-23 years also have the second highest rates of disease caused by Neisseria meningitidis.

What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?
You should seek prompt medical attention.

For more information.
Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all infectious diseases. You may call your family doctor or local health department office to ask about the meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html and the Texas Department of State Health Services:
- https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/PreteenVaccines.aspx or
- https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/meningitis/Meningitis.aspx.

Note: DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after a student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education.

Please note that this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

2.7 Communicable Diseases

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the principal or designee so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. School authorities will report those students who are suspected of having a reportable condition. A list of reportable conditions can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/.

The following symptoms might indicate an infectious condition and authorized Vanguard Academy staff may send a student home if the child exhibits symptoms including but not limited to:

- Irritability
- Difficulty breathing
- Crying that doesn't stop with the usual comforting
- Extreme sleepiness
- Vomiting two or more times in 24 hours

https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/IDCU/health/schools_childcare/Communicable-Disease

-Chart-03042024.pdf

Students excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

Please contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether a child should stay home.

2.8 Immunization Requirements

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents, in accordance with an established immunization schedule. To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please visit the Texas Department of State Health Services website at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school/requirements.

Proof of immunization may be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

Provisional Enrollment

A student may be provisionally admitted to or enrolled in Vanguard Academy if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by law. To remain enrolled, the student must continue to receive the necessary immunizations as rapidly as medically feasible, and complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible. The student and/or parent must also provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to Vanguard Academy.

A nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and Vanguard Academy shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.
Homeless Students: A student who is homeless, as defined by federal law, shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. Vanguard Academy shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

Children in Foster Care: A student who is a "child in foster care" as defined by 45 C.F.R. § 1355.20(a) shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. Vanguard Academy shall promptly refer the student to an appropriate health provider to obtain the required vaccinations.

Transfer Students: A student can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if the student transfers from one Texas school to another and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record.

Military Dependents: A military dependent can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if the student transfers from one school to another and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record. The collection and exchange of information pertaining to immunizations with respect to military dependents shall be subject to confidentiality provisions prescribed by federal law.

Exclusions from Immunization Requirements

Exclusions from immunization requirements are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience (including a religious belief), and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

To claim exclusion for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the student's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the student, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed Texas Department of State Health Services affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a period of two years. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization. The form must be submitted to the Principal or the school nurse within 90 days from the date it is notarized. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

To claim exclusion for armed forces, the student must prove that he or she is serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a parent seeks an exemption for more than one student, a separate form must be provided for each student.

Immunization Records Reporting

The school's record of a student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency ("TEA"), local health departments, and Texas Department of State Health Services and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of the student to those schools.

2.9 Emergency Medical Treatment

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, Vanguard Academy staff will seek emergency medical treatment unless the parent has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the campus registrar to update any information.

2.10 Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day.

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

Head Lice

Head lice (which are not an illness or disease) are common among children and may spread easily through contact during play or when students share items such as headphones, brushes, combs, hats, or other items that come in contact with hair.

Vanguard Academy does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If Vanguard Academy observes that a student may have head lice, an appropriate administrator or school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student needs to be sent home and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse. When an elementary student has head lice, Vanguard Academy will also provide written notice to the student's parent and the parents of each child assigned to the same classroom as required by state law.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website: (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilledprocedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school)

2.11 Administration of Medication

If a student needs to receive medication, including over-the-counter medication, during the school day, a signed order from an authorized prescriber (meaning a physician licensed to practice medicine in the United States or advanced nurse practitioner or physician assistant with prescriptive authority) as well as parent request and authorization to administer the medication is required.

Medication orders from authorized prescribers will be accepted on the school's Medication Administration Request Form, the prescriber's office/clinic letterhead, or prescription pad.

Students who require procedures or treatments during the school day are required to submit the Medication Administration Request Form and a separate authorization by the student's physician.

All forms for administration of medication at school and for procedures or treatments at school must be completed annually and whenever there is a change of medication, dose, procedure, and/or treatment. These forms are available from the campus office. Orders received expire 12 months after signed by the prescribing provider.

Vanguard Academy will contact the physician as necessary, and with parent consent, for information regarding student health concerns, medication, and procedures or treatments.

Medications to be administered during the school day must be provided by the parent. The parent will deliver all medication to the health clinic and pick up any unused medication from the {health clinic. Students may not transport medication to or from school. Medication not picked up at the end of the school year by the parent will be destroyed. Medications may not be kept in the classroom or administered by a teacher in the classroom.

Apart from students meeting state and school requirements to carry their prescription asthma medication, auto injectable anaphylaxis medication, or prescription medication and supplies required for monitoring and treatment of diabetes, students may not carry any type of medication (prescription, non-prescription, homeopathic products, vitamins, or over-the-counter health products) on their person, in their lunch box, purse, or book bag/backpack, on school transportation, or place these types of items in their locker. There are severe disciplinary consequences, including suspension and expulsion, for possessing, carrying, or distributing over the counter and prescription medications.

Medication will not be accepted without parent authorization and any required prescriber orders. All

medication must be unexpired, in the original prescription or over-the-counter container, and properly labeled. Prescription medications must be filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **In accordance with the Texas Board of Nursing Practice Act, Vanguard Academy will not administer medications prescribed or filled in Mexico.** Medication brought to the health clinic in containers such as, but not limited to, plastic wrap or bags, foil, jars, paper towels, envelopes, etc. will not be administered.

If necessary, when the prescription is filled, ask the pharmacist for an extra labeled bottle for school use. If there are changes in the dose of medication or if a medication is discontinued, written notification from the parent and/or physician is required. Changes in the dose of medication require a new prescription label. The prescription label and physician's order must always match.

All medications administered during the school day must be FDA approved. Other types of medications such as, but not limited to, homeopathic products, vitamins, herbs, dietary supplements, intravenous medications, and medications manufactured outside the United States will not be administered.

Students attending a field trip or off-campus school-sponsored event during the school day will have their prescriber ordered medication sent with the student's trained and authorized Vanguard Academy employee or qualified trained parent volunteer (e.g., MD, RN, LVN, PA or Pharmacist), along with instructions on the administration of the medication.

Except as required by law or Board policy, Vanguard Academy will not purchase medication to administer to a student.

Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life-threatening conditions, and students with those conditions are entitled to possess and self-administer prescription medication while on Vanguard Academy property or at school-related events.

Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires the student to demonstrate his or her ability to self-administer the medication to the student's physician or other licensed health care provider and the school nurse, if available. Requirements also include written authorization from the student's parent and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school office indicating the student is capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication.

Medication in a student's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

2.12 Unassigned Medication for Respiratory Distress

As permitted by Texas Education Code §38.208, Vanguard Academy has declined to adopt a policy allowing the school to maintain or administer medication for respiratory distress. As a result, Vanguard Academy does not stock, maintain, administer and or dispose of unassigned medication for respiratory distress.

2.13 Unassigned Epinephrine

As permitted by Texas Education Code §38.208, Vanguard Academy has declined to adopt a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine delivery system. As a result, Vanguard Academy does not stock, maintain, administer and or dispose any unassigned epinephrine delivery devices.

2.14 Opioid Antagonist Medication

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.222, Vanguard Academy has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists for students in grades 6-12.

Under this policy, school personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may administer an opioid antagonist to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

Vanguard Academy will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an opioid antagonist present during regular school hours. If an opioid antagonist medication is administered to a student, the school will notify the student's parent/guardian or emergency contact as soon as feasible.

2.15 Seizure Management Plan

The parent of a student with a seizure disorder may seek care for the student's seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school activity by submitting to Vanguard Academy a copy of a seizure management and treatment plan developed by the parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment. The plan must be submitted on the form adopted by the Texas Education Agency, and provided to Vanguard Academy for review:

1. Before or at the beginning of the school year;
2. ON enrollment of the student if the student enrolls after the start of the school year; or
3. As soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student.

2.16 Steroid Notice

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

Vanguard Academy does not permit steroid use. A notice shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the school gym or in each other place in a building where physical education classes are conducted.

2.17 Health Screenings

Athletics Participation

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit to certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

1. An athletics program;
2. Marching band; or
3. Any extracurricular programs identified by the superintendent.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder.

Fitness Testing

According to requirements under state law, Vanguard Academy will annually assess the physical fitness of students. Vanguard Academy is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate. Parents can request in

writing their child's physical fitness assessment results at the end of the school year by contacting their child's physical education teacher.

Spinal Screening

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis at an early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities.

All students who meet Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

A parent who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by Vanguard Academy must submit to the principal or designee documentation of a professional examination, which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to Vanguard Academy during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

Exemption: A student may be exempt from screening if the student's parent or guardian submits signed and dated documentation from an appropriately licensed professional that the student is already actively under medical care by the licensed professional for a spinal problem being screened for, the student's parent or guardian submits an affidavit that the spinal screening will be conducted by an individual other than screener used by the school, or the student's parent or guardian submits an affidavit that the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit relevant documents to the Superintendent or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Once the child's parent or guardian has given consent for screening, all children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department, and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

Exemption: A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Superintendent or designee on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Acanthosis Screening for Diabetes

Children in certain grades identified by the state must be screened for warning signs of diabetes.

Exemption: A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent must submit to the principal or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

2.18 Preparedness Training

Vanguard Academy will offer instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") and the use of an automated external defibrillator ("AED") to students in grades 7–12. This instruction may be provided as part of any course. Students shall receive the instruction at least once before graduation.

Vanguard Academy will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed and Stop the Bleed Texas.

2.19 Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Vanguard Academy prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint and/or grievance process is a violation of school policy.

Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)

For purposes of Vanguard Academy policy, the term "Prohibited Conduct" means discrimination or harassment against a student involving conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law and that adversely affects the student, and/or that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of Prohibited Conduct (meaning discrimination or harassment) is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of reported Prohibited Conduct is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a Vanguard Academy investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

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

Reporting Prohibited Conduct

****NOTE**** The following procedures apply to allegations of Prohibited Conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, please see the procedures outlined in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment" in this Handbook.

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation or believes that another student has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation should immediately report the alleged conduct to a teacher, counselor, the principal or designee, or other school employee. The report may be made by the student's parent(s). Alternatively, a report may be made directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator identified in this Handbook.

Upon receiving a report of potential Prohibited Conduct, Vanguard Academy will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. If not, Vanguard Academy will determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying. If the alleged Prohibited Conduct, if proven, would constitute discrimination or harassment and would also be considered bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

Investigation

To the extent possible, Vanguard Academy will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of Prohibited Conduct will be promptly investigated.

The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by Vanguard Academy, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Principal or the student's teacher(s) will be involved in or informed of the investigation.

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

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, Vanguard Academy will take interim action to address the alleged Prohibited Conduct.

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

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

Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation of reported Prohibited Conduct may appeal through the Vanguard Academy student and parent complaint and/or grievance procedure.

2.20 Freedom from Sexual Harassment

Vanguard Academy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by an employee, volunteer, or another student.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Vanguard Academy's educational programs or activities;

3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

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

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a school employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

General Definitions

A "complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "respondent" means an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A "formal complaint" means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Vanguard Academy investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

"Supportive measures" means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered appropriately and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Vanguard Academy's educational program or activity without unreasonably burdening either party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or Vanguard Academy's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples of supportive measures include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Any person may report sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator in Section 1.5 of this Handbook, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Vanguard Academy's response to a report of sexual harassment must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

After a report of sexual harassment has been made, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

Notice of Allegations

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, Vanguard Academy must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- Notice of Vanguard Academy's grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment, including, to the extent known, the identity of the parties, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made known at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Notice that the parties may inspect and review evidence related to the complaint.
- Notice that Vanguard Academy prohibits knowingly making false statements or
- knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during an investigation, Vanguard Academy decides to investigate allegations about the complaint or respondent that are not included in the initial notice of the complaint, Vanguard Academy must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Grievance Process

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of Vanguard Academy.

The following guidelines apply when Vanguard Academy receives a formal complaint of sexual harassment. This process is designed to incorporate due process, principles, treat all parties fairly, and to assist Vanguard Academy reach reliable responsibility determinations.

