PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

EST. 1999

PRIORITY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Learning today, leading tomorrow.

2026–2027 PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

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STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



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To Priority Charter Schools Students and Parents:

Welcome to Priority Charter Schools! We wish this year to be an especially productive experience for each student. For this to happen, we must all work together: students, parents, and staff. This Student/Parent Handbook ("Handbook") is designed to help us accomplish this goal.

The Handbook is an overview of our school's goals, services, and rules. It is an essential reference book describing what we expect from our students and parents, what they can expect of us, and how we will achieve our educational mission. We have attempted to make the language in this Handbook as straightforward as possible. Please note that the term "parent" is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Handbook is divided into six sections. The first section includes general information regarding school policies and procedures. The second section provides important health and safety information. The third section provides information about academics and grading. The fourth section is the Student Code of Conduct ("the Code"), which is required by state law and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the Code. The Code is also available in the main office at each campus and is posted on the school's website. The fifth section is especially for parents, with information regarding parental rights. Finally, the sixth section contains important notices regarding student information, computer resources, and electronic communication devices.

This Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board of Director's policy. Please be aware that this Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy and procedure that affect Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications. **In case of conflict between Board of Director's policy and any provision of this Handbook, the provision that was most recently adopted by the Board of Directors will be followed.**

We ask our parents to review the entire Handbook with their students and to keep it as a reference during this school year. Parents or students with questions about the material in this Handbook should contact the Principal.

Finally, you must complete and return the last page of this Handbook – "Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook" – to the school office at your campus.

On behalf of the entire Priority Charter School staff and community, best wishes for a great 2026-2027 school year!

Sincerely,

Scott Moger, EdD Superintendent
Priority Charter Schools

Section 1: General Information

Mission

Welcome to Priority Charter Schools

At Priority Charter Schools, we believe every student deserves an environment that inspires learning, cultivates leadership, and empowers purposeful service. Guided by our new vision—**to create a community where every student is empowered to own their learning journey, lead with integrity, and serve their communities with purpose**—we are committed to building schools where excellence is not just a goal, but a shared commitment.

Our new district motto, **"Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow."** captures the essence of our mission: equipping students with the academic knowledge, character development, and real-world skills they need to thrive both now and in the future. We strive to provide a multicultural, safe, and welcoming environment where every student can grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

We also recognize the vital role of families and the broader community in student success. At PCS, we view parents and students as our valued partners. Every team member—from teachers to support staff—embraces the belief that *"people don't care what you know until they know you care."*

As we move forward together, we remain dedicated to personalized education, servant leadership, and the belief that every child has the potential to lead with purpose.

Board of Directors

Norman Mitchell Board President	Darrell Haden Board Vice-President	Corinna Capraun Board Secretary

Donna Haden Board Member	Carmen Hankins Board Member

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Priority Charter Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to Priority Charter Schools' Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Any questions or concerns about Priority Charter Schools' 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 discrimination on the basis of sex/gender (including sexual harassment), is Robin Osburn, Executive Director of Finance, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, rosburn@prioritycharterschools.org.The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Lori Hensley, Executive Director of Special Programs, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, lhensley@prioritycharterschools.org.

- The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Robin Osburn, Executive Director of Finance, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, rosburn@prioritycharterschools.org.

- All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Robin Osburn, Executive Director of Finance, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, rosburn@prioritycharterschools.org.

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. The total number of students enrolled in Priority Charter Schools shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by Priority Charter Schools based on occupancy limitations, code compliance and staffing requirements as deemed necessary.

In accordance with state law, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' charter and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problems under Texas Education Code Chapter 37, Subchapter A may be excluded from admission and enrollment in Priority Charter Schools.

Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery

Students wanting to attend Priority Charter Schools 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 campus main office and online through the Priority Charter Schools' website.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. If Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending Priority Charter Schools; siblings of students already admitted to or attending Priority Charter Schools; and children of Priority Charter Schools' founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of Priority Charter Schools' total enrollment.

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, sub-standard 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 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 Homeless Liaison, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 76513, Phone - 254-206-2697.

Student Information

Any student admitted to Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools.

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 Director's 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 Priority Charter Schools, 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 driver's license or identification card issued by the State of Texas,
3. A current lease agreement,
4. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
5. A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
6. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,
7. Visual inspection of the residence,
8. Interviews with persons with relevant information, or
9. 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).

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

School Calendar

Priority Charter Schools operates according to the school calendar adopted annually by the Board of Directors. Holidays may be used as school make-up days for days lost due to bad weather. The latest changes to the calendar will be available on the school's website.

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 7:30 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, provided that all applicable fees for activities and/or supervision have been paid. These fees vary and will be published on our website and communicated to parents. If your campus offers an after-school program, your child

must be picked up by 6:00 or additional charges will be accrued.

Students who are not scheduled for after-school programming or supervision are expected to be picked up by 4:00 pm at the latest, unless arrangements have been made at least 24 hours in advance.

Students are expected to be picked up 15 minutes after their after-school program is finished. After those times, students not in after-school programming (clubs, athletics, supervision) will not be supervised by a Priority Charter Schools staff member. Students staying for academic help from an individual teacher are exempt from this rule, provided their teacher is supervising them and they are picked up at a pre-determined and reasonable time.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

All students must be dropped off and picked up ONLY in the designated areas. Parents can also park and walk to drop off and pick up their child from the designated areas. The current drop-off and pick up maps are available at your school campus' office.

Student Drivers and Parking

All student drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Students driving to school must park in the designated lot and have paid any required campus parking fees, if applicable. Students may not go to their cars during the school day. Students must also drive in a manner that is safe and does not disrupt
the learning environment or school community in any way. Students who fail to follow these guidelines will have their driving privileges suspended or revoked and may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.

Food Delivery Policy

For safety and security reasons, students are not permitted to have food or beverages delivered to campus by third-party vendors (e.g., DoorDash, Uber Eats, Grubhub, etc.). Deliveries from these services will be refused by school staff and will not be accepted on behalf of a student.

Parents or guardians who wish to bring a meal to their child may do so by following the school's visitor and check-in procedures. This policy is in place to ensure student safety, reduce campus disruptions, and maintain a secure environment.

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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 may be subject to compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

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.

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, Priority Charter Schools may revoke the student's enrollment, except that Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools may impose a behavior improvement plan.

Tracking Student Attendance

Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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).*
>
> *Priority Charter Schools 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. Principals may develop a plan to recuperate attendance when there are extenuating circumstances. 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.

A student may maintain passing grades in a course but still lose credit due to excessive absences under the 90% attendance requirement established by Texas law. In these situations, the Attendance Review Committee may establish a plan for the student to 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 Priority Charter Schools 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:

Priority System's Board of Directors
Attn: Attendance
275 FM 2483
Belton, Texas 76513

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

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 school registrar, and may be scanned, emailed, or faxed to the school. If a note is not received within 5 school days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.

Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law, Priority Charter Schools reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

Priority Charter Schools recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences may still count toward the 90% attendance requirement for course credit, final grades, or grade-level promotion as required by Texas law. 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 the work. These include absence for the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship.
- Service as an election clerk.
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school 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.
- A parent or guardian may submit a parent note to excuse up to three absences due to illness per semester.

A junior or senior student may also be absent for up to two days per school year for purposes of visiting a college or university, 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.

Students may also be excused for their appointment at the Department of Motor Vehicles to take the driving test, as long as documentation is provided.

A student may also be absent for up to two days in a school year for service as an early voting clerk, provided the student receives approval from the Principal prior to the absence and informs his or teachers of 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.

Additionally, Priority Charter Schools may excuse 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, if Priority Charter Schools verifies the student's activities relating to pursuing enlistment.

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 Priority Charter Schools.

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.

Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the Principal due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence.

Tardiness and Late Arrival

Tardiness means not being in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. Tardiness disrupts instruction for both the tardy student and others in the classroom. Teachers may not excuse any student from the classroom during the first 10 minutes of class and during the last 10 minutes of class. Students are given sufficient time to change class and a warning bell sounds one minute before students are to be in class. Tardies are cumulative, and disciplinary consequences may result from repeated tardiness.

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. 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.

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. To ensure that the end of the day dismissal is the safest environment, students cannot be checked out between 3:00-3:45.

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.

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 and adults may not bring in or give away food to other students during lunchtimes.

Withdrawals

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student under 18 years of age may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. Priority Charter Schools requests notice from the parent 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 parents 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

Priority Charter Schools may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 19 for non-attendance if:

1. The student has been absent 10 consecutive school days, and
2. repeated efforts by the school to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

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

Dress and Grooming

The school's dress and grooming standards are designed to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, and provide dress and grooming standards that offer flexibility for the parent and student. Students must come to school clean and neatly groomed and wear 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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. Priority Charter Schools 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 may be contacted to bring an acceptable change of clothing to school, and the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day until a change of clothes is brought to the school.

Priority Charter Schools (PCS) is proud to partner with a local uniform provider to offer high-quality, convenient uniform options for our students and families. This new partnership ensures that PCS families have easier access to uniforms while supporting our local community. Uniforms will continue to feature the PCS logo, maintaining school identity and consistency across the district.

If a returning Priority Charter Schools student or family has an older PCS shirt with a PCS patch sewed to the shirt the student may wear the shirt. Older PCS shirts and uniforms are grandfathered during our time of transition. If a student or family does not have an older uniform with the PCS brand sewed on their polo shirt, they may order their PCS polo shirts from the school office or through the MySchool Bucks found on the school website.

Priority Charter Schools' students are expected to dress in a manner that conveys respect for their learning community and communicates a message of personal confidence and pride. The school uniform plays an important role in aligning with our district vision of empowering students to own their learning journey, lead with integrity, and serve with purpose. Consistent with *The Leader in Me* framework, our uniform policy encourages students to demonstrate leadership, responsibility, and a sense of belonging within a shared school culture. The following specific guidelines must be adhered to:

Bottoms:

- Solid khaki (tan), navy blue, or black slacks or knee-length shorts must be worn. Girls may wear capris pants, knee-length skirts, or jumpers. Bottoms must be worn at the natural waistline- no sagging is allowed. They must also be hemmed and cannot have rips, tears, or holes in them.
- Camouflage is not considered khaki.
- Plaid of any color is unacceptable.
- Slacks, shorts, and capris must be twill or cotton blends. No denim, dark/black jeans, fleece, "skinny jeans," nylon pants, pajama pants, sweatpants, or scrubs are allowed.

Tops:

- Students must wear the light blue polo shirt with the official PCS logo, available through the school office or website. Polo shirts without the PCS logo are not permitted, though older PCS logo polo shirts may still be worn. Shirts must be loose fitting and must cover the midriff when the student's arms are raised.
- Shirts must be in good condition, i.e., free of holes and multiple stains.
- Shirts must be worn as the manufacturer intended. Sleeves cannot be cut, shirts cannot be fastened in the front or back, and no additional writing can be added. The school polo shirt or T-shirt must be visible at all times. Students are not allowed to wear pull-over sweatshirts, t-shirts, or vest over the school polo shirt or school t-shirt, unless it is a hoodie purchased through the school that contains the school logo.

Shoes:

- Shoes must be worn at all times. For safety reasons, no flip-flops, slippers, or shoes with wheels are allowed.
- Tennis shoes with non-marking soles are required for Physical Education and athletic environments.

Outwear:

- Sweaters and jackets may be worn in cooler weather. However, they do not take the place of the school polo shirt or t-shirt. Pullover sweatshirts are not allowed. The only exception to this rule is hoodies purchased from the school that contains the school logo.

Fun Friday's:

- The campus director may allow students to wear jeans along with the school t-shirt or college shirts on Fridays with prior approval. This privilege may be used as a campus fundraiser.

Other Standards:

- Clothing or conspicuously displayed jewelry or accessories with inappropriate advertising or statements that are offensive or inflammatory are prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, alcoholic beverages, profanity, sex, tobacco, drugs, gangs, guns, and other weapons, excessively violent or gory imagery, and the promotion of violence.
- Hats, caps, visors, bandanas, and stocking caps are not allowed inside any school facilities.
- Students are allowed up to two facial piercings. This includes, but is not limited to, noses, chins, eyebrows, and lips. Tongue piercings and gauges are not allowed.
- Earrings must have standard-sized posts. No gauged earrings of any size or type are allowed. This applies to both male and female students.
- Bracelets and necklaces must be worn in moderation. Pet collars, pet chains, and chain wallets are not allowed. No jewelry with spikes is allowed.
- Any clothing, jewelry, or other item that is gang related or shows affiliation with any other inappropriate organization.
- Hair must be neat and clean. Any hairstyles that are considered to be distracting and/or disruptive to the educational environment are prohibited. No gang-related or offensive designs may be shaved into the hair. For further clarification on what is distracting or disruptive, please consult with the campus administration.
- Male students may have neatly trimmed facial hair. "Neatly trimmed" is strictly enforced.
- Visible tattoos and similar body painting(s) that promote violence or reflect gang activity are prohibited. Visible tattoos and similar body painting(s) that are considered offensive, inflammatory, or disruptive to the learning environment are prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate advertising or statements that are offensive or inflammatory alcoholic beverages, profanity, sex, tobacco, drugs, gangs, guns, and other weapons, excessively violent or gory imagery,

and the promotion of violence.

Priority Charter Schools 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 principal or designee will make the final determination. 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.

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. If offered, a fee for a driver training course, not to exceed the actual cost per student in the program for the current school year.
12. 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.
13. A fee for summer school courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
14. A reasonable fee, not to exceed $50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program.
15. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
16. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.
17. A technology fee.

