



# **FAMILY AND STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2021-22

Last approved on 9.9.20

Dear Promesa Academy Founding Families,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year! This group of Promesa Academy's families is an incredibly special one - you are our founding families and your children will forever be the first group of students to ever attend Promesa! Together, we will spend this year redefining what school can and should look like to best meet the needs of your children and ensure that they are loved, respected, and supported every day. We promise that we will do everything in our capacity to deliver on **our 'promise' of an excellent education for your child.**

From the very beginning, it has been our goal to co-found Promesa with our families and community and we look forward to working together for many years to come as we continue to build out and refine the vision for our school.

One piece of ensuring your child's success is to make sure that we are all aligned on the terms under which our school operates. This Family Handbook ("the Handbook") is designed to help us accomplish this goal. The Handbook is an overview of the school's goals, services, and rules. It is an essential reference book describing what we expect of our parents/guardians and students and what they can expect of us, the school.

We ask our families to review the entire Handbook with their children and to keep it as a reference during the school year. Families or students with questions about the material in this Handbook should contact the main office.

We are beyond grateful that you have agreed to join our founding community and look forward to building Promesa with you.

With love and gratitude,

The Promesa Academy Team

## Promesa Academy Overview

### Our Design Pillars

At Promesa Academy, our focus is supporting, loving, and growing children. Our core pillars define how we will provide our future students with an engaging, inspirational, and nurturing learning environment that will cultivate their lifelong love for learning.

- a. **Teacher Specialization** - We believe that students learn the most when taught by teachers who are experts in their subject matter. At Promesa Academy, we recognize that elementary education is the foundation and determiner for students' future success in middle and high school and college, and as a result, we will ensure that our students have teachers who are deeply knowledgeable and passionate about the subjects they teach. Specialization also benefits our teachers who will be able to focus on subjects about which they are passionate and well-trained; that enthusiasm and preparation will carry into their classes and propel their students' success.
- b. **Creating Authentic Learning Experiences** - We believe that to truly engage students in the academics they are learning inside of the classroom, we need to also expose them to how the content they learn is relevant to the world beyond the classroom. Too often students ask the question, "When will I ever use this?" as they lack engagement in the material they are being taught. At Promesa Academy, we will design learning experiences so that our students are aware of the importance and relevance of the material they are being taught.
- c. **School-Family-Community Partnerships** - At Promesa Academy, we feel privileged to serve the families of San Antonio and will proactively build supportive and productive relationships with families and the community. We strongly believe in engaging our surrounding community and will partner with local organizations to offer extracurricular and enrichment activities, as well as much needed resources for our families.
- d. **Nurturing the Whole Child** - It is too often the case that public schools in our most underserved communities resort to punitive disciplinary practices. For children who are already living with trauma and are from challenging communities, this approach to discipline can make even their schooling environment feel unsafe. We believe that relationships should be at the foundations of our classrooms. We will work to build a strong sense of both classroom and schoolwide community and to develop our students' social-emotional learning skills to help our students grow into caring, respectful, responsible members of our community.

# FAMILY AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section 1: General Information</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Statement of Non-Discrimination	7
1.1.1 Prohibited Harassment	7
1.1.2 Sexual Harassment	7
1.1.3 Reporting Procedures	8
1.1.4 Confidentiality	9
1.1.5 Appeal	9
1.2 Attendance	10
1.2.1 School Operating Hours	10
1.2.2 Daily Attendance	10
1.2.3 Regular Attendance Hours	10
1.2.4 Tardies	10
1.2.5 Dismissal	10
1.2.6 Leaving School Early	11
1.2.7 Afterschool Activities	11
1.2.8 Types of Absences	11
1.2.9 Compulsory Attendance	12
1.3 Withdrawing from School	13
1.3.1 Involuntary Withdrawal	13
1.4 School Uniform Policy	13
1.4.1. Uniform Policy/Dress Code Violations	13
1.5. Student Fees	14
1.6 Lost and Found	14
1.7 Food Services	14
1.8 Use of Personal Electronics	15
1.9 Distribution of Published Materials or Documents	15
1.9.1 School Materials	15
1.9.2 Non-School Materials	16
1.9.3 Non-Student Non-School Materials	16
1.10 Fundraising	17
1.11 Sales	17
1.12 School Transportation	17
1.12.1 AM Drop-Off/PM Pick-Up	17
1.12.2 Bus Stops	18
1.12.3 Parent/Guardian Conduct at Bus Stop	18
1.12.4 Student Conduct	18

1.12.5 Bus Equipment	18
1.13 Field Trips	18
<b>Section 2: Especially for Parents/Guardians</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Parent/Guardian Involvement	19
2.2 Parent/Guardian Volunteers	19
2.3 Criminal Background Check	19
2.4 Volunteer Expectations of Students, Parents/Guardians, and Promesa Academy	19
2.5 School and Classroom Visits	20
2.6 Contacting Your Child	20
2.7 Visitors	20
2.8 Parent/Guardian or Student Concerns and Complaints	20
<b>Section 3: Student Health and Safety</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1 Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco-Free Campus	21
3.2 Bacterial Meningitis	21
3.3 Communicable Diseases	22
3.4 Immunization	23
3.5 Medical Emergencies	24
3.6 Illnesses During the School Day	24
3.7 Lice	25
3.8 Administration of Medication	25
3.9 Fitness Testing	26
3.10 Dyslexia and Related Disorders	26
3.11 Vision and Hearing Screenings	26
3.12 Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying	27
3.13 Law Enforcement Agencies	28
3.14 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs	29
3.15 Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Students	29
Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children	30
3.16 Interrogation and Searches	32
3.17 Vehicles on Campus	32
3.18 Procedures for Use of Restraint	33
3.19 Emergency Drills	33
3.20 Emergency Closings	33
3.21 Pest Control Information	33
3.22 Weapons Prohibition	33
3.23 Concealed Handgun Prohibition	34
<b>Section 4: Academics and Grading</b>	<b>35</b>