- Vanguard Academy will require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Any individual designated by Vanguard Academy as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent responsible. Vanguard Academy will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and anyone who facilitates an informal resolution process receive appropriate training related to the requirements of Title IX and Vanguard Academy's sexual harassment policy.
- Vanguard Academy recognizes a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.
- Vanguard Academy shall attempt to complete an investigation of reported sexual harassment within 60 calendar days of receiving a complaint. However, the investigation process may be delayed or extended for a limited time for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension. Good causes may include considerations such as absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.
- Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Vanguard Academy shall employ the preponderance of the evidence standard to determine responsibility when reviewing formal complaints.
- Vanguard Academy may not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions of evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure, of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

Consolidation of Formal Complaints

Vanguard Academy may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Dismissal of Formal Complaints

Vanguard Academy must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

Vanguard Academy ***must*** dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
- Did not occur in Vanguard Academy's education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

Vanguard Academy ***may*** dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Vanguard Academy; or
- Specific circumstances prevent Vanguard Academy from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal, Vanguard Academy must promptly send simultaneous written notice to the parties of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal. Dismissal of a formal complaint does not preclude Vanguard Academy from taking appropriate action under the Student Code of Conduct or any other school policy that may apply to the alleged conduct.

Investigating Formal Complaints

The following guidelines apply during the investigation of a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process.

1. Vanguard Academy will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on Vanguard Academy and not on the parties.
2. Vanguard Academy cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless Vanguard Academy receives that party's voluntary, written consent to do so.
3. Vanguard Academy will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
4. Vanguard Academy will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
5. Vanguard Academy will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. Vanguard Academy may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
6. Vanguard Academy will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or

other meetings with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

7. Vanguard Academy will provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
8. Prior to completing an investigative report, Vanguard Academy must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigative report.
9. Vanguard Academy must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 days prior to a determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for review and written response.
10. After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written relevant questions that a party wants asked of any witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker(s) making a determination regarding responsibility cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s). The decision-maker(s) must review the investigation report and make a written determination, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, regarding responsibility. The written determination must include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, or methods used to gather other evidence;
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
4. Conclusions regarding application of Vanguard Academy's Code of Conduct to the facts;
5. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Vanguard Academy's education program or activities will be provided to the complainant; and
6. Vanguard Academy's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

Vanguard Academy must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination becomes final either on the date Vanguard Academy provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Appeals

Vanguard Academy will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from Vanguard Academy's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to appeals, Vanguard Academy will ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, or the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. Vanguard Academy will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal will issue a written decision, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result, and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

A party who is dissatisfied with the appeal decision may file an appeal to the Board of Directors through the process outlined in Vanguard Academy's grievance procedures.

Emergency Removals

Vanguard Academy is able to remove a respondent from Vanguard Academy's education program on an emergency basis, provided that Vanguard Academy undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Vanguard Academy's ability to do so may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Informal Resolution

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, Vanguard Academy may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. However, Vanguard Academy may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continued employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints. Additionally, Vanguard Academy may not require the parties to participate in an informal process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, Vanguard Academy must:

- Provide to the parties a written notice disclosing the allegations and the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations. The notice must also inform that, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, as well as of any consequence resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Vanguard Academy may not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Retaliation Prohibited

Neither Vanguard Academy nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

Confidentiality

Vanguard Academy must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA or as required by law, or for purposes related to the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising under the Title IX regulations.

Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment" applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non-sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described under "Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation" as outlined above.

2.21 Freedom from Bullying

Vanguard Academy prohibits bullying as defined below, as well as retaliation against anyone who reports or is involved in an investigation of potential bullying.

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

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

Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which is defined by state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

Vanguard Academy will also take steps to prevent and mediate bullying incidents between students that:

1. Interfere with a student's educational opportunities; or
2. Substantially disrupt the orderly operations of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Vanguard Academy is integrating into instruction and curriculum age appropriate, research-based content that is designed to assist in the reduction and prevention of bullying incidents.

Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade shall receive the following:

1. Explicit instruction designed to students can recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, behaviors and how to report them;
2. Age-appropriate classroom culture-building discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying behaviors; and
3. Explicit instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social coping skills.

Students in grades 9 through 12 shall receive the following:

1. Explicit direct instruction on the brain's ability to recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, as the behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an immutable trait; and
2. Classroom-culture building discussions that portray bullying as an undesirable behavior and means for attaining or maintaining social status in school, and to dissuade students from using bullying as a tool for reputation management;
3. Explicit direct instruction designed so students can recognize the role reporting plays in promoting a safe school community.

Vanguard Academy shall create an age-appropriate survey with appropriate privacy controls in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that includes relevant questions on bullying, including cyberbullying, and defines who is responsible to develop and oversee the implementation of action plans based on the results that address student concerns regarding bullying, including cyberbullying.

Each campus will establish a committee which must include parents and secondary level students in schools where secondary students are served, to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives.

The school's anti-bullying policy applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
    a. Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
    b. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Reporting Procedures

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, the Principal, or another school employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. Reports of potential

bullying may also be submitted anonymously.

Vanguard Academy will investigate allegations of bullying or other related misconduct, and will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

Once a report of bullying, including cyberbullying, is received, Vanguard Academy will track the progress of the report and investigation using Texas School Safety Center Bullying Checklist of the reported incident(s) and shall monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents to assist Vanguard Academy with bullying prevention efforts and determination of the school's response to the incident.

Investigating Reports

The Principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment and, if so, proceed under that policy instead. The Principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying.

Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

A student who receives special education services will be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying or cyberbullying within applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.). Vanguard Academy may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

The Principal or designee may make a report to local law enforcement authorities if, after an investigation is completed, the Principal or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment), Texas Penal Code.

To the greatest extent possible, Vanguard Academy shall respect the privacy of the complainant and/or grievant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation. If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies Vanguard Academy that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, Vanguard Academy will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Vanguard Academy student and parent complaint and/or grievance procedure.

2.22 Law Enforcement Agencies

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the Principal or designee will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

In other circumstances, the Principal or designee will:

1. Verify and record the identity of the official and request an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
2. Ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent, unless the interviewer raises what the Principal or designee considers to be a valid objection.
3. Ordinarily be present during the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the Principal or designee considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires Vanguard Academy to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

1. By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in conduct that violates a penal law, delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision, or conduct that violates a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
2. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
3. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity, where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
4. By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
5. By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS"), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Texas Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
6. Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend.
7. To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.
8. To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
9. To comply with the laws of arrest.

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

The Principal or designee will immediately notify the Superintendent or designee and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the Principal or designee considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the Principal or designee does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

2.23 Mental Health Promotion and Intervention All Grade Levels

Mental Health, Behavioral Health, and Substance Abuse (All Grade Levels)

To promote a safe and supportive environment, Vanguard Academy has implemented programs targeting the following areas:

1. Mental health promotion and early intervention
2. Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making
3. Substance abuse prevention and intervention
4. Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community)
5. Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care
6. Positive behavior interventions and supports

7. Positive youth development
8. Safe, supportive, and positive school climates

Vanguard Academy has established comprehensive protocols to support students exhibiting early warning signs of mental health or substance abuse issues, or who are identified as at risk of attempting suicide. These protocols ensure timely communication and appropriate interventions to safeguard student well-being. The mental health liaison, or any campus administrator or counselor will notify a student's parent or guardian within a reasonable amount of time upon identifying early warning signs. Parents will also be provided with detailed information on available counseling and intervention options.

When becoming aware of a student considering suicide, counselors assert their ethical and legal responsibility to report suspected suicide risk to parents/guardians and the appropriate authorities. When becoming aware of a threat to others, members of the campus Behavior Threat Assessment (BTA) Team are tasked with reviewing threat reports, conducting behavior threat assessments, and developing interventions to support individuals who pose threats and the targets of such threats. Behavior threat assessment records are kept until the student's 24th birthday.

Vanguard Academy will notify the parent according to district policy unless the SSSP team is notified by law enforcement that doing so will impede an investigation. Vanguard Academy has also established procedures for staff to notify the district's mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, Vanguard Academy has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the student's counselor or Vanguard Academy's mental health liaison for further information.

Vanguard Academy has a team of licensed mental health professionals (Responsive Services Counselors), who serve as support members of the campus counseling and crisis teams. Vanguard Academy considers school counselors and Responsive Services counselors as school based mental health liaisons. School counselors recognize and respond to the need for mental health services that promote social/emotional wellness and development for all students. Responsive Services counselors are the district's mental health professionals who specialize in diverse populations, crisis, and trauma. Responsive Services counselors are certified as Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and School Psychologist (Licensed Specialist in School Psychology) that serve as support members of the campus counseling and crisis teams. In addition, Vanguard Academy partners with mental health providers to help our students get timely and helpful relief for mental health struggles.

In compliance with legal requirements, Vanguard Academy will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

[See **Sec. 5.5 – Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service**]

Vanguard Academy has also developed protocols for staff members to notify the campus administrators, counselors, social workers and District Licensed Specialist School Psychologist mental health liaison or other administrator to identify a student who may need intervention.

The Director of Mental & Behavioral Health & Wellbeing, Maria Luisa Elizondo, may be reached at (956) 781-1701 and maelizondo@vanguardac.net and can provide additional information about the school's intervention program, as well as materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment, and accommodations available at school.

If you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school

counselor for a list of resources or a referral for mental health services.

Teachers and other school employees may discuss a student's behavior or academic progress with the student's parent or another employee; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication and that is intended to alter perception, emotion, or behavior.

An employee who is a registered nurse, advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

Information on Student ID Cards

Each student ID card issued to a student in grade six or higher will have printed on the card the contact information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line.

2.24 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs

Vanguard Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. Vanguard Academy also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions and counseling options are also available. All school professionals have a legal duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities within 24 hours, in accordance with Texas Family Code §261.101.

The school's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the DFPS. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

2.25 Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

Vanguard Academy has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. For purposes of this plan, trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking. The plan may be accessed by contacting the campus counselor.

What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

What is Trafficking?

Child trafficking in any form is prohibited by the Texas Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers may be trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently make contact with victims online.

What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?
Other maltreatment of a child under the Texas Family Code includes "abuse" or "neglect" of a child.

Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children
Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the DFPS.

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

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or Principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child that are available in your area. The DFPS also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County.

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400;
- In non-emergency situations, the Texas Abuse Hotline Website;
- Your local police department; or
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, or Other Maltreatment
For Staff: Vanguard Academy trains staff in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration. The training includes prevention techniques for and recognition of sexual abuse, trafficking, and all other maltreatment of children, including sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children with significant cognitive disabilities.

For Students: School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age-appropriate conversation and materials no less than once per school year. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings.

For Parents: Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused, trafficked, or otherwise maltreated.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. If a parent is frightened for their own safety or that of their child, they should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

These websites are also helpful:

- Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children
- KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse
- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team

Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, or Other Maltreatment

Possible warning signs of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Fear of being alone with adults.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior.
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Possible warnings signs of sexual trafficking include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude.
- Frequent runaway incidents.
- Isolation from friends, family, and community.
- Multiple phones or social media accounts.
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone.
- Refillable gift cards.
- Social interaction and schedule being strictly controlled by someone else.
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for instance, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology).
- Tattoos or branding.
- Unexplained injuries.

Possible warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students.
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit.
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss.
- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver.
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours.
- Not being in control of his or her own money.
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused, trafficked, or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

Actions That a Child Who Is a Victim of Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, or Other Maltreatment Should Take

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse, sex trafficked, or other maltreatment or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Information for all students, including the Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) and emergency instructions, is available in English and Spanish.

Available Counseling Options

A list of counseling providers can be found through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County website.

Notice of Penalties for Trafficking of Persons and Online Solicitation of a Minor

Under Penal Code 20A.02(b-1), an offense related to human trafficking is a first-degree felony if the offense is committed in a location that was on the premises of or within 1,000 feet of the premises of a school, or on premises or within 1,000 feet of premises where an official school function was taking place or an event sponsored or sanctioned by the University Interscholastic League was taking place.

Additionally, under Penal Code 33.021(f-1), there are enhanced penalties for the offense of online solicitation of a minor if the actor committed the offense during regular school hours and the actor knew or reasonably should have known that the minor was enrolled in a public or private school at the time of the offense.

Notice of the increased penalties found under Penal Code 20A.02(b-1) and Penal Code 33.021(f-1) can be found in the main office of each campus, or in a place that is reasonably likely to be viewed by all school employees and visitors.

2.26 Interrogations and Searches

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

Administrators, teachers and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the circumstances justifying the search, such as the extent of the search, the objectives of the search, the age and sex of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

Desk and Locker Searches

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks or other school

property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of Vanguard Academy. The school will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks, and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found therein. A student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, or on the student's person.

