

Benjamin  
Independent School District  
2011-2012  
Student Handbook



Reviewed by the Benjamin ISD Board of Trustees  
August 8, 2011

# **BENJAMIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **ALMA MATER**

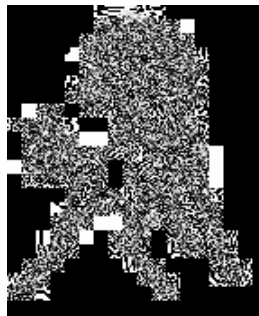
Onward Mustangs to the battle.  
Go and fight with all your might.  
For the school is right behind you  
To win this game tonight.  
Fight, fight.  
Ever onward to the battle.  
Win a victory tonight.  
For the dear old Benjamin High School  
**We will FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!**

## **SCHOOL COLORS**

Purple and White

## **MASCOT**

Mustang



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Glen Heard, President  
Linda Griffith, Vice-President  
Kathy Rainwater, Secretary  
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## **DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

In today's world of rapid change and technological advancement, the goal of Benjamin Independent School District is to provide the students of our district with the finest educational program available. This means affording them the opportunity to receive the benefits of a traditional educational program while also mastering the skills necessary to function in the next century.

All students will receive instruction in the basic academic areas of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, health, physical education, and technological literacy. These skills will be taught within a context, which will encourage students to function responsibly in the American economic, governmental, and social system. Benjamin ISD will endeavor to provide the highest quality instruction to all students using methodology, which will yield demonstrable results and consistent gains in academic performance regardless of the student's individual abilities.

Only by providing such a quality education can Benjamin ISD equip students with the skills necessary for life and leadership in tomorrow's world.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

It is the firm conviction of the Benjamin Independent School District Board of Trustees and administration that the most important thing to be taught at Benjamin ISD is respect for self and for others. For this reason, we encourage all school employees to observe the following general guidelines:

- treat all students with respect in the belief that they, in return, will treat us with respect
- do not raise our voices to students
- do not chastise or degrade our students in the presence of their peers
- do not lose our poise and let personality differences enter into disciplinary decisions and actions
- do not project the image that students who need correction are any less important than are those who never need guidance

We believe that teachers must have latitude to develop classroom rules that will best suit the environment of their own classroom. Teachers must use common sense and understanding in developing firm and fair classroom rules and procedures. The manner in which a student is treated will not only affect him/her in the present, but may shape the students attitudes regarding education for years to come. As long as teachers strive to follow established district policies and procedures, the administration and Board of Trustees will support them in every way possible.

# **Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy**

**2011-2012**

## **Benjamin ISD**

Benjamin Independent School District strives for quality education for all students. We believe a partnership between the school and home is important to ensure each student's success.

Benjamin ISD recognizes it is every parent's right to be involved in his or her child's education. We invite all parents of Title 1 students to serve on the Parent Advisory Committee that makes up the Parent Involvement Program. The parents will collaborate with the administration and faculty in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in planning, reviewing, and improving the Title 1 Program. The school district will provide timely information about the program through newsletters and flyers.

The Benjamin ISD Title 1 Parent Advisory Committee will meet formally in the fall and in the spring. Monthly the parents are to be invited to express concerns and address issues that may arise. Parents of Title 1 students will be informed of the following and any other information deemed necessary during the school year as well:

- School performance profiles
- Interpretation of student individual assessment results
- Description and explanation of school curriculum
- Types of assessment used to measure student progress
- Levels of proficiency students are expected to meet

Benjamin ISD will coordinate, provide technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist parents in actively participating in the planning and implementing of a parent involvement program in the form of a Parent Advisory Council Team.

Members of the Benjamin ISD Parent Involvement Program will evaluate the content and effectiveness of the program's policy and revise it as necessary. The effectiveness of the yearly activities will be assessed as well. The school and parents will together develop the written parent involvement policy. This will be a description of the requirements of the program detailed and distributed to parents and school staff in an understandable and uniform format.

Benjamin ISD shall submit the parent involvement plan together with any notations of dissatisfaction to the Texas Education Agency.

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# PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to give Benjamin ISD students and their parents an understanding of the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education in our schools.

The Handbook is organized in the following sections:

- Required Legal Notices and Information
- General Information about Admission, Attendance, and Conduct
- Curriculum and Program Information
- Of Special Interest to Students
- Of Special Interest to Parents

When the Handbook uses “we” or “our,” it means the school district and/or school administrators. When the Handbook uses “you” or “your,” it means the parent, legal guardian, or person who has accepted responsibility for a student, at least in regard to school matters. From time to time, the Handbook will use more general terms, such as “parents” and “school officials.” Regardless of the particular terminology, our intention is to speak directly to you as the adults who are responsible for working with us, the school officials, to make your children’s experience with the Benjamin public schools a positive educational experience.

The Student Handbook has been developed by school district administrators with assistance of teachers, students, and parents. The content is reviewed by the Board of Trustees and is intended to be consistent with formally adopted school board policies. If there is an apparent contradiction between information in the Handbook and a formally adopted board policy, the school administration will interpret the Handbook in a way that is consistent with policy and may request guidance from the Board of Trustees.

The Student Handbook is not a contract between the school and parents or students. It can be amended at any time at the discretion of the school district. If the district makes changes to the Handbook during a school year, the administration of the district and the campus will communicate those changes in ways that are designed to inform parents and students of the new or revised information.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dear Student and Parent:

The Benjamin Independent School District provides this Student Handbook to parents and students to provide you with information about the general rules and guidelines for attending and receiving an education in our schools.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it among your family. If you have any questions about the information here, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher, the school counselor, or campus administrator.

The student and parent should each sign this page on the space provided below, then return the page to the student's school.

Thank you.

✂-----

**We acknowledge that we have received the Benjamin ISD Student Handbook for the 2011-12 school year, and that we are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained here.**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: Benjamin Independent School District Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

# REQUIRED LEGAL NOTICES

**Nondiscrimination:** Benjamin ISD does not discriminate in its educational programs and services, including its career and technology education programs, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or disability. The District complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and with Section 504 as amended of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any questions or concerns about the district's compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the person shown below as Title IX or Section 504 Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator and the Section 504 Coordinator for the school district is Olivia Del Hierro Gloria, whose office is located at the Administration Office and who can be reached by telephone by calling 940-459-2231.

## Homeless Liaison and Title I Participants

Olivia Del Hierro Gloria is our liaison for services to students who are determined to be homeless, as defined by federal law. If you believe your child may be eligible for services or assistance, contact the Administration Office at 940-459-2231.

The Superintendent is also our Parent Involvement Coordinator who works with families and children participating in Title I programs. If you have questions about the program or need assistance related to the program, contact Administration Office at 940-459-2231.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act:** The school district creates and keeps general education records for all students enrolled in district schools. Those records are confidential and generally are available only to parents and school personnel or other people who are acting on behalf of the school district. When we say "parents" have a right of access to and copies of all education records pertaining to their children, we mean all biological or legal parents—whether married, divorced, or separated—and any other person with whom the child resides and who is acting as a parent in the absence of the child's parent or legal guardian.

Parents control the access to their children's education records until the child becomes an adult at age 18. When the child reaches age 18, she or he controls the access to his or her records and is the one who can consent to the release of the records to other persons. However, parents continue to have a right to see and obtain a copy their children's education records so long as the child is a dependent for federal income tax purposes, even if the child does not want them to.

If a parent wants to see or obtain a copy his or her child's education records, she or he should contact the principal of the child's school if the child is currently enrolled. If the child has withdrawn or graduated, parents should contact the school superintendent for access to records. Records can be reviewed in administrative offices during regular office hours, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and someone will be available to answer questions about the records.

Originals cannot be removed from the principal's or superintendent's office. Copies will be provided to parents within a reasonable time after parents have made a written request for copies. Parents will be charged the district's usual copying fees for copies; however, if the student is eligible for free or reduced price lunches and the parents cannot come to school to review the records, the school will provide one copy of the requested records at no charge.

If you disagree with information in your child's records or believe some information is inaccurate, you can ask for a correction. If the principal does not make the correction, you can ask for a hearing with the superintendent to explain why you believe the record is wrong or misleading. If the superintendent does not direct an amendment to be made, you have 30 days to place a comment in the student's record about the information. Under no circumstances can students or parents use this process to challenge a grade recorded for a student.