Priority Charter Schools 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.

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 with textbooks and educational materials for use during the school day. Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools allow a student to take home any instructional materials used by the student. Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools must provide instructional materials to the student in printed format if the student does not have reliable access to technology at the student's home. Priority Charter Schools also is not required to purchase printed copies of instructional materials that the school would otherwise not purchase; Priority Charter Schools may provide the student with relevant electronic instructional materials.

Food Service

Priority Charter Schools 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 and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the Principal to apply. Students must apply for meal assistance each school year.

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

Nutrition Charge Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for meal charges and collection of unpaid meal balances in accordance with federal regulations and Texas Department of Agriculture (TOA) requirements. The goal of Priority Charter Schools is to ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals while maintaining the financial integrity of the nonprofit school food service account.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Campuses
The following campuses participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):

- Priority Charter Schools Killeen- Elementary
- Priority Charter Schools Killeen - Secondary
- Priority Charter Schools Temple

Students enrolled at CEP campuses receive reimbursable breakfasts and lunches at no charge. Because

reimbursable meals are provided at no charge to all students attending CEP campuses. A La Carte items may not be charged; this includes extra meals and snack items.

Household Responsibilities
Parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring meal account balances, providing timely payment for meals, maintaining current contact information with the district and submitting meal benefit applications when applicable.

Charging meals:
We understand how important a healthy balanced meal is to any student; not only for his/her health but also his/her education. Therefore, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure their child has sufficient funds on their account to cover all school meals and to keep abreast of their child's account. Should a child's account balance become low, Priority Charter Schools will take the following actions:

- Notices will be sent home when a student's lunch account reaches a balance of $3.50.
- If you do not want your child to charge A La Carte items, please contact:
    - Kristen Villalobos at 254-206-2013 Ext. 110**, OR**
    - Email Kristen Villalobos at kvillalobos@prioritycharterschools.org**, OR**
    - Complete the Child Nutrition Student Update Form on your child's campus and return it to the campus cashier.
- Parents can make online payments at myschoolbucks.org.
- Parents can also make payments at the school. Please see your lunchroom cashier or campus secretary to collect any cash or check payments. Please enclose payment in an envelope labeled with the student's name and amount of payment enclosed.
- Check payments are allowed; however, all charges of non-sufficient funds will incur to the child's account. If this causes the account to become negative, an alternative meal will be given until all charges are paid in full.
- Any student who has a negative balance on their account will not be allowed to purchase seconds.
- Charging by adults is prohibited.

Staff Members
- Child Nutrition will set up all staff member accounts.
- All staff members can purchase a meal at the adult price. This includes breakfast, lunch, and any ala carte item.
- **All staff members, including cafeteria staff are prohibited from making any charges. Staff members whose salary is 100% funded by the National School Lunch Program are the only staff members authorized to have one "reimbursable breakfast" and one "reimbursable lunch". Meals must be consumed in the open cafeteria during staff members' break.**
- No food or drink is permitted to leave the campus without being purchased. This action is considered theft and is grounds for automatic termination.

District Responsibilities
The district will maintain an accurate meal accounting system, provide timely balance notifications, implement this policy consistently, protect student confidentiality and ensure compliance with USDA and TOA requirements.

Refund Policy
When a student withdraws from the district or graduates, parents may request, in writing, a refund of the cafeteria balance until June 15th of each year. Upon withdrawal, the school offices must check with the Cafeteria Manager or Child Nutrition Director to see if the student has a balance to be reimbursed or negative balance due.

If reimbursement is due a scheduled payment will be made at the time of withdrawal. If a negative balance exists on the account, the Child Nutrition Director will contact the parent/guardian for a payment plan/payment of funds.

At the end of the year, Child Nutrition will send a reminder letter to the household of students with a balance over $5.00 asking if they would like a refund or leave monies in the account until the following school year.

Wellness Policy

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health and safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and wellbeing, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healtheirgeneration.org.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The Competitive Food Standards do not restrict
    - Food and/or beverages that parents provide for their own children's lunches or snacks
    - Food and/or beverages that are given to students. This includes but is not limited to food and/or beverages provided for birthday parties or special events in the classroom.
2. Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA

3. Smart Snack Guidelines for Foods
    - Be a grain product that contains
    - 50% or more whole grains by weight or have whole grains as the first ingredient; or
    - Have as the first ingredient as fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
    - Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable; or contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) or one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).
    - If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be one of the food items above
4. Smart Snack Guidelines for Beverages:
    - All schools may sell:
        i. Plain water (with or without carbonation)
        ii. Unflavored low-fat milk, unflavored or flavored fat-free milk and milk alternatives permitted by National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program
        iii. 100% fruit or vegetable juice, 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation) and no added sweeteners.

    - There is no portion size limit for plain water. **Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions of milk and juice. Middle Schools and high schools may sell up to 12- ounce portions of milk or juice.**
5. Additional beverage options for high school: No more than 20-ounce portions of calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation)
6. Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain < 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or ≤ 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces no more than 12-ounce portions of: beverages with ≤ 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces, or ≤ 60 calories per 12 fluid ounces.
7. Foods must also meet several nutrient requirements: calorie limits: Snack items: ≤ 200 calories, entrée items: ≤ 350 calories, sodium limits snack items ≤ 230 mg, entrée items ≤ 480 mg fat limits, total fat ≤ 35% of calories, saturated fat < 10% of calories, trans-fat: zero grams, sugar limits ≤ 35% of weight from total sugars in foods
8. Beginning July 1, 2016, foods may not qualify using the 10% DV criteria. Beginning July 1, 2016, snack items must contain ≤ 200 mg sodium per item.
    - Classroom snacks brought by parents. Food and/or beverages that parents provide for their own children's lunches or snacks.
    - Food and/or beverages that are given to students. This includes but is not limited to food and/or beverages provided for birthday parties or special events in the classroom.
9. Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff with a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Transportation

Priority Charter Schools provides bus transportation at no cost for students living two or more miles from school. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted in the school office. Further information may be obtained by calling the school office. Priority Charter Schools may provide transportation in school vehicles for educational field trips and participation in athletic and other extra-curricular 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 established in this Handbook and the Student

Code of Conduct. Students must:

1. Follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner.
3. Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
4. Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
5. Not put head, hands, arms, legs, or an object out of any window; and
6. Wait for the driver's signal to leave or cross in front of the vehicle.
7. Not eat or drink on the school bus.

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 because 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.

Transcripts and Academic Achievement Records

Priority Charter Schools 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 through www.parchment.com. Payments should be made at the time of the request. 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. This timeline allows the District to finalize grades, verify grade point averages and class rank calculations, and complete academic records processing before official transcripts are released.

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

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

Distribution of Materials or Documents

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for Priority Charter Schools may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the Principal 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 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 Priority Charter Schools does not exercise control shall not be sold, circulated, or distributed by persons or groups not associated with Priority Charter Schools 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.

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources

Cell Phone and Personal Communication Device Policy

In accordance with House Bill 1481 and Texas Education Code Section 37.082. Students are prohibited from using personal communication devices while on school property during the school day.

Definition of Personal Communication Devices:

For the purpose of this policy, personal communication devices include but are not limited to:

- Cell Phones (smartphones, flip phones, etc.)
- Tablets or e-readers
- Smartwatches or wearable devices capable of communication
- Radios, pagers, or other telecommunication devices
- Any other electronic devices capable of digital communication

Possession and Storage of Devices

Students may bring personal communication devices to school only if the devices are turned off and stored in a backpack, locker, or other designated location during the entire school day. Devices must remain out of sight and may not be used for calls, texting, social media, taking photos, recording, or any other purpose during instructional or non-instructional times on campus unless specifically authorized by staff. Authorization for use of personal communication devices is limited to school-related or emergency purposes as determined by campus administration.

Exceptions

The use of personal communication devices during the school day may be permitted if:

1. Required to implement a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
2. Authorized by a physician for documented medical needs.
3. Required to comply with health or safety protocols as mandated by law or the school's emergency procedures.

Disciplinary Measures

Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include:

- Verbal warning or reminder.
- Confiscation of the device for the remainder of the day.
- Parent/guardian pick-up of the confiscated device.

- Additional consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct for repeated violations.

Please note that no administrative fee will be charged for returning a confiscated device, as prohibited by HB1481.

Confiscated Devices
Confiscated Devices will be securely stored by school administration. If a device remains unclaimed, the school may dispose of the device after providing written notice to the parent/'guardian at least 90 days prior to disposal.

Important Note to Parents
We encourage parents to contact the school office directly for urgent messages instead of calling or texting their child's personal device during the day. This policy helps ensure students focus, protect privacy, and maintain a safe, disruption-free learning environment.

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must also sign a user agreement, separate from this Handbook, which contains applicable rules for use.

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Priority Charter Schools is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen personal devices.

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 Priority Charter Schools' 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.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of Priority Charter Schools' 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.

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 Priority Charter Schools 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.

State law does not allow your child to be excused from participating in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

Recitation of the Declaration of Independence

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during "Celebrate Freedom Week." A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, Priority Charter Schools determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

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. Priority Charter Schools will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or mediation during any school activity.

SECTION 2: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

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:

- Texas Health and Human Services
- National Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255
- Executive Director of Special Programs, Lori Hensley, Phone: 254-206-2013, Email: lhensleys@prioritychartereschools.org.

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health

Priority Charter Schools 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,
- Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and
- Freedom from bullying.

Priority Charter Schools has also developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement these policies. Please contact the Executive Director of Operations for information on these policies and procedures.

Alcohol-Free School Notice

To provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Priority Charter Schools' 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.

Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), 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. Effective September 1, 2023, Texas House Bill, makes the possession, use, selling, giving, or delivering to another person an e-cigarette a Mandatory DAEP Placements if a student is on school property or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school event whether on or off school property.

All offenses deemed mandatory offenses under the Texas Education Code is mandatory removal from Priority Charter Schools for the remainder of the school year. However, the State of Texas has allowed an exception to this rule for a district to use In-School Suspension (ISS) along with a combination of Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) if a district's DAEP is full or the district does not operate a DAEP. Priority Charter Schools will have a mandatory 4-days ISS if a student is caught in possession of an e-cigarette and mandatory removal if caught using an e-cigarette on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

Drug-Free School Notice

Priority Charter Schools believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, Priority Charter Schools prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Priority Charter Schools 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.

Asbestos Management Plan

Priority Charter Schools 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 the Executive Director of Operations.

Bacterial Meningitis Information

State law requires Priority Charter Schools 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 the 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 does 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 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 help.

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 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.

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/.

Any student 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.

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 read the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students. Specific immunization information is available on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school

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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools.

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 Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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 to 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 Superintendent or designee 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.

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.

Emergency Medical Treatment

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, Priority Charter Schools' 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.

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. Students must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication and must be free of vomiting/diarrhea without the use of diarrhea suppressing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

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

Head Lice
Head lice (which are not illnesses or diseases) 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.

Priority Charter School does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If Priority Charter Schools observes that a student may have head lice, an appropriate administrator 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, Priority Charter Schools 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.

Administration of Medication

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school by the school nurse or designee under the following circumstances:

1. Nonprescription medication brought to school must be submitted to Priority Charter Schools by a parent along with a written request. The medication must also be in the original and properly labeled container.
2. Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner ("ANP") and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **In accordance with the Texas Board of Nursing Practice Act, Priority Charter Schools will not administer medications prescribed or fulfilled in Mexico.**
3. Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student's name, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic baggies or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
4. If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent and will be administered only if required by the students IEP or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
5. Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to Priority Charter Schools, *i.e.*, enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.
6. In certain emergency situations, Priority Charter Schools may administer a nonprescription medication to a student, but only in accordance with the guidelines developed by the school's medical advisor and when the parent has previously provided written consent for emergency treatment.

Changes to daily medications require written instruction from the physician or ANP and written permission from the parent. Parents are responsible for advising Priority Charter Schools that a medication has been discontinued.

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 Priority Charter Schools' 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.

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 Priority Charter Schools 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 to and reviewed by Priority Charter Schools:

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.

A seizure management and treatment plan must:

1. Identify the health care services the student may receive at school or while participating in a school activity.
2. Evaluate the student's ability to manage and level of understanding of the student's seizures; and
3. Be signed by the student's parent and the physician for the student's seizure treatment.

Steroid Notice

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

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

Dyslexia and Related Disorders

From time to time, students may be tested and, where appropriate, treated for dyslexia and related disorders in accordance with programs, rules and standards approved by the State of Texas. The program approved by the state must include screening at the end of the school year for each student in kindergarten and each student in the first grade. Parents will be notified should Priority Charter Schools determine a need to identify or assess their student for dyslexia and related disorders.

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:

- Athletics program.
- Marching band; or
- 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, Priority Charter Schools will annually assess the physical fitness of students. Priority Charter Schools 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.

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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 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, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Superintendent or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Vision and Hearing Screenings
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. A student may be screened using photo screening to detect vision disorders.

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.

Preparedness Training

Priority Charter Schools will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students in grades 7–12. The instruction may be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

Priority Charter Schools 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.

Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Statement of Nondiscrimination
Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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:

- 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.
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- 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.

As noted above, Priority Charter Schools also considers gender-based harassment to be Prohibited Conduct. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 discrimination prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex discrimination that, if proved, would meet the definition of a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please see the procedures outlined in "Freedom from Sex Discrimination" 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. Alternatively, a report may be made directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator identified in this Handbook.