4.1 Homework Policy	35
4.2 ESL Services	35
4.3 Special Education Services	35
4.3.1 Options And Requirements For Providing Assistance To Students Who Have Learning Difficulties Or Who Need Or May Need Special Education Services	36
4.4 Section 504 Services	37
4.5 Communicating Progress to Families and Students	37
4.6 Teacher Conferences	38
4.7 Promotion and Retention	38
4.8 Academic Integrity	38
4.9 Testing	38
<b>Section 5: Student Code of Conduct</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1 Our Approach to Behavior Management	40
5.2 Conscious Discipline at Promesa	40
5.3 Behavior Management Matrix	41
5.4 Suspensions or Expulsions	43
5.4.1 Notice to the Family	44
5.4.2 Hearing Before Chief Executive Officer or Principal	44
5.4.3 Appeal to the Board of Directors	45
5.4.4 Emergency Placement and Expulsion	45
5.5 Placement of Students with Disabilities	45
5.6 Gun-Free Schools Act	45
<b>Section 6. Student Use of Technology</b>	<b>46</b>
Section 6.1 Student Safety and Acceptable Use	46
Section 6.2 Monitored Use	46
Section 6.3 Vandalism	46
Section 6.4 Technology Damage Agreement	47
Section 6.5 Student Accounts	47
<b>Family and Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form</b>	<b>48</b>

## **Section 1: General Information**

### **1.1 Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Promesa Academy is committed to actively supporting equality for all persons. Promesa Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or relationship or association with an individual with a disability in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Board of Directors has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors. The school prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The school also prohibits dating , as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of school policy.

#### ***1.1.1 Prohibited Harassment***

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects the 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 harassment 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.

#### ***1.1.2 Sexual Harassment***

In compliance with the requirements of Title IX, the school does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The school does not tolerate sexual harassment of a

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

Sexual harassment of a student by a school employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- A school employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
  - Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
  - Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects the 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 sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

### **1.1.3 Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment or believes that another student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. Alternatively, a student may report prohibited harassment directly to one of the officials below:

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the CEO who acts as the Title IX Coordinator. Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the Special Education teachers who is the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

The CEO/Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of school compliance with all other anti-discrimination laws.

A student shall not be required to report prohibited harassment to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX Coordinator or ADA/Section 504 Coordinator may be directed to the CEO/Superintendent. A report against the CEO/Superintendent may be made to any member of the Board of Directors. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

After receiving a complaint of sexual harassment, the school may, but need not, require the student to prepare a written report. Oral complaints will be reduced to written form. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Title IX Coordinator or other authorized school official shall promptly authorize and undertake an investigation. When appropriate, the school may take interim action to avoid additional opportunities for harassment. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and any others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations.

The investigator will prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the Title IX Coordinator or other school official overseeing the investigation. If the results of the investigation establish that prohibited harassment occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the harassment and prevent its recurrence. The school may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

#### ***1.1.4 Confidentiality***

To the greatest extent possible, the school shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

#### ***1.1.5 Appeal***

A student or parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the school's grievance procedure. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

## **1.2 Attendance**

### **1.2.1 School Operating Hours**

The school's main office is open from 7:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 7:15 a.m. until 2:15 p.m. on Fridays. Classes begin at 7:45 a.m. every day. Classes will be dismissed between 3:45-4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 2:15 p.m. on Fridays.

### **1.2.2 Daily Attendance**

Attendance at school is vital to a student's academic and social progress and success. Regular attendance allows children to develop regular routines, meaningful connections with staff and other students, and invaluable social and emotional skills. We ask that families try their best to schedule appointments with doctors or other specialists during vacation periods, after school hours, or on weekends whenever possible.

### **1.2.3 Regular Attendance Hours**

We ask that students not arrive on campus before 7:15 a.m. unless they are a part of an activity organized by the school. Students can arrive anytime between 7:15-7:45am for breakfast and classes will begin at 7:45am.

### **1.2.4 Tardies**

Students reporting to school after 7:45 a.m. will be considered tardy. If a student is tardy, he/she must enter through the school's front entrance and report to the main office to obtain a tardy pass. Parents/guardians of students receiving an excessive number of tardies in a nine-week period will be requested to meet with our administrative team so that we can collaboratively find solutions to ensure that your child is not missing out on valuable learning opportunities.

### **1.2.5 Dismissal**

Students will be dismissed between 3:45-4:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and between 1:45-2:00 p.m. on Fridays. The front office will close at 4:15 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and at 2:15 p.m. on Fridays.

Students may not remain on school grounds after dismissal unless they are participating in a school-sanctioned after-school activity under the direct supervision of a faculty member. Students staying for tutoring, detentions, make-up work, etc. need to have made prior arrangements for transportation.

### **1.2.6 Leaving School Early**

Checking your child out of school before 3:45 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays or before 1:45 p.m. on Fridays counts as a “Leave Early” notation on your child’s truancy record. It is considered unexcused unless a medical note is provided from a doctor or dentist stating your child had a medical appointment during a time period that warranted leaving early.

Students may leave school early for the following reasons:

1. A dental or medical appointment
2. An emergency
3. A reason excused by an administrator

To leave school early and for it to be counted as an Excused “Leave Early”, students must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Parent/guardian will report to the front office with a reason for early release.
2. The Front Office Coordinator will escort the child to the office, where the parent/guardian will sign out the child.
3. Upon return to the campus (same day or immediate next school day), the student must present a provider’s note to the front office. The note must contain the name of the health care provider and a phone number, which may be used for verification.

Unexcused “Leave Early” notations are considered missing part of a school day and may count towards the 10 unexcused absences that trigger a truancy filing.

### **1.2.7 Afterschool Activities**

Students are highly encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities, many of which occur after-school. Students remaining on campus after regular school hours for co-curricular activities must be under the direct supervision of a staff member/sponsor. Students participating in after-school activities must be picked up within 15 minutes of the scheduled completion time for that activity.

### **1.2.8 Types of Absences**

Promesa Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused.

1. Excused Absences: An absence will be considered excused if the absence is for one or more of the following reasons *and is accompanied by official documentation*:

- a. Appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application for United States citizenship;
- b. Documented health care appointments, if the student begins classes or returns to school on the same day as the appointment;
- c. Family emergency;
- d. Observing religious holidays;
- e. Required screening, diagnosis, and treatment for Medicaid-eligible students;
- f. Serving as an election clerk;
- g. Taking part in a student's United States naturalization oath ceremony; or
- h. Temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the Principal or the student's teacher.

Any student participating in an activity listed above will be allowed one day's excused absence for traveling to the activity and one day's excused absence for returning from the activity.