Because parents generally control access to their children's education records, the district ordinarily will not permit access to or copies of education records without at least one parent's written authorization to release the records. However, under some circumstances, the district can and will provide access to or copies of education records without parent authorization. The most common circumstances are these:

- The district will forward education records on request to a public or private school or institution of higher education in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- The district may disclose education records to a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other person who is performing services for the district, who is under the district's control related to the use of the records, and who has complied with district limitations on the re-disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.
- The district will comply with a lawful subpoena for student education records, but will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents before complying, unless the subpoena indicates that parents should not be notified.
- The district will release directory information about students to any person who submits a written request for the information, as provided in the DIRECTORY INFORMATION notice included in this Student Handbook.
- The district will release educational records to a juvenile justice agency in accordance with an agreement with between the district and the agency. The information will be released before the student is adjudicated and will be provided so that the juvenile agency can appropriately serve the student.
- The district will release educational records to "school officials," meaning any employees, trustees, or agents of the district, including persons employed in shared services arrangements or cooperatives of which the district is a member, school volunteers, parents or students serving on official committees, and the district's legal counsel, who have a "legitimate educational interest" in the records, meaning they are persons who work directly with your child at school or any school activity, including officials involved in disciplinary or academic decisions affecting your child directly, persons who are compiling statistical data for the district, who are reviewing such records to fulfill their employment responsibilities, or who are investigating or evaluating district programs.

If you want to review the school's entire policy regarding student records, please contact the campus principal, who will be glad to provide a copy for you and to answer any questions you may have about the policy or this notice. You may also view or download the policy (coded FL (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)) from the District's online policy manual. If you believe the district is not following the law regarding student records, you have the right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education.

### **Bacterial Meningitis Information: What is meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord—also called meninges. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral (aseptic) meningitis is most common; most people recover fully. Medical management of viral meningitis consists of supportive treatment and there is usually no indication for the use of antibiotics. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

There are two common types of bacteria that cause meningitis: - *Strep pneumoniae* causes pneumococcal meningitis; there are over 80 subtypes that cause illness – *Neisseria*

*meningitides*-Meningococcal meningitis; there are 5 subtypes that cause serious illness- A,B,C,Y,W-135

### **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, but any of the following are possible. Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have:

- Severe headache
- High temperature
- Vomiting
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Neck stiffness, joint pains
- Drowsiness or confusion

*\*In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots or bruises caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. They are a sign of blood poisoning (septicemia), which sometimes happens with meningitis, particularly the meningococcal strain.*

### **What is the risk of getting bacterial meningitis?**

The risk of getting bacterial meningitis in all age groups is about 2-4 cases per 100,000 population per year. However, the highest risk group for the most serious form of the disease, meningococcal meningitis, is highest among children 2 to 18 years old.

### **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 permanent disability, such as deafness, blindness, amputations or brain damage (resulting in mental retardation or paralysis) even with prompt treatment.

### **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 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. Being a carrier helps to stimulate the body's natural defense system. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and causes meningitis or another serious illness.

### **How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Vaccines against pneumococcal disease are recommended both for young children and adults over 64. A vaccine against four meningococcal serogroups (A,C,Y,W-135) is available. These four groups cause the majority of meningococcal cases in the United States. This 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%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

### **What you should do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?**

*Seek prompt medical attention.*

**How is bacterial meningitis diagnosed?**

The diagnosis is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood. Spinal fluid is obtained by a lumbar puncture (spinal tap).

**For more information**

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Center of Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the Texas Department of Health: [www.tdh.state.tx.us](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us).

**Pest Control:** Periodically, district building and grounds are treated by licensed or trained individuals to control unwanted pests, such as insects and rodents. We will post notices of those treatment dates as required by law and will schedule treatment times when students or employees are least likely to be in the building or on the grounds.

**Asbestos Management Plan:** The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos that may be have been used in District facilities, is available in the Superintendent's office during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Del Hierro Gloria, Superintendent at Benjamin ISD.

# DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student.

If you do not want Benjamin ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by September 1, 2011.

Benjamin ISD has designated the following information about your child as directory information: name, address, telephone listing, school e-mail address, photograph, degrees, honors, awards received, date of birth, place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school attended, security recordings unless used to impose discipline, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, height & weight of members of athletic teams.

If you DO NOT want us to release ANY information about your child without your written consent, check this box and return the form by September 1, 2011.

We have designated the following categories of directory information as pertinent to limited school-sponsored purposes. "School-sponsored purposes" means for publication in a student directory, a school yearbook, or official school publications including the school's website and programs for school-sponsored events.

<input type="checkbox"/> Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone listing	<input type="checkbox"/> School Electronic mail address
<input type="checkbox"/> Photograph	<input type="checkbox"/> Degrees, honors, awards received
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade level	<input type="checkbox"/> Most recent school attended
<input type="checkbox"/> Participation in officially recognized activities and sports	<input type="checkbox"/> Height & weight of members of athletic teams

If you CONSENT to the use of all of the above-listed items for limited school-sponsored purposes ONLY, check this box and return this form to us by September 1, 2011.

If you CONSENT to the use of some but not all of the above listed items for limited school-sponsored purposes ONLY, check this box AND the categories for which you are providing consent and return this form to us by September 1, 2011.

Benjamin ISD receives federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), and we are therefore required to disclose your secondary (grades 7-12) child's name, address, and phone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education, on their request, unless you have told us that you do not want that information released without your prior written consent. Please note that you may not selectively withhold this information from military recruiters but provide it to institutions of higher education.

If you DO NOT want us to release your secondary school (grades 7-12) child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education, check this box.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment:** We do not require students to participate in any surveys that are funded with any U.S. Department of Education funds that concern the following topics unless you (or your child if he or she is an adult) give us your prior consent. You will also have the opportunity to inspect the survey in advance. If we administer surveys that concern any of these topics that are funded from other sources, we will give you advance notice of the survey, allow you an opportunity to inspect the survey, and give you an opportunity to opt-out of the survey. The topics that are covered by this notice are:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or his or her parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or his or her family;
3. sex behavior or attitudes;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of others with whom the responding students have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or his or her parent; or
8. income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

**Invasive Examinations or Screenings:** We do not perform any invasive physical examinations or screenings as a condition of attendance. We do perform vision, hearing, acanthosis nigricans, and scoliosis screenings, as required by state law. Please contact the principal if you have questions regarding those screenings.

**Teacher Qualifications:** You may request the following information, which we will provide to you in a timely manner:

1. Whether your child's teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
2. Whether your child's teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.
3. The bachelor's degree major of your child's teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
4. Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

### **Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Need Special Education Services**

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The

implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

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

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities. Additional information regarding the IDEA is available from the school district in a companion document A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- Texas Project First
- Partners Resource Network

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

Contact Person: Jeanne Snyder, Director of HKSSA

Phone Number: 940-658-3587

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## 2011-2011 School Calendar



August 2011							September 2011							October 2011						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30	31					

November 2011							December 2011							January 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31				

February 2012							March 2012							April 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
26	27	28	29				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

May 2012							June 2012							July 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				

	School Holiday		Early Release Day	1st Six Weeks	30
	Snow Day/Holiday 4/6/11 first		Reporting Periods	2nd Six Weeks	24
	Staff Development/Student Holiday		Report Cards	3rd Six Weeks	27
	Staff Preparation Day		TAKS/STAAR Testing	4th Six Weeks	34
<u>May 25</u>	High School Graduation			5th Six Weeks	28
				6th Six Weeks	34
				<b>Total School Days</b>	<b>177</b>
				Preparation/Inservice	10
				<b>Total Days</b>	<b>187</b>

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Adopted: 03/07/2011

## **Student's Legal Name**

While we recognize that there are circumstances when a parent may wish his or her child to be enrolled under a name other than the child's legal name, we are required to maintain all school records for your child under the child's legal surname as shown on the birth certificate or other recognized document to prove the child's identity or as shown in a court order changing the child's name.