Computers and Electronic Devices

Use of school-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by Vanguard Academy.

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

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of Vanguard Academy and may be searched at any time if reasonable suspicion exists to believe that the search will result in evidence that school rules or other laws have been violated. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to a search of the vehicle. If the student refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, Vanguard Academy may contact the student's parents and/or law enforcement officials. A student may be held responsible for and in possession of prohibited items found in his or her vehicle parked on school property or at a school-related event.

Random Drug Searches

In order to ensure a drug-free learning environment, Vanguard Academy conducts random drug searches of all school facilities. Vanguard Academy may use or contract for specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert school officials to the current presence of concealed, prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. Canine visits may be unannounced. The dogs shall be used to search vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student lockers, and the areas where vehicles are parked on Vanguard Academy property or at school-related events. The dogs shall not be asked to alert students. A dog alert to a locker, vehicle, or item in a classroom, constitutes reasonable grounds for a search by school officials.

2.27 Visitor and Volunteer Policy

Vanguard Academy encourages parents and family members to regularly visit the school and become involved in student activities. The impact that positive parental involvement has on the learning and development of students is immeasurable. With that in mind, the following policies must be adhered to so that a safe, secure, and productive learning environment can be ensured for all.

1. Visitors MUST sign in at the main office whenever they are on campus. They will be provided with a visitor ID that must be worn while on campus. Visitors are not permitted to make unscheduled or drop-in visits to classrooms.
2. When visiting campus to meet with teaching staff, visitors must have a pre-arranged time set up with the teacher(s) in question except for urgent matters. Times are best arranged via email. An email directory is located on our website. With few exceptions, conferences are scheduled during teacher/team planning time, and/or immediately before or after school. Under no circumstances can a teacher be interrupted while providing instruction before, during, or after the school day to meet with a parent.
3. Visitors to campus must be the parent, guardians, or other adult family members with permission of the parent/guardian. Students' friends, younger siblings, and other non- related

individuals cannot visit the campus during school hours.
4. Volunteers MUST go through a background check conducted by our district office. Once the check is cleared, volunteers are notified and may begin helping on campus. Until this clearance is obtained, they are not to be involved in any educational or extra-curricular activities.

Please note that we request parents and other visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in person, to only record video or audio, or take photographs of classroom activities, after receiving permission from the teacher or a campus administrator.
Additionally, the Principal or designee may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor:

1. Establish an electronic database for storing information concerning visitors. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.
2. Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the DPS or any other database accessible by Vanguard Academy.

Any visitor identified as a sex offender shall be escorted by school personnel at all times during a school visit and shall have access only to common areas of the campus.

2.28 Disruptions

To protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits Vanguard Academy to act against any person–student or nonstudent who:

1. Disrupts classes while on school property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane language or any misconduct.
2. Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
3. Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property.
4. Interferes with the movement of people at an exit, an entrance, or a hallway to a school building without authorization from an administrator.
5. Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles.
6. Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
7. Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator.
8. Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

2.29 Emergency Closings

Generally, Vanguard Academy dismisses classes for weather-related events on the same days as surrounding local independent school districts. Any closures for weather will be broadcast on local television and/or radio stations. Vanguard Academy may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather related school closings will be broadcast on local television and/or radio stations as early as possible. Any emergency closures will also be posted on the Vanguard Academy website.

2.30 Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

Students, teachers, and other staff will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of school staff quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. During the drill, order rather than speed shall be stressed. Defined instructions for vacating each room

will be posted in each room, and students should familiarize themselves with these instructions.

Active Threat Exercises

Before Vanguard Academy may conduct an active threat exercise, including an active shooter simulation, Vanguard Academy shall comply with the notice requirements of Education Code §37.1141(a)(1)-(3), including adequate notice of the exercise to students, parents, school staff, and first responder organizations that would likely respond in the event of a false report or alarm.

2.31 Pest Control Information

Vanguard Academy periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. While Vanguard Academy strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Vanguard Academy will provide appropriate notice of treatments, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Superintendent or designee.

2.32 Videotaping of Students

For safety purposes, including the maintenance of order and discipline, surveillance cameras may be used to monitor student behavior in classrooms, on school vehicles, and in school common areas. Video recordings may be reviewed routinely to document student misconduct and used by staff when investigating an incident.

2.33 Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and Employees

Vanguard Academy permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by school guidelines. For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a Vanguard Academy employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity. The employee is required to include his or her immediate supervisor and the student's parent as recipients on all text messages.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a school employee should contact the Campus Principal.

Section 3: Academics and Grading

3.1 Academic Programs

The Principal or designee will provide students and parents with information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting will have an opportunity to complete his or her daily work just as if they were in the regular learning center.

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss options for ensuring that students complete all work

required with a teacher, principal or designee.

3.2 Required Curriculum

Vanguard Academy offers instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

Mathematics, English Language Arts, Spanish Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Career and Technology Education, Foreign Language, and all other content areas that currently have Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in place.

Social Studies Coursework

For any social studies course in the required curriculum, Vanguard Academy may not require, make part of a course, or award a grade or course credit (including extra credit) for a student's:

1. Work for, affiliation with, or service learning in an association with any organization engaged in (i) lobbying for legislation at the federal, state, or local level, if the student's duties involve directly or indirectly attempting to influence social or public policy or the outcome of legislation, or (ii) social policy advocacy or public policy advocacy;
2. Political activism, lobbying, or efforts by direct communication to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch at the federal, state, or local level to take specific actions by direct communication; or
3. Participation in any internship, practicum, or similar activity involving social or public policy advocacy.

Additionally, Vanguard Academy may not implement or enforce any rules of student conduct in a manner that would result in a student's punishment for discussing, or have a chilling effect on reasonable student discussions involving those concepts described in Education Code §28.002(a)(4) in school or during a school-sponsored activity.

Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program

Vanguard Academy has adopted an advanced mathematics program for middle school students that is designed to enable students to enroll in Algebra I in 8th grade. Under this program, Vanguard Academy will automatically enroll in an advanced mathematics course for each 6th grade student who performed in the top 40% on the 5th grade STAAR assessment in math.

Parents may opt a student out of automatic in the school's advanced mathematics principal by providing written notice to the principal or designee.

3.3 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of Vanguard Academy's philosophy and practice of promoting academic excellence. All students are expected to be honest and to display a high standard of integrity in the preparation and presentation of work for credit in classes. Cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism will not be tolerated by Vanguard Academy.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Allowing another to take and/or use an assignment to submit as his or her own.
- Copying from another student when completing an assignment or during an exam.
- Discussing or revealing the contents of a test or quiz with students who have not completed the assessment.
- Giving answers to another student for an assignment or exam.

- Looking at another's test or essay with or without consent for the purpose of duplicating that work and submitting it as one's own.
- Receiving answers for assignments or exams from any unauthorized source.
- Representing as one's own the work of anyone else.
- Taking, stealing, and/or using an assignment from someone else and submitting it as one's own.
- Unauthorized use of teacher test materials, answer sheets, computer files, or grading programs.
- Using any type of "crib/cliff notes" on your person, an object, or programmed within graphing calculators, cell phones, or other electronic devices without teacher permission.
- Working on assignments with others when not authorized by the instructor.

Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Falsification of results from research or laboratory experiments.
- Participating with other students to commit academic dishonesty.
- Written or oral presentation of results from research that was never performed.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Directly quoting or rephrasing all or part of another's words without appropriately crediting the source.
- Failing to acknowledge another's original arguments or lines of thinking as well as using information and ideas without proper documentation.
- Presenting an idea, theory, argument, line of thinking, creative work, or formula originated by someone or something else as your own.
- Presenting information from other sources in a misleading way, even if they are properly cited.
- Purchasing or receiving in any other manner an essay, paper, or other assignment that is the work of another person and submitting that assignment as your own work.
- Repeating information, such as statistics or demographics, which is not common knowledge, and which was originally compiled by another person or organization.

Additionally, the use of generative artificial intelligence for the purpose of academic cheating, dishonesty, or plagiarism is strictly prohibited as a violation of Vanguard Academy policy. Generative AI refers to the use of computer algorithms to generate original content that mimics human writing styles. While this technology can be useful for various academic and creative purposes, it is important to note that using generative AI to plagiarize someone else's work, including that of a computer program, is unethical.

Students who engage in academic cheating, dishonesty, or plagiarism are subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

When using artificial intelligence ("AI") tools to create or support the creation of text or other work, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines as well as additional guidance provided by their classroom teacher.

1. **Use AI responsibly**: Students should use AI tools and techniques in a responsible and ethical manner. This includes not using AI to cheat, plagiarize, or gain an unfair advantage. AI tools should only be used for school-related work when given approval or guidance from a teacher.
2. **Understand the limitations of AI**: Students must understand the limitations of AI and recognize that it is not a replacement for critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
3. **Maintain data privacy**: AI should be used in a way that protects personally identifiable information. Students should not share with AI technologies personal information, such as name, birth date, address, or other financial or confidential information.
4. **Check sources generated by AI**: AI has been known to generate inaccurate information and can also be used to create misinformation and disinformation. Students should take steps to verify

information generated by AI.

5. **Provide attribution**: Students should provide proper attribution and credit to the source of the AI tool or technique when using AI technologies.
6. **Seek guidance**: When unsure whether the use of AI is appropriate for a particular assignment or project, students should seek guidance from their teacher or instructor.

Teachers may communicate their expectations for student use of AI on assignments in the following ways:

1. **AI Recommended**: AI technology is recommended for use in completing this assignment or project. Students are encouraged to explore AI tools and techniques to enhance their work. Students must properly cite any AI-generated work.
2. **AI Permitted**: AI technology is permitted but not required for completing the assignment or project. Students can choose to use AI tools and techniques if they believe it will improve their work. Students must properly cite any AI-generated work.
3. **AI Restricted**: AI technology **cannot** be used in completing the assignment or project. Students are expected to complete the work using their own knowledge and skills.

When AI use is recommended or permitted, students should rely on their teacher to provide guidance on the extent to which AI tools may be used on the specific assignment or project. If a teacher has not indicated whether AI technology is recommended or permitted for an assignment or project, students must ask the teacher before using AI tools.

Student use of AI technology must be consistent with Vanguard Academy's expectations regarding academic integrity. Misuse of AI tools may be considered academic cheating, dishonesty, or plagiarism.

3.4 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test

A student in grades 10–12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery ("ASVAB") test and consult with a military recruiter. Vanguard Academy will provide each student in grades 10–12 and their parents with notice of the date, time, and location of the scheduled administration of the ASVAB.

3.5 Career and Technical Education Programs

Vanguard Academy may offer, from time to time, career and technical education ("CTE") programs in a variety of areas. For a complete listing of CTE courses, please contact the Principal. Admission to these programs is based on student interest and completion of any prerequisites required by Vanguard Academy.

It is the policy of Vanguard Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of Vanguard Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Vanguard Academy will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not preclude a student from participating in all educational, and career and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator Mr. Abraham Gallegos and can be reached at (956) 781-1701 or by email or agallegos@vanguardac.net and/or the Section 504 Coordinator at 956-781-1701.

3.6 College Days

High school students who meet the following criteria will be allowed to have two excused days of absence for a college visit during their junior year and two excused days of absence for a college visit during their senior year:

- The student must have passed the required parts of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness ("STARR") / equivalent state assessment for the previous year.
- The student must be on track to graduate on time.
- The student must be classified as a junior or senior based upon credits earned.
- The student must be passing all course work.
- The student must have no truancy or other attendance problems.

Students must submit a written request to the school office at least two days prior to the day requested for a college visit so that eligibility criteria for an excused day of absence can be verified and approval granted prior to the student participating in a college visit. Approval will not be granted for a college visit on a day when major exams are scheduled, and no partial days will be approved.

3.7 Computer Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Vanguard Academy has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use Policy found in this Handbook.

3.8 Counseling

Academic Counseling
Students and parents are encouraged to talk with the school counselor to learn about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in 8th–12th grade will be provided with information on anticipated course offerings for the next year and other information that will help to make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, including attendance at a college, university, or training school or pursuing some other type of advanced education, students should work closely with the school counselor to take the courses that best prepare them for the future. The school counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling
The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including social, family, or emotional issues, and substance abuse. The Principal, designee or school counselor may also provide information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the Principal or designee or school counselor should set an appointment through the school secretary.

Please note: Vanguard Academy will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the TEA for child abuse investigations and reports.

3.9 Credit by Exam

Vanguard Academy uses examinations and guidelines established by the State Board of Education ("SBOE") to offer credit and acceleration by exam.