Upon receiving a report of potential Prohibited Conduct, Priority Charter Schools will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. If not, Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, 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 Priority Charter Schools that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, Priority Charter Schools will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

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

If Priority Charter Schools' investigation indicates that Prohibited Conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools student and parent complaint and/or grievance procedure, beginning at Level II.

Freedom from Sex Discrimination

Priority Charter Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including admission and employment.

Sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, including on the bases of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity, that is:

1. *Quid pro quo harassment* – An employee, agent, or other person authorized by Priority Charter Schools to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the school's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.

2. *Hostile environment harassment* – Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity (*i.e.*, creates a hostile environment). Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact-specific inquiry that includes consideration of the following:

a. The degree to which the conduct affected the complainant's ability to access Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity.
b. The type, frequency, and duration of the conduct.
c. The parties' ages, roles within Priority Charter Schools, previous interactions, and other factors about each party that may be relevant to evaluating the effects of the conduct.
d. The location of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred; and
e. Other sex-based harassment in Priority Charter Schools' program or activity

3. *Specific offenses –*

a. Sexual assault, meaning an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
b. Dating violence, meaning violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) the length of the relationship; (ii) the type of relationship; and (iii) the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
c. Domestic violence, meaning felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a person who: (i) is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of Texas or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim; (ii) is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; (iii) shares a child in common with the victim; or (iv) commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of Texas.
d. Stalking, meaning engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to: (i) fear for the person's safety or the safety or others; or (b) suffer substantial emotional distress.

General Definitions
Complainant means a student or employee who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX; or a person other than a student or employee who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX who was attempting to participate in Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity at the time the alleged sex discrimination.

Complaint means an oral or written request to Priority Charter Schools that objectively can be understood as a request for the school to investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX.

Confidential employee means an employee whose communications are privileged or confidential under state or federal law and employees designated by Priority Charter Schools as a confidential employee. These employees must provide information to any person, who informs them of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination about their status as a confidential employee and provide the individual with the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator, and how they can help.

Pregnancy or related conditions means (i) pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; (ii) medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; or (iii) recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

Relevant means related to the allegations of sex discrimination under investigation as party of Priority Charter Schools' grievance procedures. Questions are relevant when they seek evidence that may aid in showing whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred, and evidence is relevant when it may aid a decisionmaker in determining whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred.

Remedies means measures provided, as appropriate, to a complainant or any other person Priority Charter Schools

identifies as having had their equal access to the school's education program or activity limited or denied by sex discrimination. These measures are provided to restore or preserve that person's access to the school's education program or activity after the school determines that sex discrimination occurred.

Respondent means a person who is alleged to have violated Priority Charter Schools' prohibition on sex discrimination.

Supportive measures means individualized measures offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without unreasonably burdening a complainant or respondent, not for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent to:

1. Restore or preserve the party's access to Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity, including measures that are designed to protect the safety of the parties or Priority Charter Schools' educational environment; or
2. Provide support during Priority Charter Schools' grievance procedures or during the informal resolution process.

Reporting Sex Discrimination
Any person may report sex discrimination (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination) in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, Robin Osburn, email at rosburn@prioritycharterschools.org, or by any other means that results in Priority Charter Schools being made aware of the report.

Response to Sex Discrimination
Priority Charter Schools must respond promptly and effectively upon knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination in its education program or activity.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for monitoring Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity for barriers to reporting information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX and take steps reasonably calculated to address such barriers.

i. *Notification Requirements*

All Priority Charter Schools employees who are not confidential employees are required to notify the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or this policy.

ii. *Confidential Employee Requirements*

Priority Charter Schools must notify all participants in its education program or activity of how to contact confidential employees, if any, excluding any employee whose confidential status is only with respect to their conducting an Institutional Review Board-approved human-subjects research study designed to gather information about sex discrimination as set out in the definition of confidential employee in this policy.

Confidential employees, if any, must explain to any person who informs the confidential employee of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX:

1. The employee's status as confidential, including the circumstances in which the employee is not required to notify the Title IX Coordinator about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination;
2. How to contact Priority Charter Schools' Title IX Coordinator and how to make a complaint of sex discrimination; and

3. That the Title IX Coordinator may be able to offer and coordinate supportive measures, as well as initiate an informal resolution process or an investigation under Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures.

iii. *Title IX Coordinator Requirements*

When notified of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX, the Title IX Coordinator must take the following actions to promptly and effectively end any sex discrimination in its education program or activity, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effect:

1. Treat the complainant and respondent equitably.
2. Offer and coordinate supportive measures, as appropriate, for the complainant. In addition, if Priority Charter Schools has initiated Title IX grievance procedures or offered an informal resolution process to the respondent, offer, and coordinate supportive measures, as appropriate, for the respondent.
3. Notify the complainant or, if the complainant is unknown, the individual who reported the conduct, of Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures and the informal resolution process, if available and appropriate. If a complaint is made, notify the respondent of the Title IX grievance process and informal resolution process, if available and appropriate.
4. In response to a complaint, initiate the Title IX grievance process or informal resolution process, if available and appropriate and requested by all parties.
5. In the absence of a complaint or the withdrawal of any or all of the allegations in the complaint, and in the absence or termination of an informal resolution process, determine whether to initiate a complaint of sex discrimination that complies with Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures. To make this fact-specific determination, the Title IX Coordinator must consider, at a minimum, the following factors:
    a. The complainant's request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint.
    b. The complainant's reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint.
    c. The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint were not initiated.
    d. The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence.
    e. The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of the recipient.
    f. The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals.
    g. The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
    h. Whether Priority Charter Schools could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its Title IX grievance procedures.

    If, after considering these and other relevant factors, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other person, or that conduct as alleged prevents Priority Charter Schools from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex to its education program or activity, the Title IX Coordinator may initiate a complaint.
6. If initiating a complaint under paragraph 5 above, notify the complainant prior to doing so and appropriately address reasonable concerns about the complainant's safety or the safety of others, including by providing supportive measures.
7. Regardless of whether a complaint is initiated, take other appropriate prompt and effective steps, in addition to steps necessary to effectuate the remedies provided to an individual complainant, if any, to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity.

The Title IX Coordinator is not required to comply with this section upon being notified of conduct that may constitute sex discrimination if the Title IX Coordinator reasonably determines that the conduct as alleged could not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX.

iv. *Supportive Measures*

Priority Charter Schools must offer and coordinate supportive measures. For allegations of sex discrimination other than sex-based harassment or retaliation, Priority Charter Schools' provision of supportive measures does not require the school, its employees, or any other person authorized to provide aid, benefit, or service on the school's behalf to alter the alleged discriminatory conduct for the purpose of providing a supportive measure.

Supportive measures must not unreasonably burden either party and must be designed to protect the safety of the parties or Priority Charter Schools' educational environment and provide support during the Title IX grievance procedure or informal resolution process. These measures may include but are not limited to the following: counseling; extensions of deadlines and other course-related adjustments; campus escort services; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus; restrictions on contact applied to. One or more parties; leaves of absence; changes in class, work, or extracurricular or any other activity, regardless of whether there is or is not a comparable alternative; and training and education programs related to sex-based harassment.

Priority Charter Schools may, as appropriate, modify or terminate supportive measures at the conclusion of the Title IX grievance process or at the conclusion of the informal resolution process, or may continue them beyond that point.

If the complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator must consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's ARD Committee or Section 504 Committee to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in the implementation of supportive measures.

v. *Emergency Removals*

Priority Charter Schools is able to remove a respondent from Priority Charter Schools' education program on an emergency basis, provided that Priority Charter Schools 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 sex discrimination justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Priority Charter Schools' 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.

vi. *Discretion to Offer Informal Resolution*

At any time prior to determining whether sex discrimination occurred, Priority Charter Schools may offer to a complainant and respondent an informal resolution process, unless the complaint includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of a student or such a process would conflict with federal, state, or local law.

If Priority Charter Schools provides the parties an informal resolution process, and to the extent necessary, the Title IX Coordinator must also take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity.

Priority Charter Schools cannot require or pressure the parties to participate in an informal resolution process, and must obtain the parties' voluntary consent to the informal resolution process and must not require waiver of the right to an investigation and determination of a complaint as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or exercise of any other right.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, Priority Charter Schools must provide to the parties notice that explains:

- The allegations.
- The requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a complaint arising from the same allegations, such as reaching an agreement to resolution at the conclusion of the informal resolution process.
- That prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance procedures with respect to the 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.
- The potential terms that may be requested or offered in an informal resolution agreement including notice that an informal resolution agreement is binding only on the parties; and
- What information Priority Charter Schools will maintain and whether and how the school could disclose such information for use in Title IX grievance procedures if grievance procedures are initiated or resumed.

Potential terms that may be included in an informal resolution agreement include but are not limited to:

1. Restrictions on contact; and
2. Restrictions on the respondent's participation in one or more of Priority Charter Schools' education programs or activities or attendance at specific events, including restrictions Priority Charter Schools could have imposed as remedies or disciplinary sanctions had the school determined at the conclusion of the Title IX grievance procedures that sex discrimination occurred.

The informal resolution facilitator must not be the same person as the investigator or the decisionmaker and must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

Title IX Grievance Procedure

i. *Submitting a Complaint*

The following persons can make a complaint of sex discrimination, including complaints of sex-based harassment, requesting that Priority Charter Schools investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under this policy:

1. The complainant.
2. A parent, guardian, or other authorized legal representative with the legal right to act on behalf of a complainant.
3. The Title IX Coordinator, after making the determination specified in Section 2(c)(iv)(5) of this policy.
4. With respect to complaints of sex discrimination other than sex-based harassment, in addition to the persons listed in paragraphs 1-3 above, any student or employee or any person other than a student or employee who was participating or attempting to participate in Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

ii. *General Procedures*

Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedure consists of the following:

1. Priority Charter Schools will treat complainants and respondents equitably.

2. Any person designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decisionmaker does not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.
3. The decisionmaker may be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or investigator.
4. There is a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sex discrimination until a determination is made at the conclusion of Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures for complaints of sex discrimination.
5. Title IX grievances will be completed within 45 days of receiving a complaint, inclusive of evaluation of a complaint, investigation, determination, and appeal. Reasonable extensions of time are available on a case-by-case basis for good cause with notice to the parties that includes the reason for the delay.
6. Reasonable steps will be taken to protect the privacy of the parties and witnesses during the pendency of Priority Charter Schools' Title IX complaint procedures, provided that the steps do not restrict the ability of the parties to obtain and present evidence, including by speaking to witnesses, subject to retaliation prohibitions; consult with their family members, confidential resources, or advisors; or otherwise prepare for or participate in the Title IX grievance process.
7. Relevant evidence that is not otherwise impermissible will be evaluated objectively – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and credibility determinations will not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
8. The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are considered impermissible (except as allowed below) regardless of whether they are relevant:
    a) Evidence that is protected under a privilege as recognized by federal or state law or evidence provided to a confidential employee, unless the person to whom the privilege or confidentiality is owed has voluntarily waived the privilege or confidentiality;
    b) A party's or witness's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless Priority Charter Schools obtains that party's or witness's voluntary, written consent for use in the Title IX grievance procedures; and
    c) Evidence that relates to the complainant's sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence of the complainant's prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to the alleged sex-based harassment. Prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant's consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.

iii. *Notice of Allegations*

Upon initiation of Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures, the school must provide notice of the allegations to the parties whose identities are known. The notice must include:

1. Priority Charter Schools' Title IX grievance procedures and information about any informal resolution process;
2. Sufficient information known at the time to allow the parties to respond to the allegations, including the identity of the parties involved, the conduct alleged to constitute sex discrimination, and the date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s).
3. A statement that retaliation is prohibited; and
4. A statement that the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or an accurate description of the evidence, and that if Priority Charter Schools provides a description of the evidence, the parties are entitled to an equal opportunity for access to the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon the request of any party.

iv. *Consolidating Complaints*

Priority Charter Schools may consolidate complaints as to allegations of sex discrimination 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 sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. If Priority Charter Schools decides to consolidate the complaints, it must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

v. *Dismissing a Complaint*

Priority Charter Schools may dismiss a complaint of sex discrimination made through the Title IX grievance procedure for any of the following reasons:

1. Priority Charter Schools is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
2. The respondent is not participating in the school's education program or activity and is not employed by the school;
3. The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator determines that, without the complainant's withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX even if proven; or
4. Priority Charter Schools determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. Prior to dismissing the complaint, Priority Charter Schools must make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.

Upon dismissal, Priority Charter Schools must promptly notify the complainant of the basis for the dismissal and, if the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified, Priority Charter Schools must also notify the respondent of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal promptly following notification to the complaint or simultaneously if notification is in writing.

Priority Charter Schools must also notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, Priority Charter Schools must also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed.