## **Admission, Release, Withdrawal**

These are the basic requirements for admission to district schools:

1. The student lives in the district with a parent or legal guardian or one of the student's parents lives in the district, even if the student does not live with that parent.
  - To be eligible for admission based on just the parent's residence in the district, the court that issued a final order in a divorce proceeding must have designated that parent as a managing or possessory conservator for the child.
  - The parent enrolling a student based on only the parent's residence in the district must provide a copy of a current final order, signed by the judge and showing a file stamp from the court, designating the parent as a managing or possessory conservator.
2. The student is under age 18 and, subject to District policy at FD (LOCAL) and FDA (LOCAL), lives in the district with an adult resident of the district who has accepted a Power of Attorney from the child's parent or legal guardian or who is a grandparent, adult aunt or uncle, or adult sibling who has accepted responsibility for the child by an Authorization Agreement in compliance with Texas Family Code § 34.002. The school district has Power of Attorney forms to be completed by both the parent and the person the student lives with.
3. The student is under age 18 and does not reside in the district, but a grandparent who provides a substantial amount of after-school care for the person resides in the district. "Substantial amount of after-school care" means the grandparent provides after-school care for the student at least four days each school week.
4. Students under the age of 18 must be enrolled by a parent, legal guardian, or adult resident who has a valid Power of Attorney for the student. Students who are 18 or older, who are legally married, or who have ever been legally married, and who have not graduated from high school can enroll themselves.
5. The adult enrolling the student must present current immunization records or show proof that the required immunizations have been begun.
6. No later than 30 days after a student has been enrolled, the adult enrolling the student must provide a copy of a birth certificate or other acceptable identification for the child and copies of the education records from the school the child last attended.

We do not admit underage students to school. Your child must be 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year to be admitted to kindergarten. To be admitted to first grade, your child must be 6 years old on or before September 1 of

the current year or must have completed kindergarten, or been enrolled in first grade, in the public schools of another state.

We do not ordinarily admit overage students to school. However, a student who is 21 or younger and who has completed a GED program, but has not graduated from any high school, will be admitted.

As part of our dropout recovery programs, we may admit someone between the ages of 21 and 26 for the purpose of completing the requirements for a high school diploma. A student admitted for this purpose and who has not attended school in the preceding three years will not be placed in a classroom setting, cafeteria, or other school-sanctioned activity with a student who is 18 or younger; however, those students remain free to attend all school-sponsored events that are open to the public.

The application for admission and enrollment forms are official government records, and it is a crime to provide false information of any kind or false records for identification. School officials can ask parents or another adult enrolling a student to provide some evidence that they are bona fide residents of the school district. As required by law, we will record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling a student.

At the time of enrollment, we will request that you disclose whether your child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy (including the food to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction) that, in your judgment, should be disclosed so that district officials may take necessary precautions regarding the child's safety. This information is confidential and will be disclosed only to those employees who need the information to appropriately care for your child.

If school officials have reason to question the legitimacy of a child's residency information, they can investigate to determine the student's actual place of residence. If the district finds that a student is not really a district resident, the student will be withdrawn, and school officials will take the necessary legal steps to recover the maximum tuition fee the school district can charge or the amount the board of trustees budgets as an expense per student.

### **Attendance Zones**

The Board of Trustees has established geographic boundaries for each school, and students generally must attend the schools in the zone for their street address. You can make a written request for your child to attend a particular school and will have a chance to explain to the superintendent why you think your request should be granted. Contact the superintendent for further information if you are not satisfied with the superintendent's decision.

### **Release During the School Day**

Students will be allowed to leave school during the school day only with the permission of the principal or someone in the principal's office who has been given the authority to release students. Parents cannot go directly to their children's classroom and take the child away from school during the day. Teachers do not have the authority to let children leave their classroom with anyone. If you need to take your child from school before the end of the school day, such as for a medical appointment or a family emergency, you should go to the principal's office and sign the child out. The teacher will send the child to the principal's office, and she or he will be released to you at that time.

At the time children are enrolled, the parent or other adult completing the enrollment forms should list those people who are authorized to pick up children during the school day. Unless the principal has a current court order signed by a judge, showing an official file stamp with the court, and indicating that a parent's right of access to and possession of his or her children has been limited in some way, the principal will release children to either parent.

Students will not ordinarily be released during the school day to participate in private lessons or other instruction. If you believe you have a special situation that would warrant an exception to this rule, please contact the campus principal to schedule a conference about your situation.

### **Withdrawing from School**

Children who are under age 18 will not be permitted to withdraw from school unless a parent, legal guardian, or other adult with responsibility for the child comes to the school to complete the necessary forms. Students must return all textbooks issued to them and clear any library fines and other outstanding fees in order for the school to release an official copy of the student's records to the parents or to another school district.

Students who are age 18 or older, who are legally married, or who have ever been legally married are adults and can withdraw themselves from school.

### **Attendance Requirements**

State compulsory attendance laws generally require all children between the ages of six and 18 to attend school each day that school is in session. A student who is younger than six and has ever been enrolled in the first grade is required to attend school. Once a parent enrolls a child in kindergarten or pre-kindergarten, the child is required to attend school that school year.

A student who voluntarily remains enrolled after the age of 18 is required to attend school. If an 18-year-old student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, we may revoke his or her enrollment for the rest of the school year. If we revoke enrollment, the student will be treated as an unauthorized person and may be arrested for trespassing if he or she comes on school property. A student who is at least 18 years old and under the age of 21 will be required to attend school until the end of the school year.

Regular attendance is critical to your child's success in school. It is also critical to the school district's success because it is a factor in the district and campus rating under the state accountability system and is a significant factor in the amount of state financial aid the district is entitled to receive.

School officials aggressively enforce the state compulsory attendance laws. If your child is absent from school on 10 or more days or partial days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, you will be prosecuted for contributing to truancy and your child if age 12 or older, will be prosecuted for failure to attend school. You will be notified when your child has three unexcused absences within a four-week period or less to advise you that you must monitor your child's attendance, to inform you that you may be prosecuted, and to request a conference to discuss the absences. Every day that a child is out of school in violation of compulsory attendance laws is a separate offense. You may be assessed a fine for each offense and may also be ordered to

participate in a class designed to help you make sure your child attends school as required.

If a student who is at least 18 years old and younger than 21 fails to attend school, the District will pursue legal action against the student for failure to attend school. We will not ordinarily send warning notices to parents under these circumstances. Parents of these older students will not be referred for prosecution for contributing to truancy.

Of course, there are times that children are sick or have other legitimate reasons for being absent from school. Regardless of the age of your child, if she or he is sick and will not be at school that day, you should call the school office to let them know of the absence. Whenever a child is absent from school for any reason, she or he should bring a note signed by you explaining the reason for the child's absence when she or he returns to school. The principal or someone acting for the principal will make the final decision whether an absence is classified as excused or unexcused.

If the child does not bring a signed note, the absence will be classified as unexcused. Students ordinarily will not be permitted to make up missed work for credit if the absence is unexcused.

Although students who are married are legally adults, this fact does not mean that they are not legally required to attend school until they are age 18. We have the authority to file charges directly against students who are married, have not graduated from high school, and do not attend school. We will work aggressively with local authorities to make sure that all students who are within compulsory attendance requirements come to school.

**Doctor and Dental Appointments:** Absences for appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, physical therapists, and other health care professionals will be classified as excused absences if the student returns to school on the same day as the appointment and presents a note from the health care provider stating the time of the appointment and the time the student left the doctor's office. If the appointment is at the end of the school day and the student has been at school all day up to that time, the absence will be excused if the student brings a note from the health care provider the following day. These excused absences include those for a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to attend appointments with health care practitioners to receive a generally recognized service for persons with that diagnosis, such as applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

**Religious Holidays:** Absences for religious holy days, including up to two days of travel time if necessary, will be classified as excused absences.

**Court Appearances:** Absences for required court appearances will be classified as excused absences upon presentation to the campus attendance official of a copy of the document requiring the student's appearance in court.

**Sounding "Taps" at a Veteran's Funeral:** Absences by students in grades 6-12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a veteran's funeral with military honors may be excused upon verification that the student provided the service noted.

**Citizenship/Naturalization Activities:** Absences for appearing at a government office to complete citizenship application paperwork and for taking part in a

United States naturalization oath ceremony will be excused upon verification of the student's participation.