2. Unexcused Absences: Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Failure to bring a an official doctor's note or other official documentation within two school days following an absence;
  - b. Leaving school without the permission of the Campus Administrator or other administrator;
  - c. Personal business; and
  - d. Vacations.

### **1.2.9 Compulsory Attendance**

Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents/guardians:

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of six, or who is younger than six and has been previously enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached age 18, must attend school unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. If a student is absent from school for ten or more days or parts of days without permission within a six-month period in any one school year or is absent for three or more days or parts of days without permission within a four-week period, the school may be required to report that parent/guardian for truancy.

It is our hope to be able to partner with families to avoid having to report families for truancy. If a family is facing attendance challenges, we hope that you will give us a chance to work with you to ensure that you have the resources you need to support your child.

### **1.3 Withdrawing from School**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or legal guardian. The school requests notice from the parent/guardian at minimum 48 hours in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent/guardian may obtain information regarding the withdrawal process from the front office.

#### ***1.3.1 Involuntary Withdrawal***

The school may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for nonattendance under the following conditions:

1. The student has been absent ten consecutive school days; and
2. Repeated efforts to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

### **1.4 School Uniform Policy**

At Promesa, we strive to create a positive school culture for all of our students. We reached out to our future families to determine whether they support a uniform policy and the majority of our families expressed support for a uniform policy that also allows for some flexibility.

Our uniform policy can be found here: [Promesa Academy Uniform Guidelines](#)

Students are expected to be in uniforms on Mondays-Thursday and every Friday will be a free dress day.

#### ***1.4.1. Uniform Policy/Dress Code Violations***

Students may not remain at school dressed in a manner that (1) creates a safety hazard for the student or other students and/or (2) constitutes a serious and unnecessary distraction to the learning process, and/or (3) tends to disrupt campus order. Students will be required to modify their clothing and or apparel in such a manner that it no longer violates this policy. If necessary, the parent/guardian will be called to bring the student the proper attire.

#### **Inappropriate dress includes, but is not limited to:**

See-through clothing, tank-tops, tops that are low cut or do not cover the midriff, gang-related clothing, clothing advertising or depicting tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or offensive/obscene language or pictures.

Ripped or torn clothing is not allowed. Students should not wear sandals, flip-flops, roller shoes,

child-size heels, or dressy shoes, as these types of shoes do not provide protection and could be a safety hazard.

The Principal possesses final discretion in determining appropriate dress and appearance. Failure to adhere to established dress codes will result in a meeting with the parent/guardian.

### **1.5. Student Fees**

As a public charter school, we will provide our families with the resources that their children need to be successful at Promesa. There may, however, be times when a family is required to pay a fee. These include:

- a. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees for extracurricular activities.
- b. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, or yearbooks.
- c. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student.
- d. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- e. A fee for lost or damaged technology due to negligence.
- f. A fee for damaged school property due to vandalism.
- g. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

The school may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent/guardian are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver must be made in writing to the main office and include evidence of the inability to pay.

### **1.6 Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found is located in the main office. Please label all removable items, such as, clothing, lunch boxes and books with your child's name. Unclaimed and unlabeled articles are donated to a local charity at the end of each quarter.

### **1.7 Food Services**

Promesa Academy participates in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) which ensure that nutritional food is provided to all our students following state and federal nutrition guidelines.

Menus are posted monthly on the Promesa Academy website, Facebook page, and in the cafeteria. They may also be obtained at the school's front office.

Free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches are available. For meal benefit assistance, you must submit a meal application each school year. A paper application is available in the school office. For meal application assistance, you may contact the Food Service Manager at [creyes@promesaacademy.org](mailto:creyes@promesaacademy.org) or (512) 521-9375. Information about a student's participation is confidential.

If your child has special dietary needs, please communicate those needs to the Food Service Manager. We have vegetarian and allergy-friendly meals upon request. Promesa Academy's meal charge policy can be found [here](#).

### **1.8 Use of Personal Electronics**

The use of electronic devices during school hours is prohibited. All electronic devices must be stored and turned off and out of sight during the school day. Cellular phones may be used to communicate with parents/guardians before and after school. If a school employee observes a student with any electronic or telecommunications device (including a cell phone) during the school day, the employee will collect the item and turn it into the main office. This means that all phones should be stored in the student's bag or backpack while at school. If a student and parent/guardian have executed a waiver permitting the student to possess an electronic communication device at school, school officials may power on and search the 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.

When a device is confiscated, the school will release it to the parent/guardian at the end of the day. Repeated offenses will trigger a meeting with the administrative team in which an agreement will be put in place with the family to restrict this from reoccurring in the future.

Promesa Academy will not be responsible for damage, loss, or theft of any personal electronic or confiscated items brought to campus.

### **1.9 Distribution of Published Materials or Documents**

#### ***1.9.1 School Materials***

Publications prepared by, and for, the school may be posted or distributed with prior approval by a member of the Promesa Academy Leadership Team. Such items may include school posters, brochures, etc. The school newsletters and the yearbook are available to all students.

### **1.9.2 Non-School Materials**

Approval must be obtained from the Promesa Academy Leadership Team 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 school property if:

- a. The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
- b. The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
- c. The materials promote illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances.
- d. The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.
- e. The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
- f. The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
- g. 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.
- h. There is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others.

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

### **1.9.3 Non-Student Non-School Materials**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials over which Promesa Academy does not exercise control shall not be sold, circulated, or distributed by persons or groups not associated with the school or a school support group on the school premises unless the person or group obtains specific prior approval from the Superintendent. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual. The requestor may appeal the Superintendent's decision in accordance with school policy.

## **1.10 Fundraising**

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent/guardian groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be submitted to the Director of Operations, at least ten days before the event. Fundraising activities not approved by the Director of Operations are not permitted on school property.

## **1.11 Sales**

Advertising may be permitted for approved school-related activities. This may include school newspapers, yearbooks, and other fundraising projects. Advertising material that promotes the use of alcohol and/or tobacco is strictly prohibited. No person may display, solicit, or sell any item or service to students or school personnel while on school property, at school-sponsored events, or on school transportation without the written permission of the Promesa Leadership Team.

## **1.12 School Transportation**

Promesa Academy makes every effort to make school bus transportation available to any student who needs transportation in order to be able to access our school. Student misconduct while riding in a school vehicle will be dealt with in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, student bus riding privileges may be suspended.