If a Student has Prior Instruction (Grades 6–12)

A student who has previously taken a course or subject (but did not receive credit or a final grade for it) may, in circumstances determined by the Principal or Attendance Review Committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for the course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery." To receive credit, a student must score at least 70% on the exam.

The Attendance Review Committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to receive credit for a course by passing an exam.

If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by Texas Tech University and University of Texas Austin are approved by the Board of Directors. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2025–2026 school year will be published in an appropriate school publication and on the Vanguard Academy website www.vanguardacademy.edu

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level-Level Examination Program, or a score of three or higher on an Advanced Placement ("AP") examination, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the approved exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's course sequence, the student must complete the course.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the Principal or designee no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. Vanguard Academy will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. The student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam.

3.10 Dual Credit Opportunities

Vanguard Academy offers students both Dual Enrollment and Concurrent Enrollment opportunities. A dual enrollment credit course is a college course taken by a 9th-12th grade high school student at

their respective high school for which the student earns both college and high school credit. A concurrent enrollment credit course is a college course for 11th-12th grade students at the University of

Texas RGV for which the student earns both college and high school credit.

A student is eligible to enroll in concurrent enrollment courses if the student:

- Demonstrates college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standards under the Texas Success Initiative ("TSI") as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 4.85, on relevant section(s) of an assessment instrument approved by the SBOE; or
- Demonstrates that he or she is exempt under the provisions of the TSI as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 19.54.

Students in the 9th-12th grade are eligible to enroll in dual credit courses in reading, writing, and/or mathematics if he or she satisfies standards set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. As these requirements may change from time to time, students and parents are encouraged to contact the Director of College and Career Readiness at their school for current requirements.

Students in grades 11 and/or 12 are eligible to enroll in workforce education dual credit courses if the student demonstrates that he or she achieved the designated minimum standards set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. A student who is exempt from taking the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills or STAAR end-of-course assessments may be otherwise evaluated to determine eligibility for enrolling in workforce education dual credit courses. A student may enroll only in those workforce education dual credit courses for which he or she has demonstrated eligibility.

Students may not enroll in more than two concurrent enrollment courses per semester. A student may be exempt from this requirement only through approval by the Director of College and Career Readiness and the Chief Academic Officer of the participating college if the student demonstrates outstanding academic performance and capability.

All courses should be taken outside of school hours, unless approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Students and parents are responsible for any fees for dual credit courses.

3.11 Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students. Participation, however, is a privilege and not a right. Eligibility for participation in many school-related activities is governed by state law and rules of the UIL, a statewide association overseeing interscholastic competition between public schools. Additional information regarding extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations may be obtained from the Principal or designee.

Participation in these activities may result in events that occur off campus. Students are required to use the transportation provided by Vanguard Academy to and from the event and exceptions may only be made with approval from the activity's coach or sponsor.

Vanguard Academy requires the written consent of the parent of or person standing in parental relation to a student before the student may participate in a student club authorized or sponsored by Vanguard Academy.

As required by Education Code 33.0815, Vanguard Academy may not authorize or sponsor a student club based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are

stricter than those for students in general. If a violation of organization rules is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.

Extra-Curricular Activity (UIL Rules)

Eligibility for UIL Participants for the First Six Weeks: UIL participants are eligible to participate in contests during the first six weeks of the school year provided the following standards have been met:

- Students beginning grades nine and below must have been promoted from the previous grade prior to the beginning of the current school year.
- Students beginning their second year of high school must have earned five credits which count toward state high school graduation requirements.
- Students beginning their third year of high school either must have earned a total of ten credits which count toward state high school graduation credits or have earned a total of five credits which count toward state high school graduation requirements during the 12 months preceding the first day of the current school year.
- Students beginning their fourth year of high school either must have earned a total of 15 credits which count toward state high school graduation credits or have earned a total of five credits which count toward state high school graduation requirements during the 12 months preceding the first day of the current school year.
- Exceptions: (a) When a migrant student enrolls for the first time during a school year, all criteria cited above applies. All other students who enroll too late to earn a passing grade for a grading period are ineligible. (b) High school students transferring from out-of-state may be eligible the first six weeks of school if they meet the criteria cited above or school officials are able to determine that they would have been eligible if they had remained in the out-of-state school from which they are transferring. Students who are not in compliance with these provisions may request a hardship appeal of their academic eligibility through the UIL state office. Local school boards may elect to adopt these standards for all activities in order to avoid having different standards for student participants (e.g., football, drill team, cheerleading).

Extra-Curricular Activities (Eligibility after 1st-6 weeks)

Eligibility for All Extracurricular Participants After First Six Weeks of the School Year: A student who receives, at the end of any grading period (after the first six weeks of the school year), a grade below 70 in any class (other than an identified class eligible for exemption) or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for three school weeks. An ineligible student may practice or rehearse, however. The student regains eligibility after the seven-calendar day waiting period has ended following a grading period or the three-school week evaluation period when the principal and teachers determine that he or she has earned a passing grade (70 or above) in all classes, other than those that are exempted. All schools must check grades for all participants at the end of the first six weeks of the school year. From that point, grades are checked at the end of the grading period whether it is six, nine, or twelve weeks in length. Students who pass remain eligible until the end of the next grading period. All activity coaches and directors are responsible for obtaining official grade reports from the individual the principal designates as the keeper of official grades before the student represents the school. This provision applies to all grading periods. It also applies to all three-school week evaluation periods for ineligible students.

- All students are academically eligible during a school holiday of a full calendar week or more. When the bell rings to dismiss students for the December holidays, all students are academically eligible until classes resume in January. The same is true for summer recess and fall and spring breaks provided those breaks consist of at least a full calendar week. (See example at the end of

this document.) Students in year-round schools are academically eligible during inter-sessions.
- If a grading period or three school week evaluation period ends on the last class day prior to a school holiday of one calendar week or more (e.g. spring break, winter holidays), the seven-calendar day grace period to lose eligibility and the seven-calendar day waiting period to regain eligibility begin the first day that classes resume.

Extra-Curricular Activity (UIL Rules)

- Students lose eligibility for a three-school week period. For purposes of the law, "three school weeks" is defined as 15 class days. Exception: One, but only one of the three school weeks may consist of only three or four class days, provided school has been dismissed for a scheduled holiday period. Two class days does not constitute a "school week" for purposes of this law except Thanksgiving week if schools are on holiday Wednesday,
- Thursday and Friday. A school district may request an exception from UIL officials to the two-day school week in the event of a disaster, flood, extreme weather condition or other calamity as listed in TEC §42.005. In the event two of three school weeks are shortened, one of the Academic Requirements (No Pass No Play) Academic Requirements (No Pass No Play) 3 Academic Requirements (No Pass No Play) 4 shortened weeks may be counted as five days with ten other actual class days making up the fifteen class days. After the first six weeks of the school year, academically ineligible students in schools with six-week grading periods have one opportunity to regain eligibility after the first three school weeks of the grading period; students in a nine-week grading period have two opportunities, one at the end of the first three school weeks and one at the end of the first six school weeks. Students who fail to regain eligibility at the evaluation periods remain ineligible until seven calendar days after passing a grading period.
- Note: When computing eligibility calendars, it is helpful to remember that the seven-day grace period after the grading period also contains school week one of the three school week evaluation periods. Also, a seven-calendar day grace and waiting period is always applicable after grading periods and evaluation periods. Example: School week ends on Friday - Students who are losing eligibility have a seven-calendar day grace period, and students who are regaining eligibility have a seven-calendar day waiting period. Eligibility is lost or regained the following Friday at the time the regular school day ends or would end if that day is a holiday. Section 5 (b) of the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules defines calendar week as 12:01 am on Sunday through midnight on Saturday. 19 TAC §76.1001 (b) states: The school week is defined as beginning at 12:01 am on the first instructional day of the calendar week and ending at the close of instruction on the last instructional day of the calendar week, excluding holidays.

Ejection from Certain Activities

A person serving as a referee, judge, or other official of an extracurricular athletic activity or competition sponsored by Vanguard Academy or the UIL is authorized to eject a spectator from the extracurricular athletic activity or competition if the spectator:

- Poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- Behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting.

Student Supervision at After-School Events

To promote a safe and secure environment for all students, Vanguard Academy requires appropriate adult supervision during after-school activities and events. Students who attend UIL competitions, athletic events, fine arts performances, club activities, or other school-sponsored events as spectators must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult throughout the duration of the event.

Students who are not official participants in a scheduled school-sponsored activity may not remain on campus after regular dismissal unless they are enrolled in an approved after-school program or are under the supervision of a parent, guardian, or authorized adult.

For safety and security reasons, students who are not properly supervised may be required to leave campus. Vanguard Academy reserves the right to contact parents/guardians for immediate student pick-up and may restrict future attendance at extracurricular events for students who repeatedly fail to comply with these expectations.

Student Pick-Up and Supervision After School-Sponsored Activities

Student safety remains a priority during all extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including athletics, fine arts, UIL academic competitions, clubs, organizations, rehearsals, practices, performances, and other school-sponsored events. Parents/guardians are responsible for arranging timely transportation following the conclusion of these activities.

Students participating in school-sponsored activities must be picked up no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled end of the activity unless alternate arrangements have been approved by the sponsor, coach, director, or campus administrator.

The following progressive response may be implemented when students are not picked up on time:

• **First Occurrence:** Verbal reminder provided to the parent/guardian.

• **Second Occurrence:** Conference between the parent/guardian and the coach, sponsor, or activity director.

• **Third Occurrence:** Formal conference with the appropriate campus administrator, Athletic Coordinator, Fine Arts Director, or program supervisor.

• **Fourth Occurrence and Beyond:** Continued participation in extracurricular activities may be reviewed and subject to administrative action. If a parent/guardian or authorized adult cannot be reached or does not arrive within a reasonable period of time, law enforcement or other appropriate authorities may be contacted in accordance with district safety procedures to ensure that the student is not left without adult supervision.

Vanguard Academy values the dedication and commitment of coaches, directors, sponsors, and staff members who devote significant time beyond the instructional day to support students. Families are expected to partner with the school by ensuring prompt student pick-up and compliance with all supervision requirements.

3.12 Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

Approved grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines establish:

- The minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period;
- How the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.);
- Circumstances under which a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination the student originally failed; and
- Procedures for a student to follow after an absence.

The following are the approved grading guidelines for Vanguard Academy:

1. With respect to the rubric for grading, all teachers should adhere to the following guidelines:
    a. Daily Assignments = 50%
    b. Tests/Quizzes = 50%
2. The Test grades are summative assessments that record student learning of a unit at least 2 per 6-week period. Quizzes are weekly assessments of ongoing learning and can include formative checks for understanding. Daily assignments include classwork, homework, and other activities.
    a. Retesting – Students who earn a failing grade (below 70) on a major assessment will be provided a reasonable opportunity to retest within five (5) instructional days of receiving notification of the failing grade.
        - The retest grade will replace the original failing grade, with a maximum recorded grade of 70.
        - Prior to retesting, students must be provided an opportunity to participate in reteaching or other appropriate instructional support.
3. Teachers should record a minimum of 10 grades per core subject area per six weeks for PK3 & PK4. K -12th grades should record a minimum of 2 grades per subject per week, a minimum of 12 grades per six weeks.

3.13 Graduation (High School Grades Only)

Vanguard Academy shall ensure that each student enrolls in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the SBOE for graduation. Additionally, students must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

1. Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course ("EOC") assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law;
2. Complete any locally-required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the SBOE;
3. Complete the required number of credits established by the SBOE and any additional credits required by Vanguard Academy;
4. Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by Vanguard Academy, in the specific communication skills required by the SBOE; and
5. Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid ("FAFSA") or a Texas application for state financial aid ("TASFA").

Additional Graduation Requirements

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Awareness – Texas law requires high school students to complete a cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") awareness and training program in order to graduate. The CPR awareness course is not taken for credit and does not result in CPR certification. Vanguard Academy will offer CPR awareness training to students during their 7th -12th grade year to satisfy this requirement.

Peace Officer Training – Texas law requires high schools to provide students with instruction on proper interaction with peace officers during traffic stops and other in-person encounters. Vanguard Academy will offer this instruction during a student's junior or senior year.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment should a student choose this option. See the Principal or designee for more information on the state

testing requirements for graduation.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, Vanguard Academy will provide remediation in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require student participation before or after normal school hours, or at times of the year outside of normal school operations.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may be eligible to graduate, if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate. Please see the Principal or designee for more information on the makeup of an individual graduation committee and all other requirements for graduation.

Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school will graduate under the foundation graduation program. Within the foundation graduation program are "endorsements," which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript and diploma. The foundation graduation program also involves the term "distinguished level of achievement," which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

State law and rules generally prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement. However, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parents may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parents of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement. The student and the student's parent must then submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement.

A student who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn "performance acknowledgements" that will be acknowledged on a student's diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgements are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT exam; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgements are prescribed by state rules, and the Principal or designee can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

The Foundation High School Program is the default graduation track for all students entering 9th grade; students entering 9th grade will generally enroll in the Foundation High School Program with one or more endorsements. Permission to enroll in the Foundation High School Program without earning an endorsement will be granted only after the student's sophomore year, the student and the student's parent/guardian are notified of the benefits of graduating with endorsement and the student's parent/guardian gives written permission for the student to opt out of an endorsement. In order for a student to take courses under the Foundation High School Program without endorsements, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed 9th grade one or more times.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and Vanguard Academy will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, not taking

Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

Vanguard Academy will permit a student to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation under the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see the school counselor for more information.

Texas First Early High School Completion Program

Upon each student's initial enrollment in high school, Vanguard Academy shall provide parents and students notice of eligibility criteria for the Texas First Early High School Completion Program and Texas First Scholarship Program.

Financial Aid Application Requirement

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit an application for financial aid for post-secondary education. Students must complete and submit either a FAFSA or TASFA.

Students may consult with their school counselor for guidance in completing the FAFSA/TAFSA. A student is not required to complete and submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

- The student's parent submits a form provided by Vanguard Academy indicating that the parent authorizes the student to opt out;
- A student who is 18 years of age or older or a legally independent minor submits a form provided by Vanguard Academy indicating that the student opts out; or
- A school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for a good cause.

To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a TASFA, the student must submit:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA ApplyTexas Counselor Suite;
- Notification, such as a copy of an email, from the United States Department of Education verifying completion of the FAFSA;
- A copy or screenshot of the FAFSA acknowledgment page;
- A screenshot of the TASFA submission acknowledgment page (from those institutions that offer an electronic form);
- An acknowledgment receipt from an institution of higher education ("IHE")); or
- A copy of a financial aid award letter from an IHE

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her IEP and in accordance with state rules.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

A student who is enrolled in a special education program may earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement on the student's transcript by:

1. Successfully completing, with or without modification of the curriculum:
    a. The curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education for the foundation high school program;

b. For the distinguished level of achievement, the additional curriculum requirements identified by law; and
c. For an endorsement, the additional curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education; and

2. Successfully completing all curriculum requirements for the distinguished level of achievement or endorsement adopted by the State Board of Education without modification of the curriculum or with modification of the curriculum, provided that the curriculum, as modified, is sufficiently rigorous as determined by the student's ARD committee and documented in the student's IEP.

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. The ARD committee shall also determine whether the student is required to achieve satisfactory performance on an end-of-course assessment instrument to earn the distinguished level of achievement or an endorsement on the student's transcript.

3.14 Promotion and Retention

A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet Vanguard Academy's requirements for attendance. A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

A student may be considered for retention if they have met any of the following criteria:

1. failed one or more core subject areas;
2. failed one or more state assessments;
3. is below level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year. The decision must be made by a committee, which is composed of the child's core subject area teachers, the counselor, and the Principal or designee.

Special Education Students: A student's IEP can modify the school's promotion criteria in whole or in part. Any modified promotion standards shall be determined by the student's ARD committee and documented in the IEP. A student's ARD committee will also make determinations on whether a student will be promoted or retained.

Parent Option for Students to Repeat Grades or Courses

In certain circumstances, a parent may elect for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course. Subject to certain restrictions, a parent may elect for a student to:

1. Repeat prekindergarten;
2. Enroll in prekindergarten if the child was eligible to enroll in free prekindergarten under Education Code § 29.153(b) and has not yet enrolled in kindergarten;
3. Repeat kindergarten;
4. Enroll in kindergarten if the child would have enrolled in kindergarten in the previous school year and has not yet enrolled in first grade;
5. For grades one through eight, repeat the grade the student was enrolled in the previous school year; and/or
6. For courses taken for high school credit, repeat any course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year.

A parent may not elect for a student to repeat a course identified in item 6 above if Vanguard Academy determines the student has met all of the requirements for graduation.

An election for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course must be made in writing. If Vanguard Academy disagrees with a parent election for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course, the school must convene a retention committee and meet with the parent to discuss retention. The meeting must be conducted in person, unless the parent agrees to alternative means. A student may not be retained for a grade or repeat a course if the parent does not meet with the retention committee.

The retention committee will be composed of the Principal or designee, the student's parent, the teacher who taught the grade or course for which the parent wants the student retained or repeated, and additional teachers at the discretion of the Principal, if the student will potentially repeat multiple courses. During the retention meeting, Vanguard Academy and the parent will discuss the merits of and concerns with advancement and retention, and review and consider the student's grade in each subject or course, the results of any formative or summative assessments administered to the student, and any other available academic information to determine the student's academic readiness for the next grade or a given course. After the parent has participated in a retention committee meeting, the parent shall decide whether the student should be retained or retake a grade or course. Vanguard Academy must abide by the parent's decision.

3.15 Report Cards

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every six weeks. During the third week of a six-week grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies is near or below 70%, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70% in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. The report card or progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70% in a class or subject. Report cards and progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within seven days.

Report cards will be available through the Parent Portal the week following each grading period as indicated on the Vanguard Academy Calendar. Students receive report cards with a numerical grading system in core subject areas.

Progress reports will be sent at regular intervals of three weeks.

Honor Roll
The purpose of the honor roll program is to recognize and honor students who have attained outstanding academic success.

All schools will implement this honor roll system that recognizes students for high academic achievement at the end of each 6-week period. Schools are required to recognize students for performance at two levels: All A Honor Roll and A&B Honor Roll.

Students qualifying for each level of honor roll will be identified based on grades entered on student report cards. The following criteria will be used to identify students at each level:

- All A Honor Roll: All A's in all subject areas. (Conduct grade in elementary school is not included.)
- A&B Honor Roll: A combination of all A's and B's in all subject areas. (Conduct grade in elementary school is not included.)

All "A" Honor Roll must be maintained throughout every six weeks to receive all "A" Honor Roll for the year.

The online parental portal is available for parents to monitor student's progress.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the parent or student may request a conference with the Principal or designee. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the Board of Directors determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the school's grading policy.

Make – Up Work
Make-up work due to unexcused absences **will be accepted within a week of returning to school**. It is the responsibility of the child to collect and turn in all missed assignments.

Excused Absences

- Students shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and assessments missed due to an excused absence.
- Students will be allowed at least one school day for each day absent to turn in make-up work, with a maximum of five school days unless extended by the teacher.
- Students will receive full credit for work completed within the allotted time.

Unexcused Absences

- Make-up work missed due to an unexcused absence must be completed within five school days of returning.
- Work may receive reduced or partial credit up to 70%), at the discretion of the teacher.
- Failure to complete missed work may result in a grade of 50 or below.

Student Responsibility

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain all missed assignments from teachers immediately upon returning to school. (Excused or Unexcused Absence)
- Students are also responsible for scheduling any missed quizzes, labs, or tests with their teacher

In some cases, students who have missed assignments and/or concepts in a class due to extenuating circumstances may be given an incomplete grade. All work pertaining to an "I" should be completed and turned in within five school days. Otherwise, the "I" will default to the student's actual numeric average with zeros for missing assignment/s resulting in the student failing. Questions concerning an "I" should be directed to the teacher.

3.16 Restriction on Instruction Regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Vanguard Academy may not provide or allow a third party to provide instruction, guidance, activities, or programming regarding sexual orientation or gender identity to students enrolled in prekindergarten through 12th grade.

3.17 Special Programs

Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English
A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing regular class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra

services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee ("LPAC") will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

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 behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RTI). The implementation of RTI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This 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 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*.

Homebound Services
Vanguard Academy provides instructional arrangement/ setting for students who are served at home or hospital bedside. Students served on a homebound or hospital bedside basis are expected to be confined for a minimum of four consecutive weeks as documented by a physician licensed to practice in the United States. Homebound or hospital bedside Instruction may also be provided to chronically ill students who are expected to be confined for any period of time totaling at least four weeks throughout the school year as documented by a physician licensed to practice in the United States. The weeks need to be consecutive.

The student's ARD committee shall determine the amount of services to be provided to the student in this instructional arrangement/setting in accordance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Vanguard Academy will follow the guidelines set in the current Student Attendance Accounting Handbook.

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: Director of Special Programs Services, Mr. Francisco Faticati at (956) 781-1701 or ffaticati@vanguardac.net

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: Francisco Faticati who can be reached at (956) 781-1701 (ext. 1042) or by email at ffaticati@vanguardacademy.net

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; and
- Texas Project First.

Notification to Parent of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to General Education Students
Vanguard Academy will annually notify parents that it provides assistance to students, other than those already enrolled in a special education program, who need assistance for learning difficulties, including intervention strategies.

Services for Title I Participants
Information regarding Vanguard Academy's Title I program may be obtained from the Director of Federal Programs at (956) 781 – 1701.

Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504
A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services may qualify for protections

under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"). Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be created to determine whether the student needs Section 504 services and support in order to receive an appropriate education as required by federal law.

Students Qualifying for Dyslexia Services

A student may be eligible to receive dyslexia or related services as defined by the Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders as updated and approved by the State Board of Education in 2021.

If Vanguard Academy suspects or has reason to suspect that a student may have dyslexia, including after evaluation or use of reading diagnosis, Vanguard Academy will comply with the requirements of Texas Education Code §§ 29.0031 and 29.0032, as well as all federal and state requirements regarding any evaluation of the student.

3.18 Standardized Testing

Instructional Program

To ensure that each student achieves at least satisfactory performance on each state assessment, Vanguard Academy shall ensure that its curricular and instructional systems provide instruction to all students that:

1. is consistently aligned with the essential knowledge and skills for the applicable subject area and grade level; and
2. strategically and timely addresses deficiencies in the prerequisite essential knowledge and skills for the applicable subject area and grade level.

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students in grades 3–8 will take the state assessment, the STAAR exam, in the following subjects:

- 3rd grade – Math, Reading Language Arts, Spanish Math, Spanish Reading Language Arts
- 4th grade – Math, Reading Language Arts, Spanish Math, Spanish Reading Language Arts
- 5th grade – Math, Reading Language Arts, Science, Spanish Math, Spanish Reading Language Arts, Spanish Science
- 6th grade – Math, Reading Language Arts
- 7th grade – Math, Reading Language Arts
- 8th grade – Math, Reading Language Arts, Science, Social Studies

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services and who meet certain state-established criteria, as determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee.

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

End-of-Course Assessments for Students in Grades 9–12

STAAR or EOC assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I;
- Biology;
- English I and II; and
- United States History.

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

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

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services and who meet certain state-established criteria, as determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee. The student's admission, review, and dismissal committee will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for a student receiving special education services to graduate, in accordance with parameters set in state regulations.

Paper Administration of Assessment Instruments on Parental Request

On the written request of a student's parent, or teacher, Vanguard Academy may administer a STAAR or EOC assessment in paper format. This request must be submitted for a fall administration of STAAR or EOC assessment not later than **September 15** of the school year in which the assessment will be administered; and for a spring administration of STAAR or EOC assessment, not later than **December 1** of the school year in which the assessment instrument will be administered.

Please note that Vanguard Academy cannot administer paper assessments for more than three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. If more requests for paper assessments are received than the maximum amount allowed by the law, Vanguard Academy will accept the requests in the order received until the maximum number is reached. This limitation does not apply to a student whose admission, review and dismissal committee determines that the administration of the STAAR or EOC assessments in paper format is a necessary modification for the student.

Accelerated Instruction

Vanguard Academy will provide accelerated instruction in applicable subject areas to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the STAAR exam in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade or an end-of-course ("EOC") assessment. This accelerated instruction will be provided either during the subsequent summer or school year, and consist of instruction meeting the requirements of Education Code § 28.0211(a-1) and 28.0211(a-4), as applicable.