**Attendance and Credit** Separate and apart from the compulsory attendance requirements, students must attend school a certain amount of time in order to get credit for their academic work. State law generally requires students to be "in attendance" for at least 90 percent of the days a class is taught during a semester or year. All absences from class, excused or unexcused, are counted in determining whether a student has met attendance for credit requirements.

Students who are in attendance in a class at least 75% of the days but less than 90% are eligible to receive credit if they complete a plan approved by the principal providing for the student to meet the instructional requirements for the class. Students who are under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding must also obtain the court's consent before credit may be granted.

In the 2011-2012 school year, we require students to be in class for 74 days in the Fall Semester and 89 days in the Spring Semester to meet the 90% attendance for credit requirements. Each campus has an attendance committee that will review student attendance records. If the committee decides that extenuating circumstances prevented a student from meeting the minimum attendance for credit standard or fulfilling the principal's plan for meeting instructional requirements, the committee can award credit or tell the student what additional work, additional time, or both time and work must be completed in order for the student to get credit for the grade level or course.

You will be notified when your child is in danger of losing credit because of absences and will have the chance to meet with the attendance committee to discuss your child's situation.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

Along with this Student Handbook, your child has also received a copy of the Benjamin ISD Student Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct contains the school district's requirements for student conduct and behavior while at school or under the school's jurisdiction. The Code of Conduct also explains the kinds of disciplinary action school officials can take in response to violations of the rules for student conduct and the steps involved in taking disciplinary action. If you have any questions about conduct or discipline rules, please refer to the Code of Conduct or call your child's principal.

A student age 21 or older who has been admitted to District schools to complete the requirements for a high school diploma will not be placed in the District's DAEP or a JJAEP in which the District participates for violations of the Code of Conduct. Instead, the District will revoke the student's admission to the District.

## **Dress and Grooming Code**

We expect students to come to school in clothes that are clean and neat, and we expect students to exhibit basic cleanliness and grooming that will not be a health or safety threat to themselves or to other students or staff. While we understand students' desire to express themselves in their clothing and grooming styles, we do not permit students to wear clothing with pictures, emblems, or writing that is lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene or that advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic

beverages, drugs, or any other substance that students are prohibited from having or using at school. The principal makes decisions about dress and grooming violations.

<p>APPROPRIATE ATTIRE</p>	<p>Male students must wear clean clothing (shirt, slacks, jeans, trousers) that is not torn or damaged. Female students must wear clean clothing (dress, blouse, skirt, slacks, jeans) that is not torn or damaged. Pants must be worn with the waist at waist level, and shirts or blouses must be buttoned. All students must wear shoes and appropriate undergarments. *</p>
<p>APPROPRIATE GROOMING</p>	<p>All students will exemplify grooming standards that project a positive image for the student, school, and District. Hair must be clean and neatly groomed and worn in a style that does not cover the eyes or eyebrows.</p> <p>Male students' hair must be neatly trimmed and worn in a style above the eye brows that exposes the earlobes and has a length above the top of the collar of a button-up shirt or crew-neck tee-shirt. Male students must be clean-shaven. Sideburns may extend no lower than the bottom of the ear and must be trimmed in a straight line without flares at the bottom.</p>
<p>INAPPROPRIATE GROOMING</p>	<p>The following hair styles or colorings are inappropriate grooming for any student at school or a school-related or –sanctioned activity:</p> <p>Spikes or other sculptured hair styles.</p> <p>Neon or other hair colorings or bleaching, whether permanent or temporary, in a shade or tone that the principal determines to be unnatural, such as neon orange, neon pink, magenta, any shade of blue, any shade of green, violet, purple, white.</p> <p>Hair coloring or bleaching for the purpose of creating extreme differences in color, shade, or tone between sections of individual strands of hair or areas of hair on the head, e.g., "tips."</p> <p>Hair coloring or bleaching for the purpose of creating extreme differences in color, shade, or tone between the student's natural and original hair color and the colored or bleached color, shade, or tone.</p> <p>Patterns or designs shaved or cut into the hair, e.g., "mohawks," partially shaved heads, etc.</p>
<p>INAPPROPRIATE OR UNACCEPTABLE ATTIRE</p>	<p>The following clothing and accessories are inappropriate attire for any student at school or a school-related or –sanctioned activity:</p> <p>Shorts or skirts must extend below the length of all fingertips, unless the student is in a primary grade (K-3).</p> <p>Pants worn below the natural waistline or sagging or extremely loose pants ("baggies").</p> <p>Shirts or blouses that reveal undergarments or cleavage, midriff length tops that leave exposed skin, or halter tops.</p> <p>Exposed undergarments.</p> <p>Bedtime attire, pajamas, undershirts, or undergarments worn</p>

CLOTHING WITH WORDS OR PICTURES	<p>as outerwear, e.g., boxer shorts.</p> <p>Clothing made of any see-through material, fish net, or very loosely-woven fabric, unless other clothing is worn underneath.</p> <p>Shirts or blouses that are split up the side such that the vent or split is unfinished and extends above the natural waistline.</p> <p>Unhemmed or cut-off clothing of any kind.</p> <p>Muscle shirts, shirts with oversized armholes, or backless shirts, blouses, or tops.</p> <p>Any clothing made of Spandex or similar body-hugging fabric or material.</p> <p>Thongs, slippers, or house shoes.</p> <p>Sunglasses, hats, or caps worn inside a school building.</p> <p>Hair rollers, hair curlers, plastic hair bags, and other similar grooming items worn inside a school building.</p> <p>Clothing worn at school or school-related or-sanctioned activities may not display printed statements or pictures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that are vulgar or obscene;</li> <li>that are related to or depict sexual activity;</li> <li>that promote hate or violence in general or are directed at any specific person or group of persons; or</li> <li>that are related to or depict the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.</li> </ul>
JEWELRY, TATTOOS, BODY PIERCING	<p>Students may not wear on the outside of their clothing any jewelry or similar artifacts that are obscene or distracting or that are likely to cause disruption to the educational environment.</p> <p>Students may not wear facial jewelry of any kind, other than nondistracting earrings worn on the earlobe. Male students may not wear earrings at all.</p> <p>Any body piercings or tattoos, including temporary tattoos, must be covered at all times while students are under the school's jurisdiction.</p>
GANG ATTIRE AND GROOMING	<p>Clothing, grooming, or any attire that identifies or connects a student with a gang [There is a definition in the S&amp;E Code of Conduct.] is prohibited. The principal will maintain and regularly update a list of clothing, grooming, and other attire that has been identified as gang-related and will make the list available to teachers and parents for review.</p>
PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY	<p>The principal will determine if clothing or attire not addressed in this policy creates a distraction to the educational process and may prohibit that clothing or attire for his or her campus. Administrators have the discretion to determine the appropriateness of dress and grooming and to make special exceptions, including for religious or medical necessities.</p>

If your child comes to school wearing clothes that violate the dress code or in any other way violates our dress and grooming standards, she or he will be placed in in-school suspension until she or he is in compliance. We will make efforts to notify you as soon as possible, and if the student changes clothes or otherwise comes into compliance with the dress and grooming standards, she or he will return to regular classes immediately.

## **Harassment of Students**

We prohibit students from sexually harassing other students and from sexually harassing employees; we also prohibit harassment based on anyone's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. Engaging in harassment is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. We, of course, prohibit employees from having any kind of sexual contact or romantic relationship with students enrolled in our schools, even if the student is willing and the parents do not object. See the Student Code of Conduct for a complete description of the offense of "harassment" and possible disciplinary consequences.

If you or your child have a complaint about sexual comments, conduct, contact, or any other inappropriate conduct by a school employee or about any other kind of harassment, do not hesitate to contact the Title IX coordinator whose name appears at the beginning of this Handbook regarding sexual harassment or the superintendent regarding any other harassment. We will listen to your concern and conduct a prompt investigation, **if warranted based on the allegations**. We also will look into reports that other students have been making sexual or other harassing comments to or engaging in sexual or other inappropriate conduct or contact with your child at school or school activities and take appropriate disciplinary action according to the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

Although we will provide you a general report of the results of our investigation of harassment complaints, the same federal law that protects the confidentiality of information about your child (see Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), protects the confidentiality of information about the student you reported for investigation. In other words, we will not ordinarily disclose to you the specific discipline imposed on another student, unless that student's parents give us permission to disclose that information. If the complaint is about an employee's conduct, we will inform you of the results of the investigation and of the general action taken in response if there is a finding of wrong-doing on the employee's part.