If a special needs student is receiving bus transportation as a result of an Individual Education Plan (IEP), the Admissions Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee will have discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences for improper behavior in a school vehicle.

### ***1.12.1 AM Drop-Off/PM Pick-Up***

If dropping off and/or picking-up student(s), parents/guardians should:

- a. Arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes before the scheduled time.
- b. Park in designated parking spaces or along the street in an organized way (please do not block driveways) .
- c. Make sure the student is waiting at the stop in the AM, if a student is still getting out of the car when the bus arrives they will miss the bus.
- d. Know that the bus will leave 1 minute after the scheduled time and will not stop for late students.

### **1.12.2 Bus Stops**

Buses will only stop at designated bus stops. They cannot stop in other places to pick-up or drop-off students because other locations might not be safe and secure for loading and unloading.

### **1.12.3 Parent/Guardian Conduct at Bus Stop**

All of the following actions create extremely dangerous situations for our students, so please do not:

- a. Pull a car in front of the bus for any reason or honk at the bus to get it to stop.
- b. Try to go around the bus while students are still loading/unloading or while the bus is trying to leave.
- c. Get on the bus. Legally only authorized school and bus company personnel may board the bus.

### **1.12.4 Student Conduct**

Students riding the bus are expected to follow the rules below:

- a. Remain seated in an assigned seat with all body parts out of the aisle, inside the bus, and away from others.
- b. Follow all of the bus driver's directions.
- c. Keep all sharp objects (e.g. pencils, pens, scissors, etc.) and food inside their backpack.
- d. Use appropriate volume when speaking.

### **1.12.5 Bus Equipment**

Every bus is equipped with GPS tracking and video/audio recording units. By law, only authorized school and bus company personnel can request and view bus video footage.

## **1.13 Field Trips**

At Promesa, we embrace the opportunity to connect our students to the community around them. Parent/guardian permission for field trips and the emergency care consent form must be completed prior to your child's participation in any field trip.

## Section 2: Especially for Parents/Guardians

### 2.1 Parent/Guardian Involvement

Engaged parents/guardians help make Promesa Academy a special place. We will continually seek to involve parents/guardians and other family members in every aspect of your child's educational process and will ensure that our doors are always open to parent/guardian volunteers and visits.

### 2.2 Parent/Guardian Volunteers

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to volunteer each school year in support of the school, its mission and activities. More information on the school's volunteer program, including guidelines and volunteer responsibilities, are available from the front office.

### 2.3 Criminal Background Check

All volunteers, including parent/guardian volunteers, are subject to a criminal background check prior to volunteering with the school.

### 2.4 Volunteer Expectations of Students, Parents/Guardians, and Promesa Academy

As volunteers, you are an essential part of Promesa Academy. The time and energy you give to our school greatly benefits all students. Volunteering is a bridge in building understanding and communication between our school and our community.

The purpose of our volunteer program is to provide positive adult role models and support for students in classrooms, give individualized assistance, and enrich our students' educational experiences.

It is asked that parents/guardians agree to the following guidelines when volunteering:

**“As a parent/guardian volunteer at Promesa Academy, I agree that it is my responsibility to preserve and protect the right of privacy of any child that I observe, or have contact within the course of my work at school. I will protect the confidentiality of children by not discussing them with others. I will contact only the child's teachers if I have pertinent information that must be shared.”**

- 1) The sign-in sheet must be signed when attending any meetings.
- 2) Minors/students may not volunteer on behalf of parents/guardians.

All visitors and parent/guardian volunteers must report to the front office and sign in, even if you have a scheduled meeting. Please wear one of our visitor badges as well. This will ensure a safe school environment for all our students.

### **2.5 School and Classroom Visits**

Promesa Academy will continually seek to involve parents/guardians and other family members in every aspect of their child's educational process, including visits to the school or your student's classroom. Visiting classrooms is encouraged. To visit a classroom during instructional time, please reach out to the teacher at least 48 hours in advance to arrange the visit. Upon departure from the school, all visitors must sign-out at the central administrative office and return the visitor's badge.

### **2.6 Contacting Your Child**

It is the policy of Promesa Academy to take messages for teachers and students while they are in class. Calling a teacher or student out of class is disruptive to the learning process. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please suggest times when the teacher may return your call. In cases of emergency, a staff member will pass on a message and your child will return your call as soon as possible.

### **2.7 Visitors**

All visitors must sign in with the Front Office Coordinator in the central administrative office and wear a visitor's badge at all times while on campus. All visitors, including parents/guardians, must present a form of identification (driver's license or other form of identification issued by a governmental entity containing the person's photograph). Visitors participating in special programs that have been invited to the school (e.g. college representatives, military recruiters, etc.) are required to comply with the school's rules and policies regarding visitors.

### **2.8 Parent/Guardian or Student Concerns and Complaints**

When a parent/guardian, student, or a member of the public has a complaint or concern regarding Promesa Academy, the individual shall first bring the complaint or concern in writing to the Principal. The complaint must be brought within 15 school days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The Principal must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The Principal must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision in writing within 10 days of the Principal's receipt of the complaint.

## Section 3: Student Health and Safety

### 3.1 Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco-Free Campus

In order to provide a safe environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property.

Smoking and using smokeless tobacco are not permitted in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near school property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned events off school property. Students may not possess tobacco products at any of the locations or activities listed above. All violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law.

The school believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, the school prohibits the use, manufacture, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs or a controlled substance by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law.

### 3.2 Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

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

**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 meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, 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. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

**How is bacterial meningitis spread?** — Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or 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). The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ 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?** — Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of people you kiss. While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

**Where can you get more information?** — Your school administrators, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Texas Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

### **3.3 Communicable Diseases**

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents/guardians of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the Director of Operations so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease are alerted. Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods:

- 1) 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;

- 2) Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- 3) Meeting readmission criteria as established by the Commissioner of Health.

Written permission from a physician is required after surgery, stitches, casts, orthopedic appliances, or previous illnesses requiring hospitalization.

### **3.4 Immunization**

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 most recent “Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K-12” document. This reference and more information about school vaccine requirements are available at the Texas Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”) website: [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com)—click on the link for “School & Child-Care Immunization Requirements”).

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

**Provisional Enrollment** — A student may be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he or she transfers from one Texas school to another, and is awaiting the transfer of immunization records.