If a dismissal is appealed, Priority Charter Schools must:

1. Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations if notice was not previously provided to the respondent;
2. Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties;
3. Ensure that the decisionmaker for the appeal has been trained;
4. Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; and
5. Notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

If a complaint is dismissed, Priority Charter Schools must also, at a minimum, offer supportive measures to the complainant or respondent, as appropriate and require the Title IX Coordinator to take other appropriate prompt and effective steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within Priority Charter Schools' education program or activity.

vi. *Complaint Investigations*

Priority Charter Schools must provide adequate, reliable, and impartial investigations of complaints. To do this, Priority Charter Schools will:

1. Ensure the burden is on Priority Charter Schools – not the parties – to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient information to determine whether sex discrimination occurred;

2. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present fact witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible;
3. Review all evidence gathered through the investigation process and determine what evidence is relevant and what evidence is impermissible regardless of relevance; and
4. Provide each party with an equal opportunity to access the evidence that is relevant to the allegations of sex discrimination and not otherwise impermissible in the following manner:
    a) The parties will be provided an equal opportunity to access either the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, or an accurate description of this evidence. If Priority Charter Schools provides a description the evidence, the parties will be provided with an equal opportunity to access the relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence upon request by any party.
    b) The parties will be provided a reasonable opportunity to respond to the evidence or to the accurate description of the evidence.
    c) Priority Charter Schools will take reasonable steps to prevent and address the parties' unauthorized disclosure of information and evidence obtained solely through the Title IX grievance procedures. For purposes of this provision, disclosures of such information and evidence for purposes of the administrative proceedings or litigation related to the complaint of sex discrimination are authorized.

vii. *Questioning Parties and Witnesses*

The decisionmaker is able to question parties and witnesses to adequately assess credibility to the extent credibility to the extent credibility is both in dispute and relevant to evaluating one or more allegations of sex discrimination.

viii. *Determination Whether Sex Discrimination Occurred*

Following an investigation and evaluation of all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, Priority Charter Schools must:

1. Use the preponderance of the evidence standard of proof to determine whether sex discrimination occurred. If the decisionmaker is not persuaded under this standard of proof that sex discrimination occurred, whatever the quantity of the evidence is, the decisionmaker must not determine that sex discrimination occurred.
2. Notify the parties in writing of the determination whether sex discrimination under Title IX occurred, including rationale for such determination and the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal, if applicable.
3. If there is a determination that sex discrimination occurred, the Title IX Coordinator is responsible to coordinate the provision and implementation of remedies to a complainant and other persons Priority Charter Schools identifies as having had equal access to the school's education program and activity limited or denied by sex discrimination, coordinate the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions on a respondent (including notification to the complainant of any such disciplinary sanctions), and take other appropriate prompt and appropriate steps to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the school's education program or activity.
4. Priority Charter Schools may not impose discipline on a respondent for sex discrimination prohibited under Title IX unless there is a determination at the conclusion of the grievance procedure that the respondent engaged in prohibited sex discrimination.

If the decisionmaker determines that sex discrimination occurred, disciplinary consequences may be assessed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Priority Charter Schools may also provide supportive measures to the complaint (or others) to remedy the effects of the sex discrimination and prevent the conduct from recurring.

ix. *Appeals*

A party may appeal a determination regarding responsibility through the Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns process, beginning at Level II. An appeal may be filed for a determination regarding responsibility, and from Priority Charter Schools' dismissal of a complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- 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
- 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, Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

Retaliation Prohibited
Priority Charter Schools prohibits retaliation, including peer retaliation, in its education program or activity.

When Priority Charter Schools has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute retaliation under Title IX, it is obligated to comply with 34 CFR 106.44.

Upon receiving a complaint of retaliation, Priority Charter Schools must initiate its Title IX grievance procedures or, as appropriate, an informal resolution process.

Students with Disabilities
If a complainant or respondent is an elementary or secondary student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator must consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's ARD Committee or one or more members, as appropriate, of the students Section 504 Committee, to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as applicable, throughout Priority Charter Schools' implementation of Title IX grievance procedure.

Sex-Based Discrimination Outside of Title IX
The complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above applies only to complaints alleging sex discrimination as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sex discrimination as defined under Title IX. Complaints of sex-based discrimination not covered by Title IX 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.

Freedom from Bullying

Priority Charter Schools 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:

- 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;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; or

- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the School; or
- 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.

The school's anti-bullying policy applies to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school- related activity on or off school property;
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
    - Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
    - Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, 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. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. Priority Charter Schools will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. Reports of potential bullying may be submitted anonymously.

Investigation of Report

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.*). Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' student and parent complaint and/or grievance procedure.

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 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 Priority Charter Schools 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.

Mental Health Promotion and Intervention

Priority Charter Schools has developed protocols for providing a parent with a recommended intervention for a student with early warning signs and a possible need for early mental health or substance abuse intervention, or who has been identified as at risk of attempting suicide. Priority Charter Schools' campus principal will notify a parent within a reasonable amount of time after learning that a student has early warning signs and possible need for intervention and will also provide additional information on available counseling options.

Priority Charter Schools has also developed protocols for staff members to notify the campus principal to identify a student who may need intervention.

The campus principal 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.

Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

Priority Charter Schools has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health concern or substance abuse, Priority Charter Schools has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the campus principal for additional information.

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.

Child Abuse Reporting and Programs

Priority Charter Schools provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. Priority Charter Schools 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.

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 parents, if necessary.

Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children
Priority Charter Schools 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 principal.

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: Priority Charter Schools 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. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

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.

Interrogations and Searches

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools. 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
The use of school-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by Priority Charter Schools.

Any searches of personal electronic 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 Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools conducts random drug searches of all school facilities. Priority Charter Schools 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 should be used to search vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student lockers, and the areas where vehicles are parked on Priority Charter Schools' property or at school-related events. The dogs shall not be asked to alert on students. A dog alert to a locker, vehicle, or item in a classroom, constitutes reasonable grounds for a search by school officials.

Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs

School employees, volunteers or independent contractors are authorized to use restraint in the event of an emergency and subject to the following limitations:

- Only reasonable force, necessary to address the emergency, may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.

- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet, or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

Visitor Policy

Priority Charter Schools 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.

- 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.
- 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. 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.
- Classroom observations by a parent MUST be pre-arranged with the campus principal and will not extend beyond 30 minutes. The parent is expected to follow all guidelines outlined in the Priority Charter Schools Volunteer Policy and will need to sign a *Volunteer Agreement Form*.
- 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.
- 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 extracurricular activities.
- Volunteers must adhere to the Priority Charter Schools Volunteer Policy. A copy of the policy will be sent digitally to the approved volunteer once a background check has been completed. The volunteer will also be required to sign a *Volunteer Agreement Form.*

Additionally, the Principal or designee may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor:

- 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.
- Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the DPS or any other database accessible by Priority Charter Schools.

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.

Volunteer Policy

Volunteers are expected to support the mission, values, and goals of the school. Volunteer activities should be meaningful, appropriate, and aligned with campus needs, ensuring they positively contribute to the school environment.

All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application and successfully pass a criminal background check prior to participating in any school-related activities. Volunteers must also be at least 18 years of age.

To ensure a safe and focused learning environment, younger siblings or children may not accompany volunteers during school activities.

General Guidelines
Volunteers are expected to support the mission, values, and goals of the school. Volunteer activities should be meaningful, appropriate, and aligned with campus needs, ensuring they positively contribute to the school environment.

Placement and Assignments
Volunteers may not work in their own child's classroom in order to maintain a consistent and distraction-free learning environment. All volunteer hours and activities must be pre-approved by the campus principal. Volunteers are required to check in at the school office upon arrival to sign in, receive their assigned duties, and obtain a volunteer badge.

Campus Access
Volunteering does not grant unrestricted access to the school campus. Volunteers must remain in their assigned areas and respect all school rules and procedures. The school administration reserves the right to ask any volunteer to leave if necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of the learning environment.

Dress Code
Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately and professionally while on campus. Clothing should be neat, modest, and free of offensive language or imagery. Dress should also be practical and suited to the volunteer's assigned duties to ensure comfort and safety.

Background Check Requirement
All volunteers must complete and pass a background check prior to volunteering at any campus or school-sponsored event. Background checks must be renewed annually or as required by district policy to ensure the ongoing safety and security of our school community. Volunteers will also be required to sign a *Volunteer Agreement Form* before volunteering on campus.

Conduct and Expectations
Volunteers must always maintain confidentiality regarding students and school matters. Any concerns or questions should be directed to the principal or a designated staff member. Volunteers are required to sign in and out at the front office for each visit and must always wear a volunteer or visitor badge while on campus.

Disruptions

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

- 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.
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit, an entrance, or a hallway to a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.

- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator.
- Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

Emergency Closings

Generally, Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' website.

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.

Pest Control Information

Priority Charter Schools periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. While Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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.

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.

Section 3: Academics and Grading

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 assignments and academic work during the period of the removal.

Students and parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher and campus administration regarding assignments, timelines, and available support for completing required work.

Required Curriculum

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills ("TEKS") require all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas. TEKS are the basis of curricular planning for each grade level and each content area. Students enrolled in grades 3-11 are required to participate in Texas state assessments based on their grade level, course enrollment, or individual program requirements

Priority Charter Schools offers instruction in the TEKS of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

1. A foundation curriculum that includes:
2. English language arts and reading;
3. Mathematics;
4. Science;
5. Social studies; and
6. An enrichment curriculum that includes
7. Languages other than English, to the extent possible;
8. Health education;
9. Physical education ("PE");
10. Fine Arts;
11. Career and technical education; and
12. Technology applications.

Grading and Credit

In determining course credit, the following methods are used:

Pre-K & Kindergarten Students - Grading is based off a skills inventory that is regularly assessed by the teacher and indicated on the 9-week report card. Students will either pass or fail the grade based off adequate, grade-level progress on end of year assessment.

Elementary Students - All semester grades are recorded as numerical grades and reported by the teacher of record in accordance with District grading guidelines.

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
$\leq$ 69 = F

Middle School Students **-** All semester grades are recorded as numerical grades and reported by the teacher of record in accordance with District grading guidelines. Middle School students that participate in the school's sports program must maintain a 70% or higher on all core subjects. Any student that has a grade of 69% or lower at the end of a nine-week grading period will be required to attend tutoring sessions. A final grade in a core subject that is failing could result in a student attending summer school or being retained.

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
≤ 69 = F

High School Students **-** All semester grades are recorded as numerical grades and reported by the teacher of record in accordance with District guidelines. The list below outlines grading expectations. High School students that participate in the school's sports program must maintain a 70% or higher on all core subjects. Any student that has a grade of 69% or lower at the end of a nine-week grading period will be required to attend tutoring sessions. A final grade in any subject that is failing will require that the student re-take the course and could result in retention.

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
≤ 69 = F

Homework and Assignments
Research reveals that homework, when carefully designed, implemented, and evaluated, is an effective tool for improving understanding, enriching learning, encouraging personal connections, and providing opportunities to pursue special interests. In broad terms, homework includes written work, reading, studying, and preparing for class, and other activities related to classroom work, but assigned to be done at home. Teachers have the discretion to set deadlines for students to complete and return homework and other assignments.

Late Work
For grades 6–12, Priority Charter Schools has implemented a no late work policy in order to teach students responsibility, organization, and time management skills. All work submitted by the posted due date will be eligible for full credit. The only late work that will be accepted is late work following an excused absence, as described in this Handbook. A reasonable amount of make-up time will be given for these absences. For these absences, students are still strongly encouraged to submit work prior to being absent whenever possible.

For absences due to other legitimate reasons such as personal medical events/illness, deaths in immediate family, or any other unforeseen events, staff and teachers will work cooperatively with parents and students to adjust the due dates in advance. Make-up work will only be accepted with prior approval after the student has returned from the absence.
Given the dynamic nature of learning based on best practices under the Teaching-Learning Cycle where teachers are modifying their curriculum to fit learning needs, it is not always possible for teachers to have an exact plan of assignments for future weeks. For this reason, it is not possible to provide students with work in advance of other students to facilitate time off.

Grades 9–12 Courses and Credits
Credits are given for each course in grades 9–12; therefore, each course stands alone in counting towards graduation. Credit will be awarded for an average of 70% or higher in each course. In courses that are two- semester courses, credit will be awarded at the end of each semester when the course average is 70% or higher. If a student earns a failing semester grade (69% or below) in a two-semester course, the two semester grades will be averaged for purposes of awarding credit. Credit will be awarded when the final average grade is 70% or higher, including approved summer school coursework completed during the school year.

Grades 7–8 Courses and Credits
Priority Charter Schools students enrolled in the 8th grade have the opportunity to take at least two courses (Algebra 1; Spanish 1; or Art 1) for high school credit. Students in grades 7 and 8 are eligible for additional courses for high school credit. Qualification will be determined based on prior academic performance, state assessment history, placement testing, and campus recommendations. Students successfully completing a high school course in middle school will be given the corresponding credit towards graduation requirements and will continue to advance to the next level of course, as appropriate.

High School Grade Level Classification and Reclassification

Students on the Foundation High School Program + Endorsement (26 credits)

9th Grade:	A student must be promoted from the 8th grade and met applicable promotion requirement.
10th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 6.5 credits
11th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 13 credits
12th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 19.5 credits or have an approved graduation plan on file to graduate in less than four years

A student will only be reclassified at the end of the first and second semester of each school year as determined by the school calendar.

Students who opt out of the Endorsement and are Foundation High School Program Only (22 Credits)

9th Grade:	A student must be promoted from the 8th grade and met applicable promotion requirements.
10th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 6.5 credits
11th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 12 credits
12th Grade:	A student must have successfully completed 17.5 credits or have an approved graduation plan on file to graduate in less than four years

A student will only be reclassified at the end of the first and second semester of each school year as determined by the school calendar.

Graduation Requirements

Priority Charter Schools will ensure that students are provided access to the courses necessary to complete graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education ("SBOE")

1. To receive a high school diploma, a student must meet all State graduation requirements and any additional requirements established by Priority Charter Schools, including: Complete the required number of credits required by the State and any additional credits required by Priority Charter Schools;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses required by the State;
3. Achieve passing scores on required EOC assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless exempted or waived as permitted by State law; and
4. Complete all additional graduation requirements required by State law and the State Board of Education, including CPR instruction, speech, required law enforcement interaction instruction, and FAFSA requirements, unless otherwise exempted by law.

Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States 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 to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment should a student choose this option.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, Priority Charter Schools will provide accelerated instruction 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.

Individual Graduation Committee Decisions

In limited circumstances permitted by state law, a student who has not met all end-of-course assessment requirements may be eligible to graduate through an Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) process. Eligibility for an IGC and all graduation requirements shall be determined in accordance with applicable state law.

Please see the Principal or designee for more information regarding IGC eligibility and graduation requirements.

Foundation Graduation Program

Students enrolled in Texas public schools graduate under the Foundation High School Program established by state law. Within the Foundation High School Program are "endorsements," which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript and diploma. The Foundation High School Program also includes the Distinguished Level of Achievement, which requires completion of at least one endorsement and the curriculum requirements established by state law, including Algebra II.

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

Graduating under the Foundation High School Program will also provide opportunities to earn "performance acknowledgements" that will be acknowledged on a student's diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgements may be earned in accordance with the state law and State Board of Education rules for outstanding achievement in areas including bilingualism and bi-literacy, dual credit coursework, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams, college readiness assessments, and nationally or internationally recognized licenses or certifications. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgements are prescribed by state rules, and the Principal can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

Every student affected by this provision has graduated. The language is obsolete and should

GPA and Class Rank

NOTE: The following provisions shall apply to students beginning with the graduating class of 2022.

Weighted GPA Used to Determine Class Rank

The following scales are used to compute numerical grades into the mathematically computed score that is used to determine class rank. Courses that will be counted in the grade point average for class in rank include credits from the following content areas taken in grades 9-12 as defined by the TEKS:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Languages Other Than English

- CTE courses

The end of semester numerical grade is used to compute grade point average and is recorded on the student's Academic Achievement Record (transcript). Class rank is calculated at the end of a student's 9th–10th grade year, and subsequently at the end of each semester in grades 11th–12th. Class rank is calculated at the end of each semester only.

Grades earned in the following courses shall be excluded when calculating the weighted GPA and academic class rank:

- Correspondence courses
- Summer school courses
- Credit by examination
- Credit for acceleration
- Credit recovery courses
- Home school courses
- Distance Learning and online courses from a non-accredited private or public school
- Courses taken in foreign countries (unless offered by an accredited US school)
- High school courses taken while the student is in middle school
- Pass/fail courses
- Non-accredited private schools

Advanced academic courses (Pre-AP, AP, dual credit, college courses) are calculated on a 5.0 scale. Students attending Priority Charter Schools on a temporary foreign study basis will be excluded from class rank.

GPA, Class Rank, and 4.0 Unweighted College GPA

Regular Courses		Pre-AP or AP or Dual Credit			Regular Courses		Pre-AP or AP or Dual Credit	
Grade	Grade Point	Grade	Grade Point		Grade	Grade Point	Grade	Grade Points
100	4.0	100	5.0		84	2.4	84	3.4
99	3.9	99	4.9		83	2.3	83	3.3
98	3.8	98	4.8		82	2.2	82	3.2
97	3.7	97	4.7		81	2.1	81	3.1
96	3.6	96	4.6		80	2.0	80	3.0
95	3.5	95	4.5		79	1.9	79	2.9
94	3.4	94	4.4		78	1.8	78	2.8
93	3.3	93	4.3		77	1.7	77	2.7
92	3.2	92	4.2		76	1.6	76	2.6
91	3.1	91	4.1		75	1.5	75	2.5
90	3.0	90	4.0		74	1.4	74	2.4
89	2.9	89	3.9		73	1.3	73	2.3

88	2.8	88	3.8		72	1.2	72	2.2
87	2.7	87	3.7		71	1.1	71	2.1
86	2.6	86	3.6		70	1.0	69	0.0
85	2.5	85	3.5		69	0.0	69	0.0

The weighted GPA is a cumulative average of all semester grades earned in selected courses in high school. The semester averages of courses included in the District's weighted GPA calculation will be included in the calculation of the GPA. Local credit courses are not counted in the weighted GPA, unweighted or college GPA, or class rank calculations. Classes taken for high school credit during Middle School are not used in calculating the GPA or Class Rank. The numerical semester grades are converted to a 4.0 scale (or 5.0 scale for Dual Credit or Pre-AP, or AP) using the following table.

An unweighted Grade Point Average ("GPA") is calculated at the end of each semester beginning with the end of the first semester of a student's freshman year. The unweighted GPA is not used to determine valedictorian, salutatorian, or honor graduates.

The 4.0 Unweighted College GPA requested by colleges and universities for admission purposes is calculated based on the straight average of all semester grades for all classes where:

A=4.0 B=3.0 C=2.0 D=1.0 F=0.0

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be determined at the end of the third nine-week grading period of the senior year. The valedictorian and the salutatorian shall be the two graduating seniors with the highest rank in class (weighted grade point average). To be eligible, a student shall have been enrolled in the Priority Charter Schools for the entire last three semesters prior to graduation.

To qualify for valedictorian or salutatorian, the student must graduate in no more than four years.

Breaking a Tie for Valedictorian/Salutatorian

In case of a tie, the following method shall be used to determine who shall be recognized as valedictorian or salutatorian:

1. Compute the weighted grade point average to the maximum number of decimal places in the district computer system to break the tie.
2. If a tie still occurs, the student with the most passed Dual Credit courses or completion of the most Industry Based Certification(s) shall be considered valedictorian or salutatorian.
3. If a tie still occurs, the student with the highest numerical weighted grade average at the end of their junior year shall be valedictorian or salutatorian.

Honor Graduate Certificate

The TEA allows each public high school in Texas to award one "Honor Graduate Certificate." This certificate will be presented to the highest-ranking graduate in the senior class. The recipient will receive a certificate and a declaration document authorizing the president of any state supported college or university to provide a waiver for tuition as specified in TEC 54.201.

The recipient of this honor must:

1. Be enrolled in Priority Charter schools for a minimum of three consecutive calendar semesters prior to graduation.
2. Must graduate with the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement (26 credits)
3. Meet all state graduation requirements. Be the highest-ranking graduate with the highest GPA of all students meeting these criteria.

Early Graduates and Beyond 4-Year Continuers

A student's class rank shall be determined within the graduating class of the school year in which the student completes all requirements for a diploma, regardless of the number of years the student is enrolled in high school.

Foreign Exchange Students

All foreign exchange students who do not intend to graduate with a diploma from a Texas public school will be excluded from class rank.

Transfer Student Grades

All incoming students' GPAs shall be converted to the system used by the school to determine the GPA and rank in class.

Withdrawal Prior to the End of the Semester

Students who withdraw prior to the end of the semester and before all exams are completed will NOT receive a semester grade or semester credit from a Priority Charter Schools campus. The grade in progress at the time of withdrawal will be sent to the new school. The student's new school will determine how the grade information sent by Priority Charter Schools for the current grading period will be processed, and credits calculated/awarded.

Enrollment Prior to the End of the Semester

If the previous school has not completed the semester, the withdrawal/transfer grades from the previous school will be used with the grades earned for the remainder of the grading period to determine that grade for the grading period. The student will take the semester final to be used in calculating the semester average and course credit.

Placement of Former Home School Students

High School Course Credits

Students entering Priority Charter Schools who wish to obtain high school level credit for courses completed in home school settings must follow the procedures below.

1. Request high school credit earned through home school within the first nine weeks of enrollment at Priority Charter Schools.
2. Submit copies of student assessment results, work samples, and any other evidence of course completion.
3. Submit a detailed outline and/or course syllabus and copies of instructional materials.

All required items above should be given to the District designee. After submission of the credit request and required items, Priority Charter Schools staff will review the materials, and course credit will be awarded based on the level and type of work completed, relevancy of the course itself, and the level to which the course addresses the Texas state standards (TEKS) for the credit being requested. Submission of the credit request and required items does not guarantee public school credit. In addition, acceptance of home school credit by other private schools does not obligate or guarantee credit for these courses by Priority Charter Schools.

If Priority Charter Schools determines that the student appears to be deficient in particular areas of the course or not enough documentation is available to award course credit, the student will be required to complete an end-of-semester, end-of-course, or an equivalent exam to determine course credit. Such exams will access overall content knowledge of the courses as outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Grades K-8 Placement

Students entering Priority Charter Schools in grades K–8 from home school programs will follow the same procedures 1–3 above for high school. Work completed in home school settings will be assessed by school staff to determine the extent to which the student's grade-level and subject-area coursework aligns with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Priority Charter Schools curriculum. Students may be administered reading, math, and/or other assessments upon enrollment to assist in determining appropriate grade placement. Data from these assessments will be used in conjunction with the overall assessment of the curriculum used in the home school setting to place the students in the appropriate grade.

Standardized Testing

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students in grades 3–8 will take state- mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8.
- Reading Language Arts, annually in grades 3–8.
- Science in grades 5 and 8.
- Social Studies in grade 8.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services as determined by the student's ARD committee.

Parents of students who do not perform satisfactorily on applicable STAAR or EOC assessments will be notified. Students will receive accelerated instruction as required by law.

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

End- of- course ("EOC") assessments are administered for the following courses:

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

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, except in circumstances where a student may be eligible to graduate in accordance with a plan approved by an Individual Graduation Committee. (See "Individual Graduation Committee Decisions" above.)

Students who do not meet satisfactory performance standards may have additional opportunities to retake applicable EOC assessments in accordance with the state testing schedule. 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 as determined by the student's ARD committee.

State Testing Participation Policy

In accordance with guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the state of Texas does not offer an option for parents or students to opt out of state assessments. However, students may refuse to participate in the test. TEA has provided the following clarification:

District testing personnel are required to provide testing opportunities to all students who are present on campus during the administration of a state assessment. If a student is in attendance but chooses not to participate or refuses to respond to test questions, the test will still be submitted for scoring, as both federal and state laws require all eligible students to be accounted for in the state testing process. While Texas law allows families to temporarily remove their child from a class or school activity due to an objection, this provision does not extend to statewide assessments.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2.0 ("TSIA2") assessment. The purpose of the TSIA2 assessment is to assess the college readiness skills that students should have to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. A passing score of this assessment is required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS")

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.

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 Priority Charter Schools' requirements for attendance.

When determining whether retention should be considered for a student in grades K-8, the following factors may be considered:

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.
4. missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year.
5. Maturity (in lower grades)

Retention decisions are made by a committee comprised of teachers, administrators, and, where applicable, special education staff. Parents will be notified at least four weeks before the end of the school year if retention is a possibility and will be provided an opportunity to participate in discussions regarding the retention decision.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal ("ARD") Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program ("IEP").

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.

Academic Integrity

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. A student's attempt to present the work of another as his or her own will be viewed as a serious offense, and the student may be subject to a grading penalty and/or discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

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. Priority Charter Schools 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.

Career and Technical Education Programs

Priority Charter Schools offers career and technical education ("CTE") programs. For a complete listing of CTE courses, please contact the campus principal, or visit the district's course catalog. Admission to these programs is based on student interest and completion of any pre-requisites required by Priority Charter Schools.

It is the policy of Priority Charter Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability 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 Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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, Robin Osburn, Executive Director of Finance, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, rosburn@prioritycharterschools.org and/or the Section 504 Coordinator, Lori Hensley, Executive Director of Special Programs, 275 FM 2483, Belton, Texas, 16513, 254-206-2013, lhensley@prioritycharterschools.org

College Days

High school students may be granted up to two excused days of absence during their junior year and up to two excused days of absence their senior year for the purpose of visiting an institution of high education.

Students must submit a written request to the school office at least two days prior to the requested college visit so that the absence may be reviewed and approved prior to the student participating in the college visit. The Principal may deny a request based on attendance concerns, academic standing, or other extenuating circumstances. No partial days will be approved.

Computer Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Priority Charter Schools 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.

Counseling

Academic Counseling

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with the school principal or designee 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 principal or designee to take the courses that best prepare them for the future. The school principal or designee 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.

Credit by Exam

Priority Charter Schools 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 non-accredited 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. Credit by examination opportunities will be provided in accordance with State Board of Education requirements and District procedures.

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 in accordance with District procedures

Dual Credit Opportunities

A dual credit course is a college course taken by a high school student for which the student earns both college and high school credit. Dual credit is also known as concurrent enrollment.

A student is eligible to enroll in dual credit courses in dual credit courses if the student:

- Demonstrates college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standards under the Texas Success

Initiative Assessment 2.0 ("TSIA2") 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 from applicable TSIA2 requirements

As these requirements may change from time to time, students and parents are encouraged to contact Priority Charter Schools and/or the participating college for current requirements. Students may enroll in up to two dual credit courses per semester unless otherwise approved by the District designee and participating college. Exceptions may be granted by the District designee and the participating college based on student readiness, academic performance, and program requirements. Students and parents are responsible for any fees for dual credit courses.

Distance Learning

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies, such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network ("TxVSN") has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation. If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the Superintendent or designee. Unless an exception is made by the Superintendent or designee, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the TxVSN in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the Superintendent or designee prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, Priority Charter Schools may not recognize and/or apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

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 Priority Charter Schools to and from the event and exceptions may only be made with approval from the activity's coach or sponsor.

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 organizational 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.

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 are established:

- 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.

Graduation (High School Grades Only)

Priority Charter Schools 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, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law;
2. Complete the courses required by the SBOE for graduation;
3. Complete the required number of credits established by the SBOE for graduation; Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA") or a Texas application for state financial aid ("TASFA") or otherwise satisfy graduation requirements related aid application completion.