A copy of the entire policy addressing prohibited harassment or retaliation and the process for making reports or complaints related to alleged harassment or retaliation is included in the appendix of this handbook.

## **Searches of Students, Lockers, and Vehicles on School Property**

The principal or other school administrator can search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property if she or he has a reasonable basis to suspect that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated a school rule. The scope of the search will be related to the suspected violation.

Lockers are school property and remain under the school's control at all times. Lockers can be searched at any time. Because students are responsible for any contraband that is found in their lockers and will be disciplined accordingly, they should not give any other student the combination to their locker or otherwise let anyone else have access to their lockers.

Vehicles parked on school property are also subject to search by the principal or other school administrators if the administrator has a reasonable basis to suspect that there may be contraband of any kind, such as weapons, alcohol, drugs, or any other prohibited substance, in the car.

### **Questioning Students at School**

As school officials, we have the right to question your child about his or her own conduct at school and, in the investigation of alleged misconduct by other students or employees, to question him or her about the conduct of others. We expect students to cooperate in this process, and the refusal to cooperate will be treated as insubordination and disciplined accordingly. We will not ordinarily contact you before questioning your child about his or her own conduct or about the conduct of other students or employees, but certainly will contact you as provided in the Student Code of Conduct if our investigation shows that your child has violated school conduct rules. The Code of Conduct provides a complete explanation of the discipline processes and when you will be contacted. Our investigation of possible violations of the Code of Conduct is not a criminal proceeding, and there is no such thing as “taking the Fifth” or a student’s right not to incriminate himself or herself in a school discipline investigation.

Sometimes law enforcement officials or investigators from Child Protective Services (CPS) ask to interview students at school. In the case of an investigator from Child Protective Services conducting a child abuse or neglect investigation, we are required by state law to permit the investigator to talk to the child at school. We will also make every effort to cooperate with law enforcement officials conducting an investigation that requires talking to students.

Ordinarily, we will attempt to contact you before the interview by an outside person takes place. However, if the CPS investigator or the law enforcement official asks or tells us not to contact you, we will comply.

### **Pledges, Minute of Silence, Prayer, and Meditation**

Each day teachers will lead students in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and to the Texas flag. If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, please make a written request to the principal for your child to be excused. Following the recitation of the pledges, the school will observe a minute of silence. During this time, students may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract other students.

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school or at any school activity in a manner that does not disrupt or interfere with the delivery of instruction or other activities in the school. No school employee can or will require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

# CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS

## **General Curriculum Information**

Benjamin ISD operates a Pre-K–12 program that meets all state curriculum requirements.

A free half-day pre-kindergarten program is available for children who are at least four years old on September 1 and who are eligible because:

1. they cannot speak or understand English;
2. they are homeless as defined by federal law;
3. they are educationally disadvantaged;
4. they are the child of an active duty member of the armed forces, including a National Guard member ordered to active duty;
5. they are the child of member of the armed forces, including a National Guard member, who was injured or killed while on active duty; or
6. they are or ever have been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services, after an adversary proceeding

If you think your child or children are eligible, please contact the principal.

## **Structured Physical Activity**

In accordance with state law, we ensure that all students in elementary school, middle school, and junior high school engage in the amount and level of physical activity required by the State Board of Education.

## **Special Programs**

To meet the requirements of state and federal law, we also offer several programs designed to meet specific needs of some of our students. We identify students as eligible for one or more of these programs based on assessments made after referrals and recommendations from teachers and counselors and will always inform you about the program beforehand. We also can identify students based on an assessment after a request or referral from you. If you have any questions about the referral and identification process for any of the following programs, please contact your child's teacher(s), counselor, or the campus principal.

**Special Education:** Benjamin ISD provides special education and related services for students with disabilities according to individualized plans developed by teachers, parents, counselors, and other professionals. You may request an evaluation of your child to determine eligibility for special education at any time. We decide whether a student needs special education after we complete a comprehensive assessment. Please contact Jeanne Snyder, Special Education Director at 658-3547, or your principal to receive full information about our special education programs. See also the required Notice at the beginning of this Handbook.

**Section 504:** Some students who are not eligible for special education and related services may also have disabilities that interfere with their ability to benefit from the regular school program. A committee of educators who have knowledge of the student and his or her needs and limitations will determine

what accommodations to the regular method and requirements of instruction are necessary in order for the student to participate. Please contact your principal to receive full information about the school's Section 504 program.

**Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language:** English is the basic language of instruction in our schools. Children who have limited English-speaking skills will have access to programs to help them learn to understand, speak, read, and write the English language. At the time you enroll your children for the first time, you will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey so we know whether to take additional steps to be sure your child is properly served.

**Gifted and Talented Students:** Some children demonstrate or show a potential for demonstrating a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to other children of similar age, experience, or environment. These children may perform at a very high level in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, show an unusually high capacity for leadership, or excel in a particular academic field. We provide a variety of programs, activities, and learning opportunity for these students.

**Accelerated or Intensive Instruction/Students At-Risk:** Some students do not qualify for special education programs or Section 504 accommodations, but still need some additional assistance to be successful in school and complete the high school program. We provide tutorial programs and intensive or accelerated instruction in subjects where students are showing special difficulty and may provide specially focused instruction to improve students' language and math skills. Some of our specialized programs are designed to help students who are pregnant or are parents or who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Others are designed to provide additional assistance to students who have been retained at any grades or have had serious discipline problems.

### **Counseling Programs and Services**

The district has a developmental counseling and guidance program. Each secondary campus has one or more counselors who are available to help students with questions about planning their course of instruction, applications to college or other post-secondary education and training programs, scholarships and financial assistance, and other academic issues. We also have trained counselors available to talk and listen to students about situations and experiences that may be affecting their ability to get all they can from their instructional program. We encourage students to seek the assistance of school counselors whenever they need to, and counselors can also refer students or parents to other sources of assistance.

Some aspects of the counseling program require prior written parent consent for the student's participation. As parents, you also have the right to preview all the written materials used in the school counseling program. For full information, please contact your school principal or counselor.

### **Testing and Assessment Programs**

Once again, the statewide assessment program is in transition. Students and parents will be informed of changes in the program affecting them as those changes are implemented. The current transition will eventually eliminate TAKS for high school students and implement instead a state-developed end-of-course examination in

core curriculum courses. Students in grades 3-8 will now be assessed using the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (“STAAR”).

Results of the state examinations are used to assess individual student progress, as well as being a significant factor in the campus and district ratings under the statewide and federal accountability system. Please make every effort to have your children at school on state test administration days and to be sure that they have had plenty of rest the night before and a good breakfast that morning. High school students can get registration and test preparation materials for the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT) from the high school counselor.

As required by state law, we will annually assess the physical fitness of students in grades 3-12. You may request the results for your child in writing at the end of the school year.

### **Grading and Report Cards**

Teachers establish their grading standards, including penalties for late work, but those standards must be consistent with guidelines approved by the campus principal. If you have a question about a grade your child receives on an assignment, you should talk first with the teacher. An exam or course grade issued by the teachers is final and will not be changed unless we determine that it was arbitrary, erroneous, or not consistent with the grading standards and policy.

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each grading period. If your child is having trouble in a class, the teacher may ask you to schedule a conference. We encourage you to attend those conferences. If your child’s performance in language arts, math, science, or social studies is consistently unsatisfactory, you will receive grade reports every three weeks.

With the report of grades for the first grading period of the school year, we will inform you of the most recent performance rating of your child’s campus under the state’s Student Achievement Indicator System, along with a definition and explanation of each performance rating.

### **Promotion, Retention, Award of Credit**

Students are promoted from grade to grade, or awarded credit for a course, based on their mastery of the knowledge and skills that will let them be successful at the next grade level. In secondary grades, students receive credit for a course when they have met all the state and local requirements for that credit.