A student may be enrolled provisionally 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 complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school. The school 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 the school shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. The school shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

**Exclusions from Immunization Requirements** — Exclusions from immunization compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, 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 child or any member of the child'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 exclusion from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed DSHS affidavit must be presented by the student's parent/guardian, stating that the student's parent/guardian declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. Information for obtaining an affidavit for exclusion from immunization requirements is available at [www.ImmunizeTexas.com](http://www.ImmunizeTexas.com) (click on the link for "School & Child-Care Immunization Requirements"). The official DSHS affidavit form must be notarized and submitted to the school office within 90 days from the date it is notarized. The school will accept only official DSHS affidavit forms developed and issued by DSHS; no other forms or reproductions will be allowed. The student who has 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.

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

**Immunization Records Reporting** — The school's record of your student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and the Texas Department of Health and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of your student to those schools.

### **3.5 Medical Emergencies**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity, when the parent/guardian cannot be reached, school employees will seek emergency medical treatment unless a parent/guardian has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization.

### **3.6 Illnesses During the School Day**

Students becoming ill or injured during the school day are directed to report to the Front Office Coordinator. The Principal reserves the right to send any student home for medical issues that render the student incapable of continuing their day.

### **3.7 Lice**

Lice infestations are a common occurrence among school-aged children. To contain the spread of lice, parents/guardians who suspect their child has lice or has been exposed to lice should contact the child's teacher or the Director of Operations immediately. A student found to have head lice is sent home for treatment and will be allowed to return to school after being treated and proof of treatment has been presented to the Director of Operations.

### **3.8 Administration of Medication**

Unless otherwise authorized or described below, school employees and volunteers are prohibited from administering medications to students, including vitamins and food supplements. Medication should be administered outside of school hours, if possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school under the following circumstances:

- 1) Nonprescription medication brought to school must be submitted to the school by a parent/guardian 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.
- 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 bags or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
- 4) If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent/guardian and will be administered only if required by the student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- 5) Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to the school, 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, the school may administer a nonprescription medication to a student, but only in accordance with the guidelines developed by the school and when the parent/guardian 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/guardian. Parents/guardians are responsible for advising the school Front Office Coordinator that a medication has been discontinued.

**Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication** — Asthma and anaphylaxis are life-threatening conditions, and in accordance with recommendations from the American Lung Association and Texas Education Code § 38.015, students with those conditions are entitled to possess and self-administer prescription medication while on school property or at school-related events.

Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires that the student has demonstrated his or her ability to self-administer the medication to the student's physician or other licensed health care provider as well as school personnel.

Requirements also include written authorization from the student's parent/guardian 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 an inhaler device upon request.

### **3.9 Fitness Testing**

According to requirements under state law, the school will annually assess the physical fitness of students. The school is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other conditions identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

**Excuses from Physical Education** — Any child who is to be excused, for reasons of health, from physical education or any other normal school activity, must bring a note from home to the school office stating the reason why and the duration of the excuse. This note will be sent to the appropriate teacher.

### **3.10 Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

From time to time, students may be screened and treated for dyslexia and other related disorders in accordance with programs, rules, and standards approved by the State of Texas. Parents/guardians will be notified should the school determine a need to identify or assist a student diagnosed with dyslexia or related disorder.

### **3.11 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 Kindergarten (within 120 days of admission), and 1st and 3rd grade levels (before the end of the school year) shall be screened for vision and hearing problems.

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 consent from a parent/guardian.

**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/guardian, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the front office on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **3.12 Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying**

Promesa is committed to creating a nurturing school culture that promotes positive interpersonal and intergroup relations and respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. The ability of students to learn and meet high academic standards and the school community's ability to educate its students are compromised when students engage in discrimination or harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior toward other students. The School prohibits bullying as defined by this policy, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written, or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the school that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically or emotionally 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; or
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described above is considered bullying if the conduct:

- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

The school also prohibits cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to engage in bullying or intimidation in or out of school.

**Reporting Procedures** — Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Campus Leadership Team, or a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. A

report may be made orally or in writing. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the Campus Leadership Team.

**Investigation of Report** — The Principal shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment, and if so proceed under that policy instead. The Principal 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.

The Principal shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The school may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying under this policy.

**Confidentiality** — To the greatest extent possible, the school shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

**Appeal** — A student or parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the school's grievance procedure.

### **3.13 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 will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The Principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The Principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents/guardians unless the interviewer raises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The Principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.

**Students Taken Into Custody** — State law requires the school to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.

- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in Section 262.104 of the Texas Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

**Staff Notification** — The school is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

### **3.14 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

Promesa Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. The school also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse. 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 Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

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

### **3.15 Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Students**

**What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?** — The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

**What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?** — Under state law, “other maltreatment” of a child includes “abuse” or “neglect,” as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

**Reporting Obligation** — Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or, in non-emergency situations only, <http://www.txabusehotline.org>.
- The San Antonio Police Department at **210-207-7273**
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

The school has established the following Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse of Children (the “Plan”).

### **Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children**

**For Teachers** — The school annually trains teachers in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training will include contents of board policy and is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration.

**For Students** — The Central Leadership Team or school counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse 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 all students.

**For Parents/Guardians** — Parents/Guardians must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware, as a parent/guardian or other trusted adult, that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent/guardian or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents/guardians 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. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should report to the appropriate authorities.

Also remember that parents/guardians 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.

The Principal or designee will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. DFPS also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. The Bexar County location may be contacted at (210) 270-4000. Services available in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/programs\\_available\\_in\\_your\\_county/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/programs_available_in_your_county/)

**Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment** — Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits
- Depression or irritability
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking
- Developing fear of certain places or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Using new or adult words for body parts
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity
- Thinking of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use

Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason
- Difficulty in walking or sitting

- Stained or bloody underwear
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area
- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around the mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Signs often 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.

### **3.16 Interrogation and Searches**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that the school 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. Express or implied coercion – such as threatening to contact parents/guardians or police – invalidates apparent 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 reasonable related to the circumstances justifying the search; i.e., the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

### **3.17 Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of the school 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 owner/driver of the vehicle shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to

a search of the vehicle. If the owner/driver refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, the school may contact the student's parents/guardians and/or law enforcement officials. A student or the owner/driver of the vehicle 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.