Accelerated instruction provided during the following school year may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours. Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

In providing this accelerated instruction, Vanguard Academy may not remove a student, except under circumstances for which a student enrolled in the same grade level who is not receiving accelerated instruction would be removed, from: (1) instruction in the foundation and enrichment curriculum for the grade level in which the student is enrolled, or (2) recess or other physical activity that is available to other students enrolled in the same grade level.

Accelerated Education Plan

Vanguard Academy will develop an Accelerated Education Plan ("AEP") for each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment to provide the necessary accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade or course level by the conclusion of the school year. The AEP will be documented in writing, and a copy will be provided to the student's parents.

Vanguard Academy will make a good faith attempt to provide the parent of a student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment a parent-teacher conference with the student's primary teacher at the start and end of the subsequent school year. At the conference, Vanguard

Academy will provide the parent with:

1. Notice that the student is not performing on grade level in the applicable subject area; and
2. An explanation of the accelerated instruction to which the student is entitled and information on the AEP that must be developed for the student and the manner in which the parent may participate in developing the plan.

A parent of a student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment may submit a written request to the Principal for Vanguard Academy to consider the student's assignment to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject area for the subsequent school year, if more than one classroom teacher is available. Vanguard Academy retains discretion to make classroom assignments based on campus needs and classroom capacity.

During the school year, the student's progress will be monitored to ensure that the student is progressing in accordance with the AEP.

AEP Grievance Procedure: A student's parent may contest the content or implementation of an AEP developed by Vanguard Academy by submitting a written complaint to the Principal within (1) seven calendar days of the parent's receipt of AEP or (2) within seven calendar days of the parent's concern that the AEP is not being properly implemented. The Principal will conduct a conference with the parent within five school days of the Principal's receipt of the written complaint and issue a written decision within five school days of the conference. A parent who is dissatisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal through Vanguard Academy's student and parent complaint process, beginning at Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction level.

Special Education Students: The ARD Committee of a student who participates in the school's special education program and who does not perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment shall, at the student's next annual ARD review meeting, review the student's participation and progress in, as applicable, accelerated instruction, supplemental, or an AEP. The student's parent may request, or the school may schedule, an additional ARD meeting if a committee member believes that the student's individualized education program (IEP) needs to be modified. If the school refuses to convene an ARD meeting requested by the student's parent, Vanguard Academy shall provide the parent with written notice explaining the reason the school refuses to convene the meeting.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the TSI assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Many colleges require either the American College Test ("ACT") or the Scholastic Aptitude Test ("SAT") for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the Principal or designee early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the Principal or designee.

Note that participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at

a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS") is a system of statewide assessments administered to all Limited English Proficient ("LEP") students in grades K–12. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stages of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

SECTION 4: ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS

4.1 Access to Teaching Materials

A parent is entitled to review teaching materials, instructional materials, and other teaching aids used in the classroom of the parent's child.

4.2 Accommodations for Children of Military Families

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

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

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

4.3 Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

Vanguard Academy does not provide Human Sexuality Instruction.

4.4 Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking

Students in middle school and high school receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking. In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in the instruction will be posted on the district's website.
- Remove his or her child from any part of instruction relating to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking without academic, disciplinary, or other

penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the school's health advisory committee or attending committee meetings.
- Use Vanguard Academy grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

Before a student may be provided with instruction relating to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, Vanguard Academy must obtain the written consent of the student's parent. The consent will meet requirements under Education Code 28.004(q-6).

4.5 Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service

Vanguard Academy will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the school's intervention procedures except as permitted by law. Before administering a student well-being questionnaire or health screening form to a student, Vanguard Academy will provide a copy of the questionnaire or form to the student's parent and obtain the parent's consent to administer the questionnaire or form.

Vanguard Academy has established comprehensive protocols to support students exhibiting early warning signs of mental health or substance abuse issues, or who are identified as at risk of attempting suicide. These protocols ensure timely communication and appropriate interventions to safeguard student well-being. The mental health liaison, or any campus administrator or counselor will notify a student's parent or guardian within a reasonable amount of time upon identifying early warning signs. Parents will also be provided with detailed information on available counseling and intervention options.

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as curriculum materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

[See **Sec. 2.23 – Mental Health Promotion and Intervention**]

4.6 Information Regarding Mental, Emotional, and Physical Health and Health-Related Services

Vanguard Academy offers a variety of health-related and health-care services to each student. Vanguard Academy will notify parents of each health-related service and health-care service offered at the campus their student attends each school year in accordance with procedures developed by the Texas Education Agency.

Health-related services are services that are typically short-term, noninvasive activities designed to promote a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being but are not considered a health-care service. Parents will be given the opportunity to opt-out of each health-related service each school year. Vanguard Academy will assume consent is provided unless the parent opts out. Parents can update opt-out decisions at any time.

Vanguard Academy will obtain written (opt-in) consent before providing health-care services, including services that involve medical treatment, medical procedures, administration of medication, and any psychological or psychiatric examination, test, or treatment.

Vanguard Academy will comply with procedures developed by the Texas Education Agency to provide notice to parents of enrolled students regarding any change in services provided to or monitoring of the student related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

Incidental or in-the-moment methods or techniques used to de-escalate isolated behavioral, emotional, or other incidents are not health-related services or health-care services and will be provided as appropriate. Noninvasive actions to address minor student claims of feeling unwell or adult observations of a child being physically unwell are considered general caretaking and are also not health-related services or health-care services. This includes, but is not limited to, actions such as cleaning spills or other accidents, offering a change of clothing if necessary, providing support that an adult would typically provide to support a child's expressions of being unwell (such as feeling a student's forehead or checking for swollen lymph nodes or tonsils), and minor student care actions such as applying adhesive bandages or wiping a bloody nose. Vanguard Academy will provide general caretaking to students.

Health-care services may be provided without prior notice or consent in the event of an emergency in accordance with school policy, state law, and TEA procedures. If provided in an emergency, parents will be notified as soon as possible under the circumstances.

4.7 Notice of My Texas Future System

As part of the high school registration process, Vanguard Academy shall annually notify each parent or guardian of a student who has earned at least three high school course credits or not later than the end of a student's first semester of ninth grade:

1. Of the option to create or update annually a profile and account in My Texas Future;
2. That a student or their parent is permitted to update or revise their own profile in My Texas Future;
3. That a student or parent of a student who creates a profile and account may opt out of one or more programs offered under the My Texas Future program; and
4. Of the graduation requirement under Education Code 28.0257 for a student or parent to indicate whether the student wishes to opt into allowing the State Board of Education to share the student's data and educational records with institutions of higher education for the participating in direct admissions programs.

4.8 Notice of Postsecondary Options

During the first school year a student is enrolled at the high school level, and again during each year of a student's enrollment at the high school level, Vanguard Academy shall provide information about postsecondary education to the student and the student's parent or guardian. The notice will include information regarding:

1. The importance of postsecondary education, including career readiness and workforce training opportunities and a link to the My Texas Future Internet website and information regarding how to create a profile on that website;
2. The advantages of earning an endorsement and a performance acknowledgement and completing the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program;
3. The disadvantages of taking courses to prepare for a high school equivalency examination relative to the benefits of taking courses leading to a high school diploma;
4. Financial aid eligibility;
5. Instruction on how to apply for federal financial aid;
6. Information on the center for financial aid information;
7. The automatic admission of certain students to general academic teaching institutions;
8. The eligibility and academic performance requirements for the TEXAS Grant;
9. The availability of programs in Vanguard Academy under which a student may earn college credit, including advanced placement programs, dual credit programs, joint high school and college credit programs, and international baccalaureate programs;
10. The availability of education and training vouchers and tuition and fee waivers to attend an institution of higher education for a student who is or was previously in the conservatorship of

the Department of Family and Protective Services;
11. The availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military servicemembers for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service;
12. Opportunities to complete career training and obtain a postsecondary credential while enrolled in high school, whether at the student's campus, another Vanguard Academy campus, or an educational institution that partners with Vanguard Academy, including information regarding program costs, program completion rates, and the average wages of students who complete the program and the availability of information regarding those opportunities on the My Texas Future website; and
13. The outcome of graduates from Vanguard Academy and the campus the student attends, including completion rates and average wages based on postsecondary pathways available to Vanguard Academy graduates.

4.9 Notice of Teacher Qualifications

Vanguard Academy will provide parents with the qualifications of each teacher employed by the school. Parents may also request, and Vanguard Academy will provide in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers. Information provided in response to a parent request will include, at a minimum:

1. Whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. Whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
3. Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
4. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

4.10 Parent Contact Information

Parents are required to provide, in writing, the parent's address, phone number, and email address upon a student's enrollment within the first two weeks of the start of each school year. If a parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must notify Vanguard Academy no later than two weeks after the effective date of the change.

4.11 Review and Reporting of Library Materials

Vanguard Academy will provide for a parent of a child enrolled in the school to access the catalog of available library materials at each school library and submit to Vanguard Academy a list of library materials that the parent's child may not be allowed to check out or otherwise access for use outside the school library. Vanguard Academy may not allow a student to check out or otherwise use outside the school library a library material that the student's parent has denied access to.

For each learning management system or online learning portal used by Vanguard Academy, parents will be provided a record of each time the parent's child checks out or otherwise uses outside the school library a library material. The record will include, as applicable, the title, author, genre, and return date of the library material.

4.12 Right to Decline Consent for Health-Related Services

Vanguard Academy will comply with Education Code 26.0083(g) with respect to parent notice of each health-related service at the campus the parent's student attends. The notice will include a statement of the parent's right to withhold consent for or decline a health-related service.

4.13 Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns

Vanguard Academy values the opinions of its students and parents, and the public it serves. Parents and students have the right to express their views through appropriate informal and formal processes. The purpose of this complaint and/or grievance policy is to resolve conflicts in an efficient, expeditious, and just manner.

The Board of Directors encourages parents and the public to discuss their complaints and grievances through informal meetings with the Principal or designee. Complaints and grievances should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Neither the Board of Directors nor any School employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a parent or student for voicing a complaint and/or grievance.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the school's complaint and grievance procedures are provided to all parents and students. The formal complaint and grievance procedure shall provide for any complaint and grievance to ultimately be considered or heard by the Board of Directors in accordance with Commissioner of Education rules.

For purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean school days, and announcement of a decision in the student's or parent's presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

Informal Conferences

A parent or student may request an informal conference with the Principal or designee, teacher, or other campus administrator within seven school days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint and/or grievance. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, he or she may submit a written complaint and/or grievance form to the Principal or designee. Complaint and grievance forms may be obtained from the Principal's office.

Formal Grievance Process

The formal complaint and grievance process provides all persons with an opportunity to be heard up to the Board of Directors if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, a parent and/or student can bring complaints and/or grievances to the Board of Directors, as outlined below.

A complaint and/or grievance must specify the harm alleged by the parent and/or student, and the remedy sought. A parent or student should not submit separate or serial complaints and/or grievances regarding the same event or action. Multiple complaints and/or grievances may be consolidated at the school's discretion. All time limits shall be strictly complied with; however, if an administrator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or grievance and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the parent or student in writing of the need to extend the response time and provide a specific date by which the response will be issued. Costs of any complaint and/or grievance shall be paid by the complainant and/or grievant.

Level One Complaint –Principal Review

A parent or student shall submit a written Level One Complaint or Grievance Form to the Principal or designee within the later of (1) 10 days from the time the event(s) causing the complaint and/or grievance were or should have been known, or (2) within 10 days following an informal conference with the Principal or designee. The school reserves the right to require the complainant and/or grievant to begin the complaint and/or grievance process at Level Two.

The Principal or designee will meet with the complaining and/or grieving parent and issue a written Level One Decision within 10 days of the Principal or designee's receipt of the complaint and/or grievance. In reaching a decision, the Principal or designee may consider information provided with the complaint form and any other relevant documents or information the Principal or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Note: *A complaint and/or grievance against the Superintendent shall begin at Level Three*.

Level Two Complaint – Superintendent Review

If the parent or student is not satisfied with the Level One Decision, or if no Level One Decision is provided, the parent or student may file a written appeal to the Superintendent or designee. The appeal must include a signed statement of the complaint and/or grievance, any evidence supporting the complaint and/or grievance, and a copy of the written Level One complaint and a copy of the Level One Decision, if issued. The appeal shall not include any new issues or complaints and/or grievances unrelated to the Level One complaint. The appeal must be filed within 10 days of the Level One Decision or the response deadline if no Level One Decision is made. The Superintendent or designee will meet with the complaining and/or grieving parent or student and issue a written Level Two Decision within 10 days of receiving the written appeal. In reaching a decision, the Superintendent or designee may consider the Level One record, any additional information provided prior to the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the Superintendent or designee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Three – Board of Directors Review

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two Decision, or if no Level Two Decision is provided, the parent or student may submit to the Superintendent a written appeal to the Board of Directors. The request must be filed within 10 days of the Level Two Decision or the response deadline if no Level Two Decision is made. The Superintendent or designee will inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the Board of Directors meeting at which the complaint and/or grievance will be placed on the agenda for consideration by the Board.