If your child entered kindergarten in the 2000-2001 school year or after, he or she will have to pass the STAAR examination in the fifth and eighth grades—or pass an alternate test if he or she does not pass after three tries on the STAAR—in order to be promoted to the sixth and ninth grades. Students in the fifth or eighth grade who are taking courses above the student’s grade level will substitute subject tests appropriate to the grade level, which may include end-of-course examinations in courses for which the student may receive high school graduation credit. If your child does not pass the STAAR after the first administration at a grade level, we will provide intensive instruction in your child’s area(s) of academic weakness. Contact your principal for more information or see policy EIE (LOCAL).

## **Library Facilities, Hours, and Access**

Each school has a library available for student research and study, with resources appropriate for needs of the grades served by the campus. Students have access to the library during the school day.

If you have a concern about library materials available to your child, please contact the teacher, or the principal. We have a policy and process that will allow you to explain your concerns and reach an understanding about your child's access to the questioned materials.

## **Educational Technology and Acceptable Use**

We are steadily acquiring computers for school use and access to other instructional and research resources through connections to the Internet and the World Wide Web. These electronic instructional resources are for use at school and for school-related purposes. Before your child is permitted to receive a User Identification and password to use school computers, you and your child must sign a User Agreement that explains acceptable and unacceptable use of school educational technology. You will have the choice to prevent your child from having access to the Internet on school computers.

The following kinds of use of the school's equipment or network are classified as unacceptable under our policy and the User Agreement:

1. Unauthorized use of copyrighted material, including violating District software licensing agreements or installing any personal software on district equipment without approval of the Technology Director. (See EFE)
2. Viewing, posting or distribution of messages that are obscene, vulgar, profane, harassing, sexually oriented, sexually explicit, pornographic, offensive to others, threatening to others, or illegal, because a significant part of the District's educational mission is to inculcate or instill the habits and manners of civility and to teach students the boundaries of socially appropriate behavior.
3. Personal political use to advocate for or against a candidate, office-holder, political party, or political position, measure, or proposition. Research or electronic communications regarding political issues or candidates is not a violation when the activity is to fulfill an assignment for course credit.
4. Viewing or participating in social network sites or chat rooms other than those sponsored and overseen by the District.
5. Tampering with anyone else's computer, files, or e-mail.
6. "Hacking," i.e., attempting unauthorized access to any computer whether within the district's network or outside it.
7. Attempting to change, disable, or destroy District equipment, files, or data or any other user's data or files, including introducing computer viruses into the District's system by any means.
8. Any use that would be unlawful under state or federal law.
9. Unauthorized disclosure, use, or distribution of personal identification information regarding students or employees.

10. Forgery of electronic mail messages or transmission of unsolicited junk e-mail chain messages.
11. Use that violates the student code of conduct.
12. Use related to commercial activities or for commercial gain.
13. Advertisement for purchase or sale of a product.

Students who violate the terms of the User Agreement may lose their computer privileges at school, as well as incur consequences under the school's Student Code of Conduct.

## **OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO STUDENTS**

### **Extracurricular Activities**

We offer a variety of school-related extracurricular activities and encourage students to participate in those that are of interest to them. Some activities, such as UIL Academic Competition events are closely related to subjects taught in the curriculum; others, such as the Student Council, help students build leadership skills. All of the academic, athletic and sports teams that participate in University Interscholastic League (UIL) athletic competition are extracurricular, as is cheerleading, and drill team or pep squad. Although most extracurricular activities are designed for secondary students, those in grades 7 to 12, we encourage elementary age students to participate in UIL Academic activities and competitions.

Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. By state law, students must make a passing grade in all their classes in each grading period in order to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular performance or competition in the next grading period, unless the failing grade was received in an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or in an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, math, science, social studies, or a language other than English. Students who are ineligible because of one or more grades below 70 will be allowed to practice or rehearse during a suspension, but cannot perform or compete. If the student raises the grade(s) to passing within three weeks, she or he will regain eligibility to perform or compete.

Many of our approved extracurricular activities have standards of conduct, dress, and grooming that are stricter than those that apply to all students. You and your child will be informed of those rules at the beginning of the semester, school year, or activity and will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that you are aware of those standards and know that violation of those standards will result in suspension or removal from the activity. These additional rules are authorized by the school board, which has delegated to the superintendent the authority to approve them.

Students who participate in UIL athletic activities will be subject to random testing for the presence of illegal steroids as required by UIL rules and regulations.

Our secondary schools have established a limited open forum that permits students to meet on school premises during non-instructional time before or after school in groups that are not related to the curriculum. Meetings of these groups must be student-initiated and student-run. School employees cannot be sponsors of these groups, and adults from outside the school system cannot direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend these meetings.

The following groups, activities, and organizations are authorized extracurricular activities in Benjamin ISD. Students can miss a class no more than 20 times in the school year to participate in an approved extracurricular activity. If a student advances to a post-district competition level, she or he is allowed up to five additional absences.

### **Student Publications/Distribution of Materials**

All materials prepared and published as part of a school’s journalism or language arts programs are under the control and supervision of the administration and the Board of Trustees. The principal has final approval authority on all materials published or distributed in the name of the school.

Students are not permitted to distribute nonschool publications or materials in the classroom or hallways.

Before nonschool materials or publications are made available to students, they must be submitted to the principal for review and approval. The principal will make a decision within two school days after the materials are submitted, and his or her failure to act within that time is interpreted as disapproval. If the materials are disapproved, students can appeal to the superintendent using the student complaint policy FNG (LOCAL).

### **Parking/Driving at School**

Students driving cars to school are subject to all state and local traffic laws and regulations while they are on school property and must practice courteous and safe driving habits around school. Students may park only in front of the school building and away from the handicap and no parking zone.

### **Graduation Plans**

The Minimum and Recommended programs in place for ninth graders entering in 2007-08 and after and a basic description of their requirements are described in the chart below. Contact the counselor for information on graduation plans for students who entered the ninth grade before the 2007-08 school year.

<b>Minimum High School Program</b>		<b>Recommended High School Program</b>	
English Language Arts or approved substitute	4	English Language Arts	<b>4</b>
Mathematics-including Algebra I and Geometry	3	Mathematics-Algebra I & II, Geometry, plus one other approved math course	<b>4</b>
Science-Biology and IPC or approved substitute	2	Science-Biology required; 2 from IPC, Chemistry, Physics (not more than one from each area), plus one other lab-based science course	<b>4</b>
Social Studies-World History or World Geography & US History After Reconstruction & .5 Government	2.5	Social Studies-World History, World Geography, US History After Reconstruction, Government	<b>3.5</b>
Academic Elective-World History, World Geography, or a Science class	1	Language other than English (in the same language)	<b>2</b>

Economics-Free Enterprise	.5	Economics-Free Enterprise	<b>.5</b>
Physical Education (2 maximum for state credit)	1.5	Physical Education (2 maximum for state credit)	<b>1</b>
Health Education	.5	Health Education	<b>0</b>
Speech-Communication Applications	.5	Speech-Communication Applications	<b>0.5</b>
Technology Applications	1	Technology Applications	<b>0</b>
Electives	5.5	Fine Arts	<b>1</b>
		Electives	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Total Units Required</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Total Units Required</b>	<b>26</b>

**The Distinguished Achievement/Advanced Program is similar to the Recommended Program with the following differences and additional requirements:**

<b>Recommended Program</b>		<b>Distinguished Achievement/Advanced Program</b>	
Language other than English (in the same language)	2	Language other than English (all in the same language)	<b>3</b>
<b>Electives</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Electives</b>	<b>5</b>

For the Distinguished Achievement/Advanced Program, students must also receive any combination of four of these advanced measures that are assessed through an external review process:

1. Score of 3 or higher on College Board Advanced Placement examination(s).
2. Score of 4 or higher on International Baccalaureate examination(s).
3. Grade point of 3.0 or higher in courses that count for college credit, including advanced technical credit courses and dual credit courses.
4. PSAT that qualifies student for recognition as Commended Scholar or higher; as part of National Hispanic Scholar Program; or as part of National Achievement Scholar Program for Outstanding Negro Students.
5. Original research/project related to the required curriculum that is judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the project or conducted under direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience.

**Personal Graduation Plan:** If your child is in junior high/middle school or high school and does not perform successfully on any state assessment or if we determine that your child is not likely to receive a high school diploma within five years of beginning the 9th grade, you will be asked to participate in developing a personal graduation plan for your child. That plan will identify your child's education goals and will take into consideration your educational expectations for your child. Should a personal graduation plan be appropriate for your child, the counselor and principal will contact you with more specific information.