### **3.18 Procedures for Use of Restraint**

At Promesa, we work to provide an environment in which children feel safe, supported, and loved by every adult. Although we hope to never have to restrain a child, there may be times when a child needs to be restrained to protect the child or those around them. In these cases, only staff trained to do so will be allowed to restrain the child, using the minimum force necessary.

Any use of restraint by trained staff is 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

### **3.19 Emergency Drills**

Fire and other emergency drills are conducted at least once a semester.

### **3.20 Emergency Closings**

Promesa Academy will follow the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) in our school closure decisions for weather-related events. Any closures for weather will be broadcast on local television stations.

The school may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. Any emergency closures will be posted on the school's social media and school officials will contact families via email, text messages, and/or phone calls.

### **3.21 Pest Control Information**

The school periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Students may not re-enter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Director of Operations.

### **3.22 Weapons Prohibition**

Promesa Academy Public Schools prohibits the use or possession of any firearm, illegal knife, club, or other weapon while on the premises of the school or any school grounds or building in which a school activity is being conducted.

### **3.23 Concealed Handgun Prohibition**

Promesa Academy prohibits the use or possession of a concealed handgun on school campus and property, even if the handgun is carried by a licensed handgun holder.

## **Section 4: Academics and Grading**

### **4.1 Homework Policy**

At Promesa, we want our students to be able to be children and play and spend time with their families outside of school and do not want to put additional and unnecessary pressure on our families to have to complete homework with their children after school hours. We believe that if we do our job right as educators, our students will be excited about continuing the conversations about what they are learning at home and will want to further explore what they're learning in class without being forced to do homework.

Very little, if any, homework will be mandated for our students. We will encourage our students to spend time reading at home as we hope to set a culture at our school where students love reading. We will also provide additional work for students who are eager to extend their learning outside of school.

### **4.2 ESL Services**

In keeping with state and federal law, we offer English as a Second Language ("ESL") services at all appropriate grade levels for English language learners who have a home language other than English. The school's goal is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Tests to qualify for placement in the program. If test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent/guardian approval) is provided additional English language support.

### **4.3 Special Education Services**

The school has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5–21 years of age and who fall within the school's jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your child has a disability, please contact our special education teacher, Neah Galloway (ngalloway@promesaacademy.org) for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which is developed by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student's disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

If a parent/guardian disagrees and the ARD committee does not reach mutual agreement with the subsequent IEP, they have a right to request an additional ARD meeting, with the parent/guardian agreeing to a recess of not more than 10 school days unless the parties mutually agree on an extended timeline. During the recess the members shall consider alternatives, gather additional data, and/or obtain additional resource persons to enable them to reach mutual agreement. This recess is not required when the student's presence on the campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or others or when the student has committed an expellable offense or an offense which may lead to a placement in an alternative education program (AEP). If the recess is declined by the parents/guardians or adult student, or if after the recess the ARD committee still cannot reach mutual agreement, the district shall implement the IEP that it has determined to be appropriate for the student. When a district implements an IEP with which the parent/guardian disagrees or the adult student disagrees, the district shall provide written notice to the parent/guardian or the adult student.

If an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is conducted at the district's expense, Promesa Academy will not pay unreasonable charges for the evaluation. An unreasonably excessive fee is one that is more than 25% above the prevailing fees in the area as established in the Medicaid/Medicare Service Provider Manual for the specific evaluation being considered. In addition, Promesa Academy's criteria for IEEs typically limits the selection of evaluators to a 75 mile radius.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination of both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents/Guardians of students with Disabilities, can be obtained from the Director of Special Education or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: [www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/)

#### ***4.3.1 Options And Requirements For Providing Assistance To Students Who Have Learning Difficulties Or Who Need Or May Need Special Education Services***

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent/guardian may contact the special education teacher to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system may link students to a variety of support options, including potential referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in a regular classroom must be considered for, and provided service from, all tutorial, compensatory, and other support services prior to a referral for special education services.

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

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

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

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

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

#### **4.4 Section 504 Services**

Promesa Academy provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability. A "student with a disability" is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities, has a record of having such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. A student with a disability is "qualified" if he or she is between the

ages of three and 21, inclusive.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless the school demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, the school shall comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, the school shall ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a “physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents/guardians or teachers should contact our special education teacher for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services. For further information, please contact the Section 504 Coordinator of your campus.

#### **4.5 Communicating Progress to Families and Students**

Students grow and learn every day and it is our hope at Promesa to capture our students’ growth and share it with our families regularly through Seesaw, emails, calls, and our social media posts. Promesa will prepare formal progress reports for our parents twice annually, at the end of each semester. These reports will include narratives and a description of your child’s progress towards their goals. We do not grade children on a 0-100 or A-F scale as we firmly believe that your child’s learning cannot be captured in a single number or letter. Instead, we write reports that celebrate your child’s growth and identify areas in which we believe we need to further support your child.

#### **4.6 Teacher Conferences**

Informal conferences may be scheduled with teachers at any time during the school year and are strongly encouraged. Conferences are critical to ensure that we are partnering with families to the best of our ability. Additionally, we will reach out to schedule conferences with our families at the end of every semester to discuss progress reports.

#### **4.7 Promotion and Retention**

At Promesa, we will collaborate with our families to determine what is best for their child when considering retention. We know that the research around retention oftentimes suggests that it can have a negative, long-term impact on students, therefore before making any retention decisions, we will meet with the child’s family and primary teacher to discuss the best course of action for that

child.

The state mandates that students at certain grade levels (5th and 8th grade) will be required to pass state-mandated assessments to be promoted, however parents/guardians of students who do not perform satisfactorily on their exams will be able to participate in a grade placement committee (comprised of a parent/guardian, a teacher, a school administrator, and a special education teacher and/or ESL teacher (if applicable)) to determine if it is in the child's best interested to be retained.

#### **4.8 Academic Integrity**

Promesa Academy values academic integrity very highly and does not permit dishonesty that unfairly or improperly enhances a student's academic progress in any way. Specifically, plagiarism, defined as claiming someone else's work as your own, is treated seriously. It is our responsibility as a school to ensure that our students understand the importance of crediting others for their work and if a student is found to have plagiarized, we will have a discussion with that student and his/her parent/guardian to ensure that the student understands the implications of plagiarism.