The Board of Directors will consider the appeal, and may allow a presentation by the parent or student and the school administration. The appeal will be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One and/or Level Two, except that if the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the complaint and/or grievance record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the Board of Directors' meeting.

Vanguard Academy will determine whether the appeal will be presented in open or closed session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law.

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for any presentation of evidence, including an opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall hear the complaint and/or grievance and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

The Board of Directors shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the decision being appealed shall be upheld. The Board of Directors may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed

Additional Complaint Procedures

This Parent and Student Complaints and Grievance process does not apply to all complaints and/or grievances:

1. Complaints alleging Prohibited Conduct (discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and similar matters) shall be submitted as described in "Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation," in this Handbook.
2. Complaints concerning decisions of an accelerated learning committee and/or Life School's implementation of a student's accelerated learning plan shall be submitted as described in "Accelerated Learning Committees,".
3. Formal complaints alleging sexual harassment shall be submitted as described in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment," of this Handbook.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted as described in "Freedom from Bullying," of this Handbook.
5. Complaints and grievances concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance shall be submitted as described in "Attendance for Credit or Final Grade," as described in this Handbook.
6. Complaints and grievances concerning disciplinary long-term suspensions and/or expulsions. Shall be submitted as described in "Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals" as described in the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted as described in "Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns" above, except that the deadline for filing an initial Level One complaint and/or grievance shall be 30 calendar days and the procedural safeguards handbook.
8. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with applicable Board policy and the procedural safeguards provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
9. Complaints regarding the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the school is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, political beliefs, age, disability, national origin, or limited English proficiency. (Not all bases apply to all programs.) Reprisal is prohibited based on prior civil rights activity. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which is available online at the following website: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usada.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339, or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

4.14 Notice of Threat Assessment

Before Vanguard Academy's safe and supportive school team conducts a threat assessment of a student, the team must notify the parent of the student regarding the assessment. In conducting the assessment, the team shall provide an opportunity for the parent to:

1. Participate in the assessment, either in person or remotely; and
2. Submit to the team information regarding the student.

After completing a threat assessment of a student, the team shall provide to the parent of the student the team's findings and conclusions regarding the student.

4.15 Surveys and Activities

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment ("PPRA") requires that students may not be required to

participate in certain surveys, analyses, or evaluations – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concern:

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

Parents may inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

"Opting Out" of Surveys and Activities

The PPRA also gives parents the right to receive notice of and deny permission for their student's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from their student for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. A non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam of screening permitted or required under state law.)

SECTION 5: IMPORTANT NOTICES

After reading the following sections, Vanguard Academy will require all parent(s) or guardian(s) to sign and return the attached forms to their child's respective home campus.

Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education record within 45 days after the day Vanguard Academy receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the Principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The Principal or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Vanguard Academy to amend their child's or their education records should write the Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify

why it should be changed. If Vanguard Academy decides not to amend the records as requested by the parent or eligible student, Vanguard Academy will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before Vanguard Academy discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A "school official" is:

- A person employed by Vanguard Academy as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel);
- A person serving on the Board of Directors;
- A volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by Vanguard Academy, performs an institutional service or function for which Vanguard Academy would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of Vanguard Academy with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or providers of video conferencing or other virtual learning software apps to hold classes or conduct classroom activities virtually;
- A parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or
- A parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, Vanguard Academy discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Vanguard Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Notice of Directory Information

FERPA, a federal law, requires that Vanguard Academy, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Vanguard Academy may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised Vanguard Academy to the contrary in accordance with Vanguard Academy procedures.

Directory Information for School-Related Purposes:
Vanguard Academy has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure for school-related purposes:

- Student name;
- Address and telephone listing;
- Date and place of birth;
- Dates of attendance;
- Degrees, honors, and awards received;
- Grade level;
- Major field of study;
- Most recent educational institution attended;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- Photographs (including video images); and
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-related purposes are those events/activities that Vanguard Academy conducts and/or sponsors to support the school's educational mission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Extracurricular programs or events (e.g., playbills or programs for events such as school plays, concerts, athletic events, graduation ceremony, etc.).
- Honor roll and other student recognition lists.
- Marketing materials of Vanguard Academy (e.g., using directory information for print media, website or social media accounts operated by Vanguard Academy, videos, newspaper articles, etc.).
- Publications (e.g., printing student names and pictures in newsletters and yearbooks, etc.), including sharing directory information with companies who have a contractual relationship with Vanguard Academy and that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

Directory Information Supplied to Military and College Recruiters (Secondary Students Only):
Two federal laws require Vanguard Academy to provide military recruiters or an institution of higher education, upon request, with access to the name, address, and telephone listing of each secondary student served by Vanguard Academy, unless parents have advised Vanguard Academy that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Directory Information Supplied to Law Enforcement Officials and Authorities:
Vanguard Academy has designated the following categories of information as directory information for purposes of responding to requests for general student information made by law enforcement officials and authorities: students name, address, and telephone number.

Vanguard Academy shall not release directory information except for the purposes indicated above, namely, disclosure relating to school-related purposes; for the purpose of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education for secondary students; and for the purpose of disclosure upon request by law enforcement officials and authorities.

IF YOU DO NOT WANT VANGUARD ACADEMY TO DISCLOSE ANY OR ALL OF THE TYPES OF INFORMATION DESIGNATED ABOVE AS DIRECTORY INFORMATION FROM YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION RECORDS WITHOUT YOUR PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT, YOU MUST NOTIFY Vanguard Academy IN WRITING WITHIN 10 DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THIS "NOTICE OF PARENT AND STUDENT RIGHTS (ANNUAL FERPA CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE)."

Disclosure of PII without Consent
FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires Vanguard Academy to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible

students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

Vanguard Academy may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student:

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom Vanguard Academy has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom Vanguard Academy has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the Texas Education Agency. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or
- (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information Vanguard Academy has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))

- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form

"Directory Information" means information contained in an educational record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. FERPA permits Vanguard Academy to designate certain personal information as "directory information," which may be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting it as proscribed in school policy.

To prohibit Vanguard Academy from releasing your student's directory information, you must circle NO adjacent to the appropriate statement(s) below, sign the form, and return it to your student's school. **Completion of this form is optional. However, if you do not circle NO or return this form, directory information about your student may be released in accordance with Vanguard Academy policy**.

If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate one for each student.

PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO

For all students:

YES	NO	I give permission for my student's directory information to be used for school-related purposes.
YES	NO	I give permission for my student's name, address, and telephone number to be provided upon request by law enforcement officials and authorities.

For secondary students only:

YES	NO	I give permission to release my student's directory information to **institutions of higher education**.
YES	NO	I give permission to release my student's directory information to **military recruiters**.

PRINT Student's Full Legal Name

Student's Date of Birth

PRINT Parent/Guardian Full Legal Name
or Eligible Student Full Legal Name

Parent/Guardian Signature
or Eligible Student Signature

Date

Use of Student Work in School Publications

Occasionally, Vanguard Academy wishes to display or publish a student's name and photo along with student artwork, photos taken by the student, or other original work on the school's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the school (such as a classroom website), on social media accounts operated by the school, and in school publications. Vanguard Academy agrees to use these student projects in this manner.

Parents/Guardians: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent/guardian of _____ (student's name), (do give) (do not give) Vanguard Academy permission to use my child's artwork, photos, or other original work in the manner described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Photo/Video Release Form

Throughout the school year, there may be times when Vanguard Academy staff, the media, or other organizations (with the approval of the Principal), may take photographs of students, audiotape and/or videotape students, or interview students for school-related stories in a way that would individually identify a specific student. Those photographs, audio recordings, and/or videotaped images or interviews may appear in Vanguard Academy publications; in Vanguard Academy video productions; on the Vanguard Academy website; in Vanguard Academy advertisements, fundraising, and/or recruitment materials; in the news media; or in other nonprofit, education-related organizations' publications. In order to release student photos, video footage, comments and/or post on the Vanguard Academy website, we need written permission. To give your consent, please complete the form below.

_ I hereby give permission for Vanguard Academy to use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I authorize the use and reproduction by Vanguard Academy of any and all photographs and/or audio or video recordings taken of my child, without compensation to my child or to me. All photographs and recordings shall be the sole property of Vanguard Academy. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs, audio or video recordings, and/or reproduced materials that may be used in conjunction with them. I understand and agree that Vanguard Academy may use my child's voice and/or likeness in subsequent school years unless I revoke this authorization by notifying the Principal in writing, I further grant unto Vanguard Academy permission to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles. I release Vanguard Academy and those acting pursuant to its authority from liability for any violation of any personal or proprietary right I may have in connection with the purposes mentioned above.

_ Vanguard Academy may not use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I further decline permission for Vanguard Academy to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles.

Student's Name: _____ Parent Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Students 18 years of age or older may sign this release form for themselves

Student Acceptable Use Policy

This Student Acceptable Use Policy ("Policy") sets forth the guidelines governing the use of all Vanguard Academy technology resources by students while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on- or off-campus, as well as the use of all Vanguard Academy technology resources via off-campus remote access.

Vanguard Academy reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this Policy at any time.

Introduction

Vanguard Academy is pleased to offer students access to school computers, communications systems,[1] the Internet and a wide array of other technology resources to promote educational excellence and enhance the classroom experience. Technology can expand a student's access to educational materials, prepare students by providing workforce skills and college readiness, and lead to personal growth. Vanguard Academy recognizes, however, that access to technology must be given with clear guidelines, expectations, and supervision to protect students. This Policy is designed to make parents, teachers and administrators partners to teach students how to be responsible users of technology.

Vanguard Academy will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Vanguard Academy will hold ALL students responsible for their use of technology, whether school-provided or personal, and they are expected to act in an appropriate manner in accordance with campus procedures, Vanguard Academy policy and procedures, and legal requirements. This applies to the use of all Vanguard Academy technology resources by students while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on-or off-campus, as well as the use of all Vanguard Academy technology resources via off-campus remote access.

This Policy shall be used in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct.

Using the Internet and Communications Systems

Vanguard Academy provides technology resources to students for the express purposes of conducting research, completing assignments, and communicating to the faculty, staff, and others to complement their educational experience. Just as students must demonstrate proper behavior in a classroom or school hallway, they must also behave appropriately when using any Vanguard Academy computer networks, personal communication devices, and software or websites sanctioned or used by Vanguard Academy. Access to Vanguard Academy's technology is a privilege, not a right. Students must comply with all standards set forth in this Policy at all times in order to maintain the privilege of using its technology resources.

Students and their parents are advised that any information stored on and/or sent through Vanguard Academy's technology resources is the property of Vanguard Academy. Accordingly, in connection with ensuring student safety, Vanguard Academy network administrators and/or other appropriate personnel will engage in periodic reviews and searches of stored files and communications stored on Vanguard Academy technology resources to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are complying with this Policy and using technology in a responsible and appropriate manner. Such reviews will include students' use of school-approved educational websites or software to ensure that they are using it in an appropriate manner consistent with Vanguard Academy's expectations for such use. Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy over any information stored on Vanguard Academy

[1] "Communication Systems" include educational-related communications between and among Vanguard Academy and students by email, web sites, cell phones, pagers, text messaging, instant messaging, blogging, podcasting, listservs, and/or other emerging technologies.

technology.

Vanguard Academy may allow students to bring personal technology devices (i.e., tablets, e-readers, smartphones) for use during the school day for authorized curricular purposes. Students that use personal technology devices will be required to comply with all aspects of the Acceptable Use Policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct in the use of such devices at school. A student's personal technology device may be subject to search by campus administrators in connection with determining if a student has committed a violation of this Policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct.

Vanguard Academy remains committed to integrating technology to enhance its curriculum for students, which it believes increases students' educational experience for them and allows for better preparation for job skills and college success. Access to the Internet enables students to use extensive online libraries, databases and websites selected by Vanguard Academy for use in instruction.