### **Early Graduation Scholarships**

High school students who complete the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement/Advanced program and graduate in fewer than four school years are eligible under state law for the Early High School Graduation Scholarship program.

This scholarship provides from \$500 to \$3,000 in credits toward tuition and mandatory fees for a public or private college or university in Texas. The amount of the scholarship depends on the number of months needed to complete the high school program and the number of college credits a student earns during high school. Contact your high school counselor for complete information on this program.

## **Graduation Honors/Class Ranking**

Class rankings are calculated for the first time at the end of the sophomore year. Final rank in class for purpose of determining the highest ranking graduate, valedictorian, salutatorian, and honor graduates is calculated at the end of the fifth six-week grading period of the senior year.

Under state law, students who are ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission to all Texas state colleges and universities, including The University of Texas system and the Texas A&M University system. The counselor will provide more detailed information about this opportunity during a student's first year of high school, including information about eligibility for financial aid. Please contact the counselor at any time for information.

Rank in class for purposes of determining which students are in the top 10% of their graduating class will be calculated at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and at high school graduation. Students will use the latest ranking in relation to their college application deadlines. The number of students in the top 10% for automatic admission to a Texas college will not exceed the mathematical calculation of 10% of the number of students in the graduating class.

We use a weighted grade point/grade average system that is designed to recognize the relative difficulty and effort required for the course. The additional grade point/points on the grade are used solely for ranking purposes and will not be reflected in the grades recorded on your child's official transcript or Academic Achievement Record.

The valedictorian and salutatorian will be the highest and next highest ranking eligible student in the graduating class. Eligible students who complete all requirements in three years, rather than the usual four years, will be ranked for graduation honors with students who have completed requirements in four years. The highest ranking graduate, who will be eligible to receive a scholarship for exemption from the first year of tuition at a state college or university, will be the person who has the highest rank in class, regardless of eligibility for the honor of valedictorian under our policies.

## **Graduation Exercises**

Graduation exercises are held at the end of the school year. With one legally required exception, only those students who have completed all state and local requirements, including passing the TAKS Exit-Level examinations or fulfilling state requirements for cumulative scores on end-of-course examinations, for receiving a diploma are eligible to participate in graduation exercises. All students who have completed all graduation requirements, whether in three years or four years, are eligible to participate in graduation exercises.

State law requires that we permit a student with disabilities who has completed four years of high school but has not completed all requirements for graduation under the

student's individualized program to participate in graduation exercises if he or she wishes to. Students may participate in only one graduation exercise.

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right, and students who do not comply with dress, grooming, and conduct standards for the rehearsal and ceremony will be removed from the ceremony. Graduating students who are assigned to the district's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program through the end of school year and successfully complete their term of assignment in the DAEP without further disciplinary action may be allowed to take part in graduation ceremonies. That decision rests with the principal and cannot be appealed. See the Student Code of Conduct for additional information.

The graduation ceremony is a solemn event commemorating a milestone achievement in the lives of our graduates. The planning and execution of the ceremony is under the joint control of the graduating class and the administration.

## **OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO PARENTS**

### **Parent Rights**

**Academic Programs:** You can ask the principal to change your child's teacher or class assignment; however, the principal is not required to make the reassignment and will not do so ordinarily if that change would affect the assignment or reassignment of another student.

You can ask the school board to add a specific academic course to the schedule and offerings. If the administration and the board determine that the course is among those included in the State Board of Education-approved curriculum and that there is sufficient interest in the class to make it economically practical to offer the class, the request will not be unreasonably denied.

You can ask that your child be permitted to attend a class for credit above his or her grade level. If the counselor and child's current and prospective teacher expect that the child can perform satisfactorily in the class, the request will not be unreasonably denied.

**Teaching Materials:** You may review all teaching materials, textbooks and other teaching aids used in your child's classroom and may review all tests administered to your child, after the test is given. To review these materials, please contact the principal, who will make arrangements to provide you access to those materials at school during regular school hours.

Some textbooks are so expensive that we purchase classroom sets rather than a textbook for each student taking the course. You may request that your child be permitted to take home any textbook used by the student, and if a book is available, we will gladly honor that request. If the teacher requests it, the student must return the textbook to school the following school day.

**Records and Other Information:** As we stated in the "Required Notices" section of this Handbook, you have a right of access to all written educational records that we maintain concerning your child. You also can receive full information about any and all school activities in which your child is involved. However, as we explained in the section on "Questioning Students at School," we

must comply with a request or directive from a Child Protective Services investigator regarding contact with or information to parents about an investigation.

**Video and Audio Recording:** We will seek and obtain your written consent before any school employee makes an audio or video recording of your child, except that your prior consent is not required before a recording that will be used only for:

- safety purposes, including maintaining order and discipline in common areas of the school or on school buses;
- a purpose related to a co-curricular or extracurricular activity;
- a purpose related to regular classroom instruction; or
- media coverage of the school.

**Psychological Examinations:** We will seek and obtain your written consent before conducting any psychological examination, test, or treatment of your child, unless the examination is part of an investigation by Child Protective Services in response to a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. If the examination or test is part of the comprehensive assessment to see if your child needs special education or related services, before we obtain consent, on your request, we will provide you with information about the name and type of examination and how the examination will be used to develop an appropriate individualized program for your child.

**Exemption from Instruction:** You may temporarily remove your child from a class or other school activity that conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs if you provide a written statement authorizing the removal to your child's teacher. However, you are not entitled to remove your child from class or an activity to avoid taking a test or to prevent your child from taking a subject for an entire semester. Your child will be required to satisfy grade level or graduation requirements, regardless of any periods of temporary removal based on your religious or moral beliefs.

**Campus Performance and Accountability:** We will keep you informed annually of your children's campus ratings and whether the campus has been identified under state and federal law as one that needs improvement. If the campus is so identified, we will inform you of your rights regarding public school choice and transportation at that time. You will receive information with your child's report card for the first reporting period of each year related to the campus performance rating under the state accountability system.

**Classroom Celebrations:** You or a grandparent may provide any food product of your choice to your child and his or her classmates on the occasion of the child's birthday or for any other school-designated function, such as class parties, bake sales, etc.

## **Visiting School**

You are welcome to visit your children's schools from time to time; however, you must comply with our policy requiring all visitors to go first to the principal's office and sign in. We have this policy for the safety of your children and our staff. Parents and any other person on campus without the principal's knowledge will be considered as trespassers and may be subject to arrest.

We also expect parents to be polite and civil in their dealings with all school staff. We do not permit or tolerate abusive, disrespectful, threatening, lewd, profane, or offensive language from your children at school, and we will not tolerate it from parents. Parents who create a disruption at school or behave unacceptably may be prohibited from coming onto school property without specific authority and will be treated as criminal trespassers if they disregard the principal's or superintendent's directive.

While we encourage you to be involved in your children's education and knowledgeable about their classes, teachers, and curriculum, it has been our experience that frequent and lengthy visits to the classroom are disruptive both to teaching and learning. The principal can limit or restrict the frequency and duration of classroom visits to be sure that disruption of the instructional process does not occur.

We encourage you to come to school occasionally and eat lunch with your child; however, children can be removed from the campus during lunch period only by following the established process of signing the child out from the principal's office. Unless we have possession of a court document that limits a possessory conservator's (that is the parent who does not ordinarily have custody of the student) access to their child while at school, we will permit either parent to eat lunch with their children at school.

### **Complaint Process**

We realize that situations may arise when parents disagree with a decision that affects their child or believe that a policy has been improperly applied to their child. A number of these types of disputes or controversies have specific processes for pursuing those concerns. The principal can provide you with a copy of the relevant policies and procedures.

In general, all parent complaints should be brought initially to the teacher involved or the campus principal within 15 business days of the events or situation that you are concerned about. Often the problem can be resolved through an informal conference with the teacher or principal. On those occasions when a conference does not take care of problem, you should request a copy of the complaint policy and complaint form from the principal's office. In order for your concern to be resolved at the earliest possible level, you must put your complaint in writing on the form provided before meeting formally with the principal.