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. Priority Charter Schools will offer CPR awareness training, free of charge, to students during their junior or senior 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. Priority Charter Schools 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. 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, Priority Charter Schools 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 (IGC), 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 official transcript. The foundation graduation program also involves the term "distinguished level of achievement," which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

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 parent may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parent of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement. The student and the student's parent must then submit written

permission to the Principal or designee 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 official 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, 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.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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 campus Principal for more information.

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 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA).

Students may consult with the campus Principal or designee 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools indicating that the student opts out; or
- The campus Principal or designee may authorize a student to opt out for good cause permitted by applicable law and TEA guidance

To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA or TASFA, the student must submit one of the following:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA Apply Texas 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"));
- 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.

The admission, review, and dismissal committee 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. To earn an endorsement under the foundation graduation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the EOC assessments and receive no modified curriculum in the student's chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

Promotion and Retention

A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery of grade-level standards and meet Priority Charter Schools 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 required state assessments;
3. is performing below grade-level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. missed more than 10% of instructional days for which the student was enrolled during the academic year. The decision must be made by a committee, which is comprised of the child's core subject area teachers, 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 three, repeat the grade the student was enrolled in the previous school year;
6. For grades four through eight, repeat the grade the student was enrolled in the previous school year; and/or
7. 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 7 above if Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools must abide by the parent's decision.

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 nine weeks. During the fourth week of a nine-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 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 may be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. The report card or progress report may include information regarding tutorials, interventions, or academic support for a student who receives a grade lower than 70% in a class or subject. Parents may be asked to acknowledge receipt of report cards and progress reports and return any required documentation within the timeframe established by the school.

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 may not be changed unless the Board of Directors determines that the grade was arbitrary, contains an error, or was not assigned in accordance with the school's grading policy.

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 prior federal notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

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

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

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is: Lori Hensley, Executive Director of Special Programs, at 254-206-2013, lhensley@prioritycharterschools.org.

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: Lori Hensley, Executive Director of Special Programs, at 254-206-2013, lhensley@prioritycharterschools.org.

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
Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' Title I program may be obtained from the campus principal.

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 supports in order to receive an appropriate education as required by federal law.

Standardized Testing

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:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8;
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8;
- Science in grades 5 and 8; and
- Social Studies in grade 8.

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.

Accelerated Instruction: Grades 3–8

Priority Charter Schools will provide accelerated instruction in accordance with applicable state law to each student who does not perform satisfactorily on a STAAR assessment in grades 3-8. This accelerated instruction may be provided during the summer, during the school year, or through a combination of both and will be provided in accordance with applicable state law.

Accelerated instruction provided during the following school year may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours.

In providing this accelerated instruction, Priority Charter Schools 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 Instruction: Grades 9–12

Each time a high school student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, Priority Charter Schools shall provide the student with accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area. Theis accelerated instruction may require the student's participation before or after normal school hours, or at a time of the year outside normal school operations. This accelerated instruction will also be provided in a manner required under Education Code § 28.0211.

Accelerated Education Plans (AEP)

In accordance with state law, Priority Charter Schools will provide accelerated instruction to eligible students who do not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment.

Parents will be notified of accelerated instruction requirements and provided information regarding the accelerated instruction and supports that will be provided to assist the student in meeting grade-level expectations. Notification may include information regarding the amount of accelerated instruction required and the manner in which the instruction will be provided.

For students receiving special education services, accelerated instruction will be provided in accordance with the student's individualized Education Program (IEP) and applicable state and federal requirements.

Special Education Students: For a student receiving special education services who is required to receive accelerated instruction under state law, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee will determine the manner in which accelerated instruction will be provided in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and applicable state and federal requirements.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment
The Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2.0 (TSIA 2) is a college readiness assessment that measures skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Priority Charter Schools requires students in grades 10 and 11 to participate in the TSIA 2 as part of the district's college and career readiness program. TSIA2 results may be used to determine eligibility for dual credit coursework and may provide students with evidence of college readiness for postsecondary enrollment. Students and parents should contact the campus administration for current dual credit eligibility requirements and testing opportunities.

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. 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: Student Code of Conduct

Purpose of the Student Code of Conduct

To function properly, education must provide an equal learning opportunity for all students by recognizing, valuing, and addressing the individual needs of every student. In addition to the regular curriculum, principles and practices of good citizenship must also be taught and modeled by school staff. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, Priority Charter Schools has established this Student Code of Conduct in accordance with state law and the Priority Charter Schools open-enrollment charter. The Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Board of Directors and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Student Code of Conduct will be posted at each Priority Charter Schools' campus and/or will be available for review at the campus office. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in a student being suspended or expelled from Priority Charter Schools. Students must be familiar with the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

The Student Code of Conduct does not define all types and aspects of student behavior, as Priority Charter Schools may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Student Code of Conduct. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Student Code of Conduct. When students participate in student activities, they will also be expected to follow the guidelines and constitutions that further specify Priority Charter Schools' organization's expectations, student behavior and consequences.

Authority and Jurisdiction

Priority Charter Schools has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school on Priority Charter Schools' transportation;
2. During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
3. While the student is attending any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
4. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
5. For any expulsion offense committed while on Priority Charter Schools' property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of Priority Charter Schools or another school in Texas;
6. For any expulsion offense committed away from Priority Charter Schools' property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, if the misconduct creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment;
7. While the student is in transit to or from school or to or from school-related activities or events;
8. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
9. When the student commits a felony, including those provided by Texas Education Code §§ 37.006 or 37.0081, regardless of time or location;
10. When criminal mischief is committed on or off Priority Charter Schools' property or at a school-related event; and
11. While a student is participating in any remote / virtual classroom or other period of online instruction provided by Priority Charter Schools.

Reporting Crimes
In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Standards for Student Conduct

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet Priority Charter Schools' standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus rules and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other Priority Charter Schools' staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including Priority Charter Schools' property and facilities.
- Cooperate with and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Code of Conduct Offenses

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school and all school-related activities.

General Conduct Violations
The categories of conduct described below are prohibited on school property, in vehicles owned, operated, or contracted by Priority Charter Schools (PCS), and at all school-sponsored or school-related activities. This list is not intended to include the most serious offenses. In the subsequent sections on In-School Suspension (ISS), Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), Removal from the Regular Educational Setting, Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses, and Expulsion, offenses that require or permit specific disciplinary consequences are identified.

PCS does not operate a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Students who are expelled from PCS will be required to serve the period of expulsion outside of PCS and may be required to provide appropriate documentation demonstrating compliance with the terms of the expulsion prior to being considered for re-enrollment. Any offense, however, may be severe enough to result in removal from the regular educational setting, suspension, or expulsion, as determined by the severity of the conduct and applicable law.

Disregard for Authority Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel.
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct in district vehicles.
- Refuse to accept discipline or consequence assigned by a teacher or principal.

Mistreatment of Others Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault, see Expulsion for Certain Offenses)
- Threaten a district student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in any behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct and is motivated by antisemitism. [see Glossary]
- Engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See glossary for all four terms.)
- Release or threaten to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or

older without the student's consent.

- Engage in sexual or gender-based harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence. (See glossary.)
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See glossary.)
- Coerce an individual to act through the use or threat of force.
- Commit extortion or blackmail.
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.
- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

Property Offenses Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others. (For felony criminal mischief, see Expulsion for Certain Offenses)
- Deface or damage school property, including textbooks, technology and electronic resources, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Penal Code. (For felony robbery, aggravated robbery, and theft, see Expulsion for Certain Offenses)
- Enter, without authorization, district facilities that are not open for operations.

Possession of Prohibited Items Students shall not possess or use:

- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
- A "look-alike" weapon that is intended to be used as a weapon or could reasonably be perceived as a weapon;
- An air gun or BB gun;
- A short barrel firearm;
- Ammunition;
- A hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown;
- A firearm silencer or suppressor;
- *A location-restricted knife;
- *A club;
- *A firearm;
- A stun gun;
- Knuckles;
- A pocketknife or any other small knife;
- Mace or pepper spray;
- Pornographic material;
- Tobacco products (including nicotine pouches), cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device;
- Matches or a lighter;
- A laser pointer, unless it is for an approved use; or
- Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

Safety Transgressions Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

Virtual Learning & Possession of Personal Communication Electronics

While some students may participate in a virtual (online) classroom environment, standards for student conduct remain important to our school environment. To help ensure that our students understand how to behave in a virtual classroom environment, we have developed a code of conduct for students to follow. This code of conduct addresses student interactions with Priority Charter Schools' faculty, staff, and students in the online environment.

A. Interactions with Faculty and Staff

1. Students should address Priority Charter Schools' faculty and staff members as adults with courtesy and respect. Students should use the appropriate title (Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr.) and the faculty or staff member's last name only.
2. Students should phrase communications with Priority Charter Schools' faculty and staff in a polite and courteous manner appropriate for speaking to adults.
3. Students are not to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language or images in any communications with Priority Charter Schools' faculty and staff.
4. Students must use a screen name and/or virtual platform profile picture that is appropriate for an educational environment. Screen names and profile pictures may not include profanity or language or images that may otherwise be construed as offensive. Profile pictures generally should include only the student's face. Priority Charter Schools' administration reserves the right to determine if a student's screen name and/or profile picture is inappropriate. Students using an inappropriate screen name and/or profile picture will be required to update their user profiles.

B. Interactions with Other Students

1. All communications with other students in the virtual classroom must be of a course-related nature.
2. All communications with other students in any forum, course related email, discussion post, etc., must be polite, courteous, and respectful.
3. Priority Charter Schools takes seriously the integrity and authenticity of student work. Copying the work of others, allowing others to knowingly copy your own work, and/or misusing content from the Internet will result in disciplinary consequences as allowed under the school's Student Code of Conduct.
4. Students are not to collaborate with other students on assignments unless directed to do so by the teacher. Additionally, parents are not permitted to log in to a student account to complete coursework on the student's behalf.
5. Students are not to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language or images in any communications with other students.
6. Students are not to send or post discriminatory or harassing messages or images.

7. Students may not use the virtual classroom environment to engage in bullying conduct.
8. While using the virtual classroom environment, students may not view or exchange pornographic materials.
9. Students must be dressed appropriately for class while participating in the virtual classroom.

C. Students shall not: violate Priority Charter Schools' computer use policies, rules, or agreements, such as the Student Acceptable Use policy, and including conduct involving but not limited to:

a. Attempting to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of Priority Charter Schools or its students or employees, and uploading or creating computer viruses, including such conduct off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
b. Attempting to alter, destroy, or disable Priority Charter Schools' computer equipment, Priority Charter Schools' data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the Priority Charter Schools system, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption of the educational environment.
c. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten Priority Charter Schools' students, employees, or volunteers, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
d. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
e. Using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.

D. Possession of Personal Communications Electronics

To support a safe, focused, and productive learning environment across all Priority Charter Schools (PCS) campuses, students are expected to adhere to the guidelines outlined below during the school day while on school property. These guidelines restrict the use of personal electronic communication devices in order to minimize distractions, maximize instructional time, and promote student engagement in learning.

Research has consistently demonstrated that excessive use of cell phones, social media, and other personal communication devices can negatively impact student well-being, academic performance, and social development. In addition, Texas law requires public schools to prohibit student use of personal communication devices during the school day while on school property. PCS has adopted this policy to comply with state law and to maintain an environment that supports student learning and success.

For purposes of this policy, a *personal communication device* is defined in accordance with Texas Education Code §37.082. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, wireless earbuds (including AirPods), headphones, tablets, wearable technology capable of digital communication, and any other personal device used to send, receive, access, or facilitate electronic communications.

Personal Communications Electronics: Guidelines

Grades PK–12
Students are required to keep all personal electronic communication devices powered off and stored out of sight during the school day while on PCS property. For purposes of this policy, the school day begins when a student arrives on campus and ends when the student is officially dismissed at the conclusion of the school day.

Upon arrival to campus, students must power off all personal electronic communication devices and secure them in their backpack or another designated storage location. Devices must remain stored and inaccessible throughout the

school day. Students may not carry, display, use, access, or attempt to access a personal electronic communication device during the school day unless specifically authorized by a campus administrator or staff member for an approved educational, medical, or emergency purpose.

A student is considered in violation of this policy if a personal electronic communication device is visible, in use, being handled, or is accessed at any time during the school day without authorization.
Students who violate these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

At the conclusion of the school day and after dismissal, students may resume use of their personal electronic communication devices, subject to any additional campus rules or restrictions.

Definitions

School Property
School property includes any PCS campus, facility, building, vehicle, or location where school-sponsored instruction, programs, activities, or events occur. This includes, but is not limited to, classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries, playgrounds, athletic fields, courtyards, parking areas, and extracurricular activity spaces. This definition does not include off-site educational locations that are governed by another institution's policies, such as dual-credit college courses or other approved educational programs. Students attending such locations must comply with the communication device policies of the host institution.

School Day
The school day begins when a student arrives on campus and ends when the student is officially dismissed. Before-school and after-school activities, including extracurricular activities, are not considered part of the school day unless otherwise directed by campus administration.

Stored and Out of Sight
A Personal Communication Electronic is considered stored and out of sight when it is powered off and secured in a backpack, locker, or other location designated by the campus and is not visible or accessible to the student during the school day.

Powered Off
A Personal Communication Electronic is considered powered off when it is completely turned off and unable to send, receive, or display notifications, messages, calls, alarms, or other communications.

Use
Use includes, but is not limited to, holding, viewing, accessing, activating, wearing, listening to, communicating through, recording with, photographing with, or otherwise interacting with a Personal Communication Electronic.