Although Vanguard Academy strives to ensure that any Internet access avoids any inappropriate material, students and their families should be aware that some material accessible on the Internet may contain information that is inaccurate, profane, sexually oriented, defamatory and potentially offensive to some. Vanguard Academy does not condone any student accessing, or attempting to access, such material, and it remains deeply committed to safe Internet use. Vanguard Academy takes steps to minimize students' opportunities to access such content, including the implementation of technology prevention measures, such as extensive content-filtering software, to restrict access to inappropriate content such as those that are illegal, obscene, or harmful to minors. Each Vanguard Academy device with Internet access shall have a filtering device or software that blocks access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors, as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") and/or as determined by the school administration. This software is not fail-safe, however, and while at school, Vanguard Academy strives to ensure that students' Internet use is supervised, it is possible that the software may miss some content, or students may find a way around the software to access inappropriate material. For this reason, this Policy is strictly enforced, and students who misuse any Vanguard Academy technology outside its intended purpose, including the use of school-recommended websites for purposes outside the educational intent, will be in violation of this Policy, which may lead to disciplinary consequences for the student.

With this in mind, Vanguard Academy still believes that the benefits of allowing student access to the Internet to enhance the educational experience outweighs any potential harm to students.

Proper and Acceptable Use of All Technology Resources

Vanguard Academy requires students to use all technology resources, including any websites or software used in the classroom, in a manner consistent with the following rules. Vanguard Academy will hold students responsible for any intentional misuse of its technology resources, or any other failure to comply with the rules in this Policy. When using Vanguard Academy technology systems outside the school, parents should strive to ensure that students do so in compliance with the rules set forth in this Policy, as Vanguard Academy is unable to supervise students' technology use at home. Vanguard Academy's content-filtering software will not work in a student's home, so parents are encouraged to place content-filtering software on their home computers or take any other steps necessary to monitor students' Internet usage at home.

Students, who unintentionally access inappropriate material in connection with their use of any Vanguard Academy technology, including websites and software used in the classroom, shall immediately stop accessing the material and report it to a supervising adult. Vanguard Academy shall take immediate steps to ensure such material is blocked from further view at school by its content-filtering software.

All Vanguard Academy technology resources, including but not limited to school computers, communications systems and the Internet, including any websites or software used in the classroom,

must be used in support of education and academic research and in accordance with the rules set forth in this Policy.

Activities that are permitted and encouraged include the following:

- School work and assignments;
- Original creation and presentation of academic work;
- Research on topics being discussed in classes at school;
- Research for opportunities outside of school related to community service, employment or further education;
- Reporting inappropriate content or harassing conduct to an adult.

Activities that are barred and subject to potential disciplinary action and loss of privileges, whether on a school-provided or personal communication device, include the following:

- Attempting unauthorized access, or "hacking," of Vanguard Academy computers or networks, or any attempts to bypass Internet content-filtering software used by Vanguard Academy.
- Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the student is not an intended recipient or logging into a server or account that the student is not expressly authorized to access. For purposes of the section, "disruption" includes, but is not limited to, network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, forged routing information for malicious purpose, and any other form of network monitoring designed to intercept data not intended for the student's host.
- Engaging in abusive, harassing, insulting, ostracizing, intimidating, or any other online conduct which could be considered bullying and/or damaging to another's reputation while using any Vanguard Academy technology resource, to include the use of any website or software used by the school.
- Engaging in any conduct potentially constituting "cyberbullying," which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:
    - Creating a social networking site or web page that masquerades as another person's personal site and using it to embarrass the other person.
    - Making it appear that a person is posting malicious comments about a friend to isolate the person from his or her friends.
    - Posting a person's personally identifiable information on a site to put the person at greater risk of contact by predators or strangers.
    - Posting abusive comments on someone's social networking site.
    - Recording and distributing media with the intent to manipulate or embarrass others.
    - Sending abusive comments while playing interactive games.
    - Sending abusive text messages to cell phones, computers, or Internet-connected game consoles.
    - Sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.
    - Sending, posting, or sharing statements encouraging another person to commit self-harm.
- Engaging in any conduct that damages or modifies, or is intended to damage or modify, any Vanguard Academy equipment, network, stored computer file, or software, to include any conduct that results in a person's time to take any corrective action.
- Exporting software, technical information, encryption software or technology, in violation of international or regional export control logs.
- Intentional or neglectful transmission or direct placement of computer viruses or other

unauthorized programs onto Vanguard Academy equipment, networks, stored computer files, or software.

- Interfering with or denying service to any other use or than the student's host (for example, denial of service attack).
- Participating in online chat rooms or using instant and/or text messaging without prior approval by a classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Port scanning or security scanning.
- Presenting any copyrighted, registered, or trademarked work as that of the student.
- Refusing to submit to a search of a personal communication device in accordance with the Student Acceptable Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Revealing an account password to others or allowing use of an account(s) by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being done at home.
- Searching, viewing, communicating, publishing, downloading, storing, or retrieving any inappropriate or offensive material, including but not limited to obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic materials, or any material that is not related to the permitted activities set forth above.
- Sharing online any personal information of another student or staff member, including name, home address, or phone number.
- Taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting."
- Tampering with, removing components from, or otherwise deliberately interfering with the operation of Vanguard Academy computers, networks, printers, user files, or other associate peripherals.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books, or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software for which Vanguard Academy or the end user does not have an active license.
- Using a website or software program implemented by Vanguard Academy in a manner outside the scope of the use specified by the classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Using any programs/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, or disable, a user's terminal session, via any means, locally or via the Internet/Intranet.
- Using any Vanguard Academy technology for games, role-playing, multi-user environments, gambling, junk mail, chain mail, jokes or fundraising activities without prior approval by a classroom teacher or administrator.
- Using any Vanguard Academy technology resource to engage in any activity that violates any Board policy, the Student Code of Conduct, campus rule, local, state, and/or federal law.
- Using any Vanguard Academy technology resource to take, disseminate, transfer, or share obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content.
- Using any Vanguard Academy technology resources for any commercial and/or for-profit purpose, to include personal financial gain or fraud.
- Using obscene or profane language on any Vanguard Academy technology resource, to include posting such language on any website or software used by Vanguard Academy.
- Using Vanguard Academy or personal technology during the administration of state standardized testing, End of Course, and or final examinations unless expressly allowed to do so by a teacher.
- Using technology for plagiarism or otherwise representing the work of others as the student's own.
- Using USB, bootable CD's, or other devices to alter the function of any Vanguard Academy technology equipment, network or software.
- Violating the rights of any person or company protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, any downloading, installation, or distribution of "pirated" or other software products.

Students shall immediately report any violations of this Policy to a classroom teacher or administrator. If any student or parent has any question about whether any activity may be a violation of this Policy, they should ask a classroom teacher or the Principal or designee.

Personal Communication Devices
As noted in Section 1.28 of this Handbook, state law prohibits students from using personal communication devices while on school property during the school day. Vanguard Academy is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal communication devices, or for damage, or unauthorized access to the device nor the data that resides therein. Students and parents assume any and all risks associated with bringing a personal communication device to a campus or school-related event. In addition:

- If a student uses a personal communication device in an inappropriate manner, he or she will lose their privilege of bringing a personal device to school. Additional consequences may be imposed based on school policy and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any campus-based consequences for violating the usage rules for personal communication devices.
- Personal communication devices are never to be plugged into the wired network (i.e., computers, wall jacks, other school equipment, etc.).
- School officials may power on and search a student's personal communication device if there is a reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation and if a student and parent have signed a form authorizing the student to possess the device at school.
- Sound on personal communication devices must be turned off during the school day.
- When personal communication devices are not in the student's possession, the student must secure them. Personal communication devices must go home with students daily.

Privacy and Security
Students are expected to use Vanguard Academy's technology resources responsibly and in a safe and secure manner. Students shall not share their individual logins, passwords, or access to Vanguard Academy's technology with others without the prior approval of a classroom teacher or administrator. Students shall sign off or log off all Vanguard Academy equipment, software, or Internet sites once they are done with their session in order to protect the integrity of their logins, passwords, or access.

Consequences
Violation of Vanguard Academy's policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

1. Any disciplinary consequence, including suspension or expulsion, allowed under the Student Code of Conduct and deemed appropriate by Vanguard Academy.
2. Denial, revocation, or suspension of a user's access to Vanguard Academy's technology resources, with or without cause or notice for lack of use, violation of policy or regulations regarding acceptable network use, or as a result of disciplinary action against the user.
3. Referral to law enforcement authorities.
4. Termination of a system user account.

Violations of law may also result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by Vanguard Academy. Vanguard Academy will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the school's computer systems and networks.

Limitations of Liability
Vanguard Academy makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the technology resources it provides to students. Vanguard Academy is not responsible for any damages that a student

may sustain, including those arising from non -delivery of information, erroneous delivery of information, service interruptions, unauthorized use by a student, loss of data, and any potential exposure to inappropriate material from the Internet. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the student's own risk, as Vanguard Academy makes no representations, and denies responsibility for, the accuracy or quality of the information. In exchange for being allowed to use Vanguard Academy's technology resources, students and their parents hereby release Vanguard Academy, its directors, employees, and representatives from any and all claims for damages that arise from the intentional or neglectful misuse of Vanguard Academy's technology resources by the student.

Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form

I have read and agree to abide by Vanguard Academy's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I further understand that any violation of this policy may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my Internet and computer access privileges may be revoked, and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

_____
Student Name

_____ _____
Student Signature Date

(If you are under the age of 18 a parent or guardian must also read and sign this Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgement Form.)

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read Vanguard Academy's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. Vanguard Academy has taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for Vanguard Academy to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold Vanguard Academy responsible for materials transmitted on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Personal Communication Device Commitment Form

Electronic communications at school and at school-related functions are subject to regulation by Vanguard Academy.

This Personal Communication Device Commitment Form grants authority and permission to Vanguard Academy to regulate electronic communication devices when these devices are brought to and/or used while on school property or when attending school-related functions and events. Such communication devices include but are not limited to cellular phones, smart watches, smart glasses, pagers, PDAs, and tablet or laptop computers. These regulations are made necessary in light of the unique opportunities these devices create for violations of law and school policies, and to perpetrate conduct disruptive of an educational environment essential to the school's educational program. These concerns are exacerbated by electronic security protections and the personal size of these devices, which are often concealed in pockets and purses.

Therefore, all students who would possess personal communication devices on school property or at school-related activities are required to sign this form together with their parent, guardian or other adult person having the authority of a parent for school purposes.

Each of you, by your signature below, agrees to the following:

- In accordance with state law, Vanguard Academy prohibits student use of personal communication devices while on school property during the school day.
- The possession of personal communication devices by a student on school property or at school-related events is subject to regulation by Vanguard Academy.
- If a student possesses a personal communication device on school property or while attending school-related events, Vanguard Academy is authorized and has parent(s)/guardian's full consent to confiscate, power on or off, manipulate and do all things necessary to search student's device and recover or intercept communications (including but not limited to text messaging) when reasonable suspicion exists that such device has been used to transmit or receive communications in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation.
- I further understand, agree and consent that a personal communication device used or possessed in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or school policy or regulation is subject to confiscation and that Vanguard Academy is not liable for any loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

SIGNATURE LINES AND DATES

_____ _____

(Signature of Student) Date

_____

(Printed Name of Student)

_____ _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian) Date

Food Allergy Notification Form

Dear Parents,

Vanguard Academy is required by law to request, at the time of enrollment, that the parent or guardian of each student attending Vanguard Academy disclose the student's food allergies. This form will satisfy this requirement.

This form allows you to disclose whether your child has a food allergy or severe food allergy that you believe should be disclosed in order for Vanguard Academy to take necessary precautions for your child's safety.

"Severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human boy to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Please list any foods to which your child is allergic or severely allergic, as well as the nature of your child's allergic reaction to the food. Vanguard Academy will contact you for a note from your physician if your child has food allergies. **Your child must have an EpiPen prescribed to help in the event of an emergency.**

Food:	**Nature of allergic reaction to the food:**

Vanguard Academy will maintain the confidentiality of this form and the information provided above, and may disclose the information to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Board of Director's policy. **Vanguard Academy will maintain this form as part of your child's student record.**

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____ Parent/Guardian Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

Our signatures below acknowledges that Vanguard Academy has made its Student/Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct available to us; that we have been given notice of the rules, responsibilities and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct; that we have been informed that when my child is enrolled in Vanguard Academy, all information herein is applicable to student, parent/guardian, and all school staff; and that we have expressed intent to review this Student/Parent Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct contained within and to abide thereby.

Printed Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____