#### **4.9 Testing**

In the spring, students in 3rd grade and above are given the STAAR Achievement Test, a standardized, criterion-referenced achievement test mandated by the state of Texas. Results are used in schoolwide and classroom instructional program planning and evaluation, to align our curriculum and teaching standards with state and national standards. Certain students may be eligible for exemptions or accommodations to state-mandated exams.

Promesa Academy believes in its curriculum. We are fully confident that, in teaching our curriculum, standardized testing will take care of itself. Please do not allow yourself or your child to become obsessed with the STAAR to the exclusion of a love of learning. While the test can be an important measuring tool, it is only one of them.

## **Section 5: Student Code of Conduct**

### **5.1 Our Approach to Behavior Management**

We deeply believe that children thrive on connection. When children feel safe and loved, they are able to function in an executive brain state and manage their own emotions and experiences with increasing success. When they are in a survival or emotional state, however, children need a safe, loving connection with an adult to learn to regulate their emotions and responses in a way that brings them back to emotional equilibrium. This being said, we also know that even as adults, it can be difficult to manage emotional triggers and stress, and we recognize that before this work can be done with our children, it must be done in ourselves. At Promesa, we are deeply committed to

developing ourselves and our staff in order to unlearn harmful ways of thinking about behavior and to allow space for personal and professional growth. The ultimate outcome is a campus where staff are responsive instead of reactive, where children are able to learn to manage themselves in healthy ways, and where everyone involved feels safe, loved, and supportive.

As a school community, we are committed to applying these policies in a fair and equitable manner so as not to disproportionately impact our students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, students who speak a native language other than English, or other at-risk students that have been historically marginalized in schools.

## **5.2 Conscious Discipline at Promesa<sup>1</sup>**

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning, school culture, and discipline. It helps teachers and administrators build schools based on the internal resources of **safety, connection, and problem solving** instead of external rewards and punishments. It is based on brain research that indicates our internal states dictate our behavior. Its goal is to provide systematic changes in schools by fostering the emotional intelligence of teachers first and children second. Simply put, as we become more emotionally intelligent, we are better equipped to create positive, healthy educational climates that help create and maintain optimal learning states. The three core components of Conscious Discipline in our school community are:

1. **Safety:** Safety, through self-regulation, enhances adults' and children's ability to recognize and manage physiological and emotional upset.
2. **Connection:** Connection, through creating a compassionate school family culture, motivates adults' and children's willingness to engage in healthy relationships, help each other be successful, and change perceptions about conflict.
3. **Problem-Solving:** Problem solving, through changing our response to conflict and upgrading social-emotional skills, boosts adults' and children's ability to adapt to changing situations.

With these components, everyday events and conflicts become opportunities to teach life skills. The social-emotional curriculum does not come from prescribed sequential lessons added to core standards; the curriculum emerges from daily challenges, acts of kindness, academic struggles, interpersonal conflicts, chronic rule breaking, and celebrations.

Here is a brief overview of how our approach using the Conscious Discipline framework at Promesa compares to traditional disciplinary models:

Traditional Discipline	Conscious Discipline
------------------------	----------------------

<sup>1</sup> Bailey, Rebecca Anne. *Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms*. Loving Guidance, 2015.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is possible to control others through environmental manipulations.</li> <li>2. Rules govern behavior.</li> <li>3. Conflict is a disruption to the learning process.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others.</li> <li>2. Connectedness governs behavior.</li> <li>3. Conflict is an opportunity to teach.</li> </ol>	
<b>Belief</b>	<b>Value it Teaches</b>	<b>Belief</b>	<b>Value it Teaches</b>
It is possible to make others change.	Failure to make others change equals failure on the teacher's part.	Changing ourselves is possible.	It is our choice whether or not to change.
When others don't do what we want, we must try to coerce them.	The more insubordinate they are, the more external power/force is expected and justified.	We are in charge of ourselves.	We can become the person we want to be.
When we succeed in making others behave, we demonstrate power and authority.	Power comes from overpowering people.	We are empowered by choosing to control ourselves instead of others.	Power comes from within.

**5.3 Behavior Management Matrix**

Our goal is to provide a positive learning environment that promotes learning and fosters a safe and caring school experience for students and staff. We fundamentally believe that all children mean well and that negative behaviors should be perceived as a call for help rather than disrespect. Our teachers and staff will intervene in ways that are aimed at addressing the root cause of behaviors and will focus on teaching new behaviors as opposed to punishing a child.

Our approach towards behavior is tailored to the individual student and varies in method and severity according to the nature of the behavior, the age of the child, and the child's history of behaviors.

When managing behaviors, our school does not:

- 1) Use zero-tolerance policies that lead to suspensions or expulsions except if required by law (for example, instances involving weapons);
- 2) Advise or encourage students or families to voluntarily leave our school in order to avoid formal disciplinary action;
- 3) Use corporal punishment;
- 4) Use restraint or seclusion for punishment.

Below is the matrix that our staff will use in addressing behaviors:

Level of Student Behavior	Descriptions	Examples	Possible Responses/Intervention
<b>Level 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Behavior that disrupts the classroom environment</li> <li>* Not following the co-created classroom commitments</li> <li>* Behavior that is generally managed with a brief intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Name calling</li> <li>* Impacting a peer's personal space</li> <li>* Inappropriate language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reteach the appropriate behavior</li> <li>* Logical consequence</li> <li>* Behavior or social contract</li> <li>* De-escalation technique</li> <li>* Peer-to-peer conversation</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Repeated Level 1 behaviors</li> <li>* Behavior that is generally managed with a brief intervention by an adult present and may include additional follow-up with support staff</li> <li>* Not following teacher directives when given more than three times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Being out of the designated area when in school</li> <li>* Physical or verbal antagonism</li> <li>* Swearing at or discriminatory statements against another person</li> <li>* Propping open secured facility or bus doors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A Level 1 response AND any of the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A check-in with a support staff such as a member of the leadership team or the counselor</li> <li>- A behavior contract</li> <li>- A meeting with the parent/guardian</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Repeated or significant incident(s) of Level 2 behaviors within a brief timeframe</li> <li>* Putting the safety of others or the school environment at risk</li> <li>* Behaviors targeted at a person that cause harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Fighting with another student or staff with the intent to hurt</li> <li>* Physical interactions that result in harm to others</li> <li>* Threats</li> <li>* Bullying/cyber-bullying</li> <li>* Extortion</li> <li>* Possession of stolen property</li> <li>* Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Level 1-2 responses AND any of the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A formal conference with a parent/guardian</li> <li>- A counselling plan</li> <li>- A formal behavioral plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Behaviors that require alternative settings and/or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Weapons use</li> <li>* Arson or fireworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Level 3 disciplinary options or evaluation of</li> </ul>

	emergency placement	* Sexual assault * Bomb threats * Severe physical assault * Robbery	suspension/expulsion
--	---------------------	--	----------------------

## **5.4 Suspensions or Expulsions**

We hope to never to suspend or expel students at Promesa Academy. Suspensions tell students that they are not a part of our community and do not build skill sets to actually change the behavior. They are the easy way out. At Promesa Academy we believe that it is our responsibility to ensure our students have the emotional intelligence and respect to succeed.

Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are the most serious form of disciplinary consequence and should be used only as a last resort and for legitimate educational purposes. School staff should complete the checklist below before suspending or expelling a child.

- 1. Is the offense eligible for suspension or expulsion?**
  - a. Only Level 4 offenses, as described above, are eligible for suspensions or expulsions.
- 2. Would the student's continued presence in the school cause a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning?**
  - a. Short-term suspensions are only allowed if the student's presence in school poses a threat to school safety or to other students.
- 3. Has our school staff exhausted all alternatives to suspension or expulsion?**
  - a. Suspensions or expulsions should never be used until all appropriate behavioral and other disciplinary interventions have been exhausted.
- 4. Has the student previously violated the code of conduct?**
  - a. A suspension or expulsion cannot be imposed for a first-time offense unless the behavior involved an emergency involving school safety.
- 5. Is a suspension or expulsion appropriate given the student's grade?**
  - a. Students in Kindergarten-5th grade cannot be suspended for more than three consecutive days.
  - b. Students in 6th grade and above cannot be suspended for more than five consecutive days and no more than ten in one school year.
- 6. Has school staff considered whether the child has a disability and provided all required protections?**
  - a. If a child has an IEP, procedural protections must be followed.

### ***5.4.1 Notice to the Family***

If a student's conduct warrants expulsion, the following process will be followed.

1. The Principal or designees will provide the student's parent/guardian with notice of
  - a. the reasons for disciplinary action;
  - b. the date and location for a hearing before the CEO, within five school days from the date of disciplinary action
2. The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:
  - a. May be present;
  - b. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
  - c. Shall be apprised and informed of the school's evidence;
  - d. May be accompanied by his/her parent(s)/guardian(s); and
  - e. May be represented by an attorney

#### **5.4.2 Hearing Before Chief Executive Officer or Principal**

The school shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and his/her family of the time and place for the hearing, and the school shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's family, or another adult attending the student attends. The Chief Executive Officer or Principal may audio record the hearing.

Immediately following the hearing, the Chief Executive Officer or Principal will notify the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. For a suspension, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the suspension period; and
3. The right to appeal the Chief Executive Officer'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.

#### **5.4.3 Appeal to the Board of Directors**

The student or his/her family may appeal the suspension or expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Chief Executive Officer in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Chief Executive Officer or Principal's decision. The Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Chief Executive Officer or Principal at a specially called meeting. The Board will notify the student and his/her family of its decision, in writing, within five calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final and may not be appealed.

Discipline consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an expulsion to the Board.

#### **5.4.4 Emergency Placement and Expulsion**

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, the Principal or designee may order immediate removal of the student. Immediate removal may be imposed by the Principal or designee if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from 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.

#### **5.5 Placement of Students with Disabilities**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities shall be conducted in accordance with the most current federal and state laws. A student with a disability shall not be excluded from his or her current placement pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim. Pending appeal to a special education hearing officer, a student with a disability shall remain in the present education setting, unless the school and parents agree otherwise.

#### **5.6 Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, the school 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 Chief Executive Officer or Principal 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.

### **Section 6. Student Use of Technology**

Promesa Academy is committed to utilizing the maximum potential of technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness by providing students with technology-related experiences. Recognizing the ever-changing influences of technology on all aspects of our lives, the school is dedicated to providing an integrated technological curriculum for all students.

#### **Section 6.1 Student Safety and Acceptable Use**

The school is aware that resources that are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the school's Internet access is filtered with an Internet filtering system. However, users

must recognize that it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

Users are to properly use school network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the school's mission statement. Students are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

### **Section 6.2 Monitored Use**

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated school staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the school's authorized IT Coordinator may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

### **Section 6.3 Vandalism**

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of the school's network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed as violations of school policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security are violations of school policy and administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

### **Section 6.4 Technology Damage Agreement**

Our school recognizes that with the implementation of blended learning in the curriculum, there is a need to protect the investment of the school and the interest of the students and parents/guardians. This damage fee policy pertains to all devices purchased by Promesa Academy; all student damages are treated on a case by case basis. Internal repairs are performed, but if severe enough, we work with our warranty vendor and invoice the listed parent/guardian for repayment.

Pricing below is for the repair cost and what the parent/guardian responsibility will be for each event. If a family cannot afford the repairs, we will work with that family to ensure that this does not place unnecessary financial stress on the family.

1st Breakage - Accidental or Intentional	\$75
2nd Breakage - Accidental or Intentional	\$145
3rd Breakage - Accidental or Intentional	\$294 (The full cost for a replacement)

**Section 6.5 Student Accounts**

Student accounts are active as long as the student is active in Promesa Academy. Access is lost after a withdrawal has been processed.

**Family and Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

The Family/Student Handbook, as found on Promesa Academy’s website ([www.promesaacademy.org](http://www.promesaacademy.org)), outlines the mission of the school, information related to student learning, expectations for student behavior, school policies and procedures, and other information related to student and parent/family rights. If you would like a printed version, please notify the front office at your child’s campus and a copy will be sent home.

Please review the Student and Family Handbook carefully and return this form to your child’s advisory teacher or the front office within 15 business days of receipt. A form should be filled out for each child that is enrolled at Promesa Academy and will be kept as part of his/her permanent school records.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the 2020-21 Family and Student Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein. I understand that the policies contained in the handbook may be added to, deleted, or changed at any time. All updates and/or revisions to this handbook will be sent home with your children.

-----  
Student Name & Grade

-----  
Date

-----  
Parent/Guardian Signature

-----  
Date