Possession
Possession means a Personal Communication Electronic is on the student's person, in the student's clothing, backpack, bag, pouch, or any other location under the student's control or readily accessible to the student.

Exceptions to Personal Communication Electronics Guidelines

The following exceptions may permit student access to a Personal Communication Electronic during the school day:

- A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Accommodation Plan, Individualized Health Plan (IHP), or other documented educational or medical plan specifically requires the use of a Personal Communication Electronic.
- A student who has a documented medical need requiring access to a Personal Communication Electronic as prescribed by a licensed physician. Documentation must be submitted to and approved by the campus

principal or designee. Approved use shall be limited to the circumstances identified in the documentation and conducted in a manner that minimizes disruption to the educational environment. The campus may impose reasonable restrictions regarding the time, place, and manner of use.

- Any other circumstance required by federal or state law, or specifically approved by the Superintendent or designee to address a documented health, safety, or educational need.

Student Safety and Emergencies
Campus administrators may authorize limited student use of Personal Communication Electronics during an emergency situation when such use is determined to be necessary for student health, safety, or welfare. The authorization of device use during an emergency shall be at the discretion of campus administration and consistent with applicable law and school procedures.

In the event of a family emergency, parents or guardians should contact the campus front office. School personnel will ensure that emergency messages are communicated to students in a timely manner.

Students approved for an exception remain subject to all other provisions of this policy. Use of a Personal Communication Electronic outside the scope of the approved exception may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Additional Disciplinary Considerations for the Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices
Students who refuse to put their personal electronic communication devices away or surrender them upon request will be held to consequences for Disregard for Authority, as defined by the Student Code of Conduct, for failure to comply with directives given by school personnel. (p.9) Students will receive additional disciplinary consequences for violating the personal electronic communication guidelines for any offense categorized as disregard for authority.

Definition of Surrender of Phone to Assistant Principal
When required, students will report to the designated location before the beginning of school and surrender their phone to the AP or designee. The phone will be locked away and can be picked up at or after the dismissal bell rings at the conclusion of the school day. If the referral for the violation comes in at the end of the day, the surrender may not begin until the subsequent day that the AP has had an opportunity to notify parents and give instructions to the student. If a personal communication device is in the possession of the school, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device appropriately stored and free from damage.

However, parents should note that the school specifically disclaims any liability for devices that are damaged or lost while in the school's possession. Parents will not be compensated for devices that have been in the school's possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

Miscellaneous Offenses Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
- Engage in academic dishonesty, which includes cheating or copying the work of another student, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination.
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

In addition to the expectations outlined in this Student Code of Conduct, campuses, administrators, and teachers may establish reasonable campus- or classroom-specific rules and procedures. These rules may be communicated through campus handbooks, classroom postings, course syllabi, or direct instruction to students.

Failure to comply with campus or classroom rules may result in appropriate classroom or administrative consequences. Depending on the nature of the conduct, a violation of a campus or classroom rule may also constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action under the Code.

Discipline Management Techniques

Disciplinary management techniques are designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense, unless otherwise specified by law, may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses.

Techniques

The following discipline management techniques may be used—alone or in combination—for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Assignment of school duties such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Cooling-off time or "time-out."
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Rewards for positive behavior.
- Demerits.
- Detention.
- Expulsion from Priority Charter Schools, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- In-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by Priority Charter Schools.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation (final warning contracts).
- Seating changes within the classroom.
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area.
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, field trips, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Withdrawal or restriction of bus privileges.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.
- Priority Charter Schools will NOT administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

Participation in Graduation Activities

Priority Charter Schools (PCS) reserves the right to limit or revoke a student's participation in graduation activities when the student's conduct violates the Student Code of Conduct or otherwise substantially disrupts the educational environment or school-sponsored activities.

Participation in graduation activities is considered a privilege, not a right, and may include involvement in commencement ceremonies, senior activities, and student speaking roles.

Students selected to deliver opening remarks, closing remarks, valedictory addresses, salutatory addresses, or other student speeches at graduation shall be notified by campus administration in accordance with campus procedures.

To be eligible for a student speaking role at graduation, a student must meet all academic requirements and demonstrate conduct consistent with the expectations of PCS. A student shall be ineligible for a graduation speaking role if the student received an out-of-school suspension or was expelled during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

PCS reserves the right to determine eligibility for participation in graduation activities and speaking roles based on both academic achievement and student conduct.

Out of School Suspension

In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the administrator may take into consideration factors including self-defense, prior discipline history, the student's status as a student in foster care or who is homeless, intent or lack of intent and other appropriate or mitigating factors determined by the administrator.

In addition to the Code of Conduct violations listed above that may result in suspension, the Principal or designee has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five school days for any of the following additional reasons:

1. The need to further investigate an incident,
2. A recommendation to expel the student, or
3. An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

Special Rules for Suspensions Involving Homeless Students

Priority Charter Schools may not place a student who is homeless in out-of-school suspension unless the student engages in the following conduct while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

1. Unlawful possession of a firearm or other weapon;
2. Assault, sexual assault, aggravated assault, or aggravated sexual assault; or
3. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana or a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or an alcoholic beverage.

Emergency Placement

If the Principal or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of Priority Charter Schools or a school- sponsored activity, the Principal or designee may order immediate removal of the student. The Principal or designee may impose immediate suspension if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm. At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

Removal from School Transportation

A student being transported by Priority Charter Schools' transportation to or from school or a school- sponsored or school-related activity may be removed from a school vehicle for conduct violating the school's established standards for conduct in a school vehicle.

Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by applicable state and federal law, and Priority Charter Schools' policy.

Process for Suspensions Lasting Up to Five Days

Prior to suspending a student for up to five days, the Principal or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to: give notice of suspension and the reasons for the suspension to the student. Additionally, prior to suspending a student for up to five days, the Principal or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
2. Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and
3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

If the Principal or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day for up to five days, the Principal or designee will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The Principal or designee will notify a suspended student's parent(s) of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the Principal or designee.

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed during the period of suspension within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.

Process for Out-of-School Suspensions Over Five Days (extended suspension) and Expulsion Notice

When the Principal or designee determine that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days (extended suspension) or expulsion, but prior to taking any such action, the Principal or designee will provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
2. The date and location for a hearing before the Principal or designee, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

1. May be present;
2. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
3. Shall be apprised and informed of Priority Charter Schools' evidence;
4. May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
5. May be represented by an attorney.

Hearing Before the Principal

Priority Charter Schools shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and Priority Charter Schools shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The Principal or designee may audio record the hearing.

Within 48 hours or two school days, whichever is later, following the hearing, the Principal or designee will notify the student and the student's parent(s) in writing of his or her decision as to whether the student's conduct warrants suspension and/or expulsion and, if so, the decision shall specify:

1. The length of the extended suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. When or if the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period if at all; and
3. The right to appeal the Principal or designee's decision to the Board of Directors or the Board's designee.

The notice shall also state that failure to timely request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter, and that disciplinary consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an extended suspension or expulsion decision.

Appeal to the Board of Directors
The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the extended suspension or expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Principal in writing within five calendar days of the date of receipt of the Principal or designee's decision. The student and/or his or her parent(s) will be informed of the date, time, and location of the meeting in which the disciplinary consequences will be reviewed. The Board of Directors will review the disciplinary administrative record and any audio recording or transcription/minutes of any hearings or conferences before the Principal or designee at a regular or specially called meeting in closed session as permitted by the Texas Open Meetings Act. The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered during the disciplinary consequence, except that if the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the expulsion record, the administration shall provide the student or parent(s) notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the Board of Directors' meeting.

The Board of Directors may, but is not required to, allow an opportunity for the student or parent(s) and the administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will consider the appeal and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the disciplinary decision.

The Board of Directors will communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors' meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors' meeting, the Principal or designee's decision with respect to the disciplinary action appeal 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.

As stated above, disciplinary consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an extended suspension or expulsion to the Board of Directors.

No Credit Earned
Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

Placement of Students with Disabilities

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities (504 or special education under the IDEA) shall be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

A student with a disability shall not be removed from his or her current placement for disciplinary reasons and/or pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without action by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee to determine appropriate services in the interim and otherwise in accordance with applicable law. If a special education due process appeal to a TEA special education hearing officer is made, the student with a disability shall remain in the then current education setting in place at the time such appeal is noticed to Priority Charter

Schools, unless Priority Charter Schools and the student's parent(s) agree otherwise.

Gun-Free Schools Act

In accordance with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, Priority Charter Schools shall expel, from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The Principal or designee may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with legal requirements.

For the purposes of this section, "firearm" means:

1. Any weapon – including a starter gun – which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
3. Any destructive device. "Destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon – other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes – by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

Glossary

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct.

Abuse is improper or excessive use.

Abusable Volatile Chemical Offense, as defined by Health and Safety Code § 485.001 and 485.031. No student shall inhale, ingest, apply, use, or possess an abusable volatile chemical with intent to inhale, ingest, apply, or use any of these in a manner:

1. Contrary to the directions for use, cautions, or warnings appearing on a label of a container of the chemical; and
2. Designed to affect the central nervous system, create, or induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination, or elation, or change, distort, or disturb the person's eyesight, thinking process, balance, or coordination.

No student shall knowingly deliver to a person younger than 18 an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.032

No student shall knowingly use or possess with intent to use inhalant paraphernalia to inhale, ingest, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. No student shall knowingly deliver, sell, or possess with intent to deliver or sell inhalant paraphernalia knowing that that person who receives it intends to use it to inhale, ingest, apply, use, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.033

Aggravated robbery is defined in part by Penal Code 29.03(a) as when a person commits robbery and:

- Causes serious bodily injury to another;
- Uses or exhibits a deadly weapon; or
- Causes bodily injury to another person or threatens or places another person in fear of imminent bodily injury or death, if the other person is:
    - 65 years of age or older, or
    - A disabled person.

Antisemitism is defined by Government Code section 448.001 as a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. The term includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Examples of antisemitism are included with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's "Working Definition of Antisemitism" adopted on May 26, 2016.

Armor-piercing ammunition is handgun ammunition used principally in pistols and revolvers and that is designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

Arson is defined by Texas Penal Code § 28.02 and occurs when a person starts a fire, regardless of whether the fire continues after ignition, or causes an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:

- Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
- Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
    - Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
    - Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
    - Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
    - Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
    - Knowing that it is located within property belonging to another, or
    - When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.

Arson also occurs when a person:

- Recklessly starts a fire or causes an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance and the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or
- Intentionally starts a fire or causes an explosion and in so doing recklessly damages or destroys a building belonging to another or recklessly causes another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

Assault is defined in part by Texas Penal Code § 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury; or intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another that can reasonably be regarded as offensive or provocative.

Breach of computer security includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in Texas Penal Code 33.02, if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a public school; and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school property or information; or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

Bullying is defined 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;
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 means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular telephone 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. Bullying conduct includes conduct:

1. that occurs on or is delivered to Priority Charter Schools' property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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, Priority Charter Schools, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Chemical dispensing device is a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being.

Club is an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death, including but not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

Controlled substances or dangerous drugs include but are not limited to marijuana; any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, barbiturate; anabolic steroid; or prescription medicine provided to any person other than the person for whom the prescription was written. The term also includes all controlled substances listed in Chapters 481 and 483 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

Criminal street gang means three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

Dangerous drug is defined by Health and Safety Code 483.001 as a device or a drug that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes a device or drug that federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription or restricts to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Dating violence is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship, as defined by Texas Family Code § 71.0021.

Deadly conduct occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, and includes, but is not limited to, knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

Deferred adjudication is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Deferred prosecution may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

Delinquent conduct is conduct that:

- Violates either state or federal law, other than a traffic offense, and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail;
- Violates a lawful order of a court under circumstances that would constitute contempt of that court in a justice or municipal court, or a county court for conduct punishable only by a fine;
- Constitutes an intoxication and alcoholic beverage offense under Chapter 49 of the Texas Penal Code; or
- Violates Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code § 106.041 relating to driving under the influence of alcohol by a minor (third or subsequent offense).

Discretionary means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

E-Cigarette or electronic cigarette means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. The term also includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe; a dab pen; a vapor product; or any other similar device under another product name or description. Also included is any component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking.

Explosive weapon is any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror, and includes a device designed, made, or adapted for delivery or shooting an explosive weapon.

False Alarm or Report occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

- Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

Firearm is defined by federal law (18 U.S.C. § 921(a)) as:

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
- The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
- Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or
- Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.
- Such a term does not include an antique firearm.

Firearm silencer means any device designed, made, or adapted to muffle the report of a firearm.

Graffiti means making marks with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

Handgun is defined by Texas Penal Code § 46.01 as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

Harassment is:

- Conduct that meets the definition established in district policies;
- Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer; is sexually intimidating; causes physical damage to the property of another student; subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint; or maliciously and 51 substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety, as defined in Education Code 37.001(b)(2); or
- Conduct that is punishable as a crime under Penal Code 42.07, including the following types of conduct if carried out with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrassing another:
    - Initiating communication and, in the course of communication, making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene, as defined by law;
    - Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
    - Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury;
    - Causing the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or making repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another;
    - Making a telephone call and intentionally failing to hang up or disengage the connection;
    - Knowingly permitting a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to commit an offense under this section;
    - Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrassment, or offend another;
    - Publishing on an internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern, as defined by law; or
- Making obscene, intimidating, or threatening telephone calls or other electronic communications from a temporary or disposable telephone number provided by an internet application or other technological means.

Hazing is an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that is directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization, if the act involves situations outlined in Texas Education Code § 37.151 including:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal

Code; or 52

- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated

Hit list is a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

Improvised explosive device is defined by Texas Penal Code § 46.01 as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

Indecent Exposure is defined by Penal Code 21.08 as an offense that occurs when a person exposes the person's anus or any part of the person's genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person, and is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

Intimate Visual Material is defined by Civil Practices and Remedies Code 98B.001 and Penal Code 21.16 as visual material that depicts a person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct. "Visual material" means any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide of any photographic reproduction or any other physical medium that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen.

Knuckles means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

Location-Restricted Knife means a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

Look-alike weapon means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

Machine gun is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

Mandatory means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

Online Impersonation occurs when a person, without obtaining the consent of another person and with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten any persons, uses the name or persona of another person to:

- Create a web page on a commercial social networking site or other Internet website; or
- Post or send one or more messages on or through a commercial social networking site or other Internet website, other than on or through an electronic mail program or message board program.

Online impersonation also occurs when a person sends an electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication that reference a name, domain address, phone number, or other item of identifying information belonging to any person:

- Without obtaining the other person's consent;
- With the intent to cause a recipient of the communication to reasonably believe that the other person authorized or transmitted the communication; and
- With the intent to harm or defraud any person.

Paraphernalia are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body. It also includes equipment, products, or materials used or intended for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing,

preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, or concealing a controlled substance.

Personal Communication Device means a telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

Possession means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse, or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including, but not limited, to an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

Prohibited weapon under Penal Code 46.05(a) means: The following items, unless registered with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice:

- Explosive weapon;
- Machine gun;
- Armor-piercing ammunition;
- Chemical dispensing device;
- Zip gun;
- Tire deflation device; or
- Improvised explosive device.

Public Lewdness is defined by Penal Code 21.07 as an offense that occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, when the person is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student. Educational organizations listed in Education Code 37.121(d) are excepted from this definition.

Reasonable belief is that which an ordinary person of average intelligence and sound mind would believe. Chapter 37 requires certain disciplinary decisions when the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that a student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony offense. In forming such a reasonable belief, the superintendent or designee may use all available information, and must consider the information furnished in the notice of a student's arrest under Code of Criminal Procedure Article 15.27.

Self-defense is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

Serious misbehavior means:

- Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
- Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
- Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or
- Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
- Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07; 54
- Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
- Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
- Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
- Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.
- Behavior that is grounds for permissible expulsion

- Behavior identified by the district as grounds for discretionary expulsion
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Refusal to attempt or complete schoolwork as assigned.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

Short-barrel firearm is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

Switchblade Knife is any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or by the force of gravity or by the application of centrifugal force. The term does not include a knife that has a spring, detent, or other mechanism designed to create a bias toward closure and that requires exertion applied to the blade by hand, wrist, or arm to overcome the bias toward closure and open the knife.

Terroristic threat is defined by Penal Code 22.07 as a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

- Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;
- Cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service;
- Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
- Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state, or a public charter school (including Priority Charter Schools).

Tire deflation device means a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

Title 5 felonies are those crimes listed in Title 5 of the Penal Code that typically involve injury to a person and may include:

- Murder, manslaughter, or homicide under Sections 19.02–.05;
- Kidnapping under Section 20.03;
- Trafficking of persons under Section 20A.02;
- Smuggling or continuous smuggling of persons under Sections 20.05–.06;
- Assault under Section 22.01;
- Aggravated assault under Section 22.02;
- Sexual assault under Section 22.011;
- Aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021;
- Unlawful restraint under Section 20.02;
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual under Section 21.02;
- Bestiality under Section 21.09;
- Improper relationship between educator and student under Section 21.12;
- Voyeurism under Section 21.17;
- Indecency with a child under Section 21.11;

- Invasive visual recording under Section 21.15;
- Disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material under Section 21.16;
- Sexual coercion under Section 21.18;
- Injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person of any age under Section 22.04;
- Abandoning or endangering a child under Section 22.041;
- Deadly conduct under Section 22.05;
- Terroristic threat under Section 22.07;
- Aiding a person to die by suicide under Section 22.08; and
- Tampering with a consumer product under Section 22.09.

Trespassing means entering or remaining on the property of another (including Priority Charter Schools) without effective consent of the owner, and the person (1) had notice that the entry was forbidden; or (2) received notice to depart but failed to do so. Trespassing may also include presence on Priority Charter Schools' campus if expelled or suspended.

Under the influence means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

Use means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

Vapor product means electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or any other device that uses a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver vapor that may include nicotine to the individual inhaling from the device, or any substance used to fill or refill the device.

Zip gun is a device or combination of devices, not originally a firearm, but adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

Section 5: Especially for Parents

Accommodations for Children of Military Families

Children of military families will be provided with 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 Priority Charter Schools. 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.

Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

As part of Priority Charter Schools curriculum, students in certain grade levels receive instruction related to human sexuality. 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.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction 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 Priority Charter Schools grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

State law also requires instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS):

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, Priority Charter Schools must obtain written consent from the student's parent.

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 the human sexuality instruction 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 Priority Charter Schools grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service

Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The campus Principal will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

Priority Charter Schools has also established procedures for staff to notify the campus Principal regarding a student who may need intervention.

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.

Notice of Teacher Qualifications

Priority Charter Schools will provide parents with the qualifications of each teacher employed by the school. Parents may also request, and Priority Charter Schools 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.

Parent Contact Information

Parents are responsible for notifying Priority Charter Schools of any changes in their address, telephone number, and/or email address so that we can update our records accordingly and maintain up-to-date contact information.

Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns

Priority Charter Schools values the opinions of their 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 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) seven school days from the time the event(s) causing the complaint and/or grievance were or should have been known, or (2) within seven school 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 ten school days of the Principal or designee's receipt of the complaint and/or grievance.

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/or grievance 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 ten school 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 seven school days of the written appeal.

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 ten school 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 Director's 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 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.

Priority Charter Schools will determine whether the appeal will be presented in an 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 of Directors' 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 discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin,

disability, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law shall be submitted as described in "Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation," of this Handbook.
2. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted as described in "Reporting Procedures," of this Handbook.
3. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted as described in "Freedom from Bullying and Cyber-Bullying," of this Handbook.
4. For complaints and grievances concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance.
5. For complaints and grievances concerning disciplinary long-term suspensions and/or expulsions.
6. 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.
7. 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 of Directors' policy and the procedural safeguards provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
8. 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 on 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.

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 6: IMPORTANT NOTICES

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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools decides not to amend the records as requested by the parent or eligible student, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, performs an institutional service or function for which Priority Charter Schools would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Priority Charter Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised Priority Charter Schools to the contrary in accordance with Priority Charter Schools procedures.

Directory Information for School-Related Purposes:
Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools (e.g., using directory information for print media, website or social media accounts operated by Priority Charter Schools, 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 Priority Charter Schools and that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

Directory Information Supplied to Military and College Recruiters (Secondary Students Only:
Two federal laws require Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, unless parents have advised Priority Charter Schools that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Directory Information Supplied to Law Enforcement Officials and Authorities:
Priority Charter Schools 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: student name, address, and telephone number.

Priority Charter Schools 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 PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS 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 PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS 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 Priority Charter Schools to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' policy.

If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate 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, Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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**) Priority Charter Schools' permission to use my child's artwork, photos, or other original work in the manner described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Acceptable Use Policy

This Student Acceptable Use Policy ("Policy") sets forth the guidelines governing the use of all Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' technology resources via off-campus remote access.

Priority Charter Schools reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this Policy at any time.

Introduction

Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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, Priority Charter Schools' policy and procedures, and legal requirements. This applies to the use of all Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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

Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' computer networks, personal electronic devices, personal device data plans, software or websites sanctioned or used by Priority Charter Schools, and any personal technology used in an educational setting. Access to Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' technology resources is the property of Priority Charter Schools. Accordingly, in connection with ensuring student safety, Priority Charter Schools' network administrators and/or other appropriate personnel will engage in periodic reviews and searches of stored files and communications stored on Priority Charter Schools 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

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

will include students' use of school-approved educational websites or software to ensure that they are using it in an appropriate manner consistent with Priority Charter Schools' expectations for such use. Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy over any information stored on Priority Charter Schools' technology.

Priority Charter Schools 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.

Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools for use in instruction.

Although Priority Charter Schools 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. Priority Charter Schools does not condone any student accessing, or attempting to access, such material, and it remains deeply committed to safe Internet use. Priority Charter Schools takes steps to minimize students' opportunities to do so, including the implementation of extensive content-filtering software. This software is not fail-safe, however, and while at school, Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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, Priority Charter Schools 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

Priority Charter Schools requires students to use all technology resources, including any websites or software used in the classroom, in a manner consistent with the following rules. Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools is unable to supervise students' technology use at home. Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' technology, including websites and software used in the classroom, shall immediately stop accessing the material and report it to a supervising adult. Priority Charter Schools shall take immediate steps to ensure such material is blocked from further view at school by its content-filtering software.

All Priority Charter Schools' 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 electronic device, include the following:

- Attempting unauthorized access, or "hacking," of Priority Charter Schools' computers or networks, or any attempts to bypass Internet content-filtering software used by Priority Charter Schools.
- 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 Priority Charter Schools' technology resource, to include the use of any website or software used by the school.
- Engaging in any conduct that damages or modifies, or is intended to damage or modify, any Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 electronic device in accordance with the Student Acceptable Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools or the end user does not have an active license.
- Using a website or software program implemented by Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' technology resource to take, disseminate, transfer, or share obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content.
- Using any Priority Charter Schools' technology resources for any commercial and/or for-profit purpose, to include personal financial gain or fraud.
- Using obscene or profane language on any Priority Charter Schools' technology resource, to include posting such language on any website or software used by Priority Charter Schools.
- Using Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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 Electronic Devices

Personal wireless and mobile devices may provide filtered access to the Internet as well as access to any web-based student applications (e.g., Discovery Education Streaming, Moodle) that would normally be accessible to students from home. Priority Charter Schools is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal electronic 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 electronic device to a campus or school-related event. In addition:

- All students with personal electronic devices being used for instructional or other school business must use Priority Charter Schools' wireless network, which is filtered according to federal guidelines for Internet access in public schools.
- If a student uses a personal electronic 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 the Policy and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any campus-based consequences for violating the usage rules for personal electronic devices.

- Personal electronic communications such as e-mail, instant messaging, chat, blogs, etc., are prohibited at school unless the teacher and/or administrator has approved the use of an application for educational purposes.
- Personal electronic 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 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 wireless and mobile devices must be turned off when it is being used as part of a class.
- Student selection of appropriate, tasteful screensavers and wallpaper is expected.
- Teachers will establish standards for personal electronic devices used in their respective classrooms; however, it is Priority Charter Schools' policy that students are not allowed to access the Internet unless supervised by a teacher or staff member.
- The student must take full responsibility for configuring and maintaining their personal electronic devices. Priority Charter Schools will not provide technical support for these devices.
- When personal electronic devices are not in the student's possession, the student must secure them. Priority Charter Schools will not store, nor will it accept responsibility for storing, any student's personal electronic device on school grounds. Personal electronic devices must go home with students daily.

Privacy and Security

Students are expected to use Priority Charter Schools' technology resources responsibly and in a safe and secure manner, regardless of whether such technology is accessed using a school-issued or personal electronic device. Students shall not share their individual logins, passwords, or access to Priority Charter Schools' technology with others without the prior approval of a classroom teacher or administrator. Students shall sign off or log off all Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' 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. Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration.
2. Any campus-based disciplinary consequence, including suspension, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
3. Suspension may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
4. Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used Priority Charter Schools' Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student's work files.

Violations of law may also result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by Priority Charter Schools.

Limitations of Liability

Priority Charter Schools makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the technology resources it provides to students through Priority Charter Schools provided and/or a student's personal electronic device. Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools makes no representations, and denies responsibility for, the accuracy or quality of the information. In exchange for being allowed to use Priority Charter Schools' technology resources, students and their parents hereby release Priority Charter Schools, its directors, employees, and representatives from any and all claims for damages that arise from the intentional or neglectful misuse of Priority Charter Schools' technology resources by the student.

Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form

I have read and agree to abide by Priority Charter Schools' 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 Priority Charter Schools' Student Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. Priority Charter Schools has taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for Priority Charter Schools to restrict access to all controversial materials, and I will not hold Priority Charter Schools 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 Date

Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form

Electronic communications at school and at school-related functions are subject to regulation by Priority Charter Schools.

This Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form grants authority and permission to Priority Charter Schools 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, pagers, PDAs, and pocket 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 or use such 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:

- The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, PDAs, and other electronic communication devices by a student on school property or at school-related events is subject to regulation by Priority Charter Schools.
- If a student possesses such devices on school property or while attending school-related events, Priority Charter Schools 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 an electronic communication device used or possessed in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation is subject to confiscation and that Priority Charter Schools is not liable for any loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

SIGNATURE LINES AND DATES

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of student)

_____
(Printed name of student)

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of parent/guardian)

Food Allergy Notification Form

Dear Parents,

Priority Charter Schools is required by law to request, at the time of enrollment, that the parent or guardian of each student attending Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools to take necessary precautions for your child's safety.

"Severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body 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. Priority Charter Schools 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:**

Priority Charter Schools 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. **Priority Charter Schools 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 Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date form received by Priority Charter Schools: _____

Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

Our signatures below acknowledges that Priority Charter Schools 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 Priority Charter Schools, 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: _____