The principal will schedule a conference with you and give you a written response within ten business days after the conference. You will also have an opportunity for a conference with the superintendent if the principal has not resolved the matter. If the superintendent is not able to take care of the problem, you can make a written request for the Board of Trustees to consider the matter at a future meeting. You must, however, follow our established policies and use our forms.

Individual trustees cannot respond to parent complaints beyond referring the matter to the administration. Furthermore, the board of trustees will not permit complaints to be heard in the public comment or open forum portion of board meetings. In order for the board to take any action on a complaint, you must follow the complaint process established in policy.

## **Student Health Concerns**

We have adopted and enforce policies to ensure that our campuses comply with Texas Department of Agriculture guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines containing foods of minimal nutritional value. Generally, this means that soft drinks and other foods of minimal nutritional value will not be available to elementary students during the school day or to secondary students during any designated meal periods.

As required by state law, we have and enforce prohibitions against student possession and use of tobacco and tobacco products on campuses or a school-sponsored or –related activities. These prohibitions are addressed in the Student Code of Conduct and also in board policy and the employee handbook.

The district's student health advisory council met 4 times during the preceding school year and will meet at least four times during each school year.

In collaboration with you and, if possible, your child's physician, we will develop an individualized health plan for children with diabetes who need care for diabetes while in school or participating in a school activity. If your child has diabetes and will need care at school or while participating in a school activity, you must submit the diabetes management and treatment plan prepared by you and your child's physician before or at the beginning of the school year, on enrollment after the beginning of the school year, or as soon as practicable following a diagnosis of diabetes.

## **Student Illness or Injury at School**

We will promptly attempt to notify you or a person you have authorized us to notify if we have knowledge that your child has been injured at school or has become ill at school.

One of the forms we ask you to complete at the beginning of each school year is a form authorizing designated school employees to consent to medical treatment in case your child is injured at school or a school-related activity and requires emergency treatment. We, of course, will call you in such a situation and will also call for emergency medical assistance, if needed. It is important, however, that you understand that the school district is not responsible for any cost of medical treatment or services provided after an injury at school or a school-related activity. We cannot and will not use public funds to pay individual student medical expenses.

At the beginning of each school year, we offer you the opportunity to purchase low-cost student accident insurance that covers the student while at school. You may also purchase a policy that covers the student 24 hours a day. The school district is not the policyholder for this insurance; if you decide that additional protection would be a benefit and protection to you and your family, the contract is between you and the insurance company. We are authorized to and do purchase accident insurance for students who participate in interscholastic athletic practice and competition.

Although we want your child to attend school every day, we do not want your child at school if she or he has a communicable disease or is running a fever of 100° or more. Under State and local Health Department regulations, if your child has certain medical conditions, she or he must be excluded from school for a period of time. The principal can provide you a complete list of those conditions and periods of exclusion.

## **Administering Medicine at School**

Often, students have to take prescription medication for a certain period of time as treatment for a medical condition. If at all possible, we ask that you schedule the timing of the doses so that the child takes the medicine at home. If children have to take medicine at school, you must make a written request to the principal or nurse. The school nurse or other authorized school employee will administer medications only from a container that appears to be the properly labeled original prescription container or from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by the nurse from a properly labeled original prescription container. Only the nurse or other authorized school employees are permitted to administer prescription medicines at school. Other than prescription asthma medicine or anaphylaxis treatment for students with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis, we do not permit students to carry their own medications and self-administer.

Children with asthma or children with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis will be allowed to carry and self-administer their prescription asthma or anaphylaxis medicine under certain conditions. The student must have demonstrated to his or her doctor and to the school nurse that the child has the skills necessary to self-administer the asthma or anaphylaxis medicine. Additionally you must provide us a written authorization for self-administration and a written statement from child's doctor that the student has asthma and is capable of self-administration and that includes the name and purpose of the medicine, the prescribed dosage, the times and circumstances for administration, and the period for which the medicine is prescribed.

If your child has unique medical conditions or any other condition, such as a food allergy, that requires virtually immediate administration of medications under specified conditions, please contact the principal, who will schedule a meeting of appropriate personnel to ensure that your child's needs are met.

If your child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that, in your judgment, would require immediate medical attention if the student were exposed to the allergen, we will ask you to disclose that information, including the food to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction, at enrollment so that we may take necessary precautions for the child's safety. The information provided is confidential and will be disclosed only to those employees who need the information in order to appropriately care for your child.

## **Lost, Damaged, or Stolen Personal Items**

We ask that you discourage your child from wearing or bringing to school expensive or irreplaceable jewelry, watches, sunglasses, or personal clothing that may be removed during the days, such as winter coats. Students are responsible for all their personal possessions while at school or any school-sponsored or school-related event. It is important that you understand the school district is not responsible for any personal items that are lost, damaged, or stolen at school or a school-related activity.

## **Telephone Use**

School telephones are for school business use. Students will be permitted to use school telephones only for emergencies and only with permission. If you call for your child during the school day, we will take a message and deliver it to the student at the end of the class period or other time that will least interfere with instruction.

The Student Code of Conduct allows students to carry cellular phones or other electronic communication devices during the school day, but requires them to be turned off during instruction. Improper use of a cellular phone or other electronic communication device during the school day will result in the item's being confiscated.

### **Parent Organizations**

Benjamin ISD has an active Parent-Teacher Organization, and we encourage you to actively participate in the group.

### **Transportation Program**

We provide transportation on school buses to and from school for those children who live more than two miles away from the school they attend. Students are required to comply with rules for conduct on school buses and to comply with the Student Code of Conduct while at authorized school bus stops waiting for the bus. Students who misbehave or violate the Code of Conduct while on the bus will be disciplined according to the Code of Conduct and may be suspended from the bus for a period of time.

### **Authorized Fees**

Although the basic cost of your child's public education is provided through local tax revenues, state funding, and some federal funds, we may assess fees for certain kinds of materials and services, as described in the following list:

- a fee to cover the cost of materials when the student makes, builds, or prepares some product that becomes the student's personal property.
- dues for voluntary student organizations and clubs and admission fees to voluntary extracurricular activities.
- security deposits for materials, supplies, or materials that must be returned to the district.
- fees for personal PE equipment and clothing, unless the student provides his or her own clothing and equipment that meets school health and safety standards.
- fees for items of personal use or products a student chooses to purchase, such as student publications, class rings, annuals, and graduation announcements.
- a reasonable fee, not more than the annual cost of maintenance, for school-owned musical instruments and uniforms.
- fees for personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the student's personal property, such as cheerleader, pep squad, or drill team uniforms.
- a fee for vehicle identification for cars regularly parked on school property.
- a fee for student identification cards.
- a fee for school-provided driver training courses.
- a fee for an elective course taken for credit if it requires using facilities not available on school premises or employment of an educator who is not part of the regular staff.

- fees for attendance at summer school. If the course is one required for graduation, summer school fees will be assessed if the course is also offered during the regular school year.
- fees, not more than \$50, for attendance in a program offered outside of regular school hours that allows students who have excessive absences that would require losing credit to make up missed instruction and receive credit. This fee will be assessed only if a parent signs a form stating that paying the fee will not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program.
- a reasonable fee for transporting a student to and from school if the student is not an eligible rider and the district does not receive any state funds for a transportation allotment.

You may request a waiver of any required fee that you are unable to pay by contacting the principal who will determine ability to pay based on the criteria for identifying students who are eligible for participation in the free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch program.

### **Food Service/Free and Reduced-Price Food Program**

We serve a variety of nutritious food for students and faculty members at a nominal cost. We do not allow foods of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the federal Child Nutrition program, to be served or available for purchase in food service and eating areas during the time students are being served meals.

Benjamin ISD has a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave campus for lunch. Students must follow directions for entering the cafeteria and observe good table manners and courteous behavior at all times, i.e., no cutting in line. Wearing hats in the cafeteria, loud talking, and unnecessary noise are considered poor manners and may result in disciplinary action.

Our schools participate in the federal Child Nutrition Programs, which provide free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs to students based on family income levels. We maintain strict confidentiality as to whether students participate in the program. If you would like more information about the program or an application, please contact the Stacia Propps at the Administration Office, 940-459-2231.

# Benjamin Independent School District Extracurricular Code of Student Conduct

## **I. Extracurricular Activities**

The term “extracurricular activities” means, without limitation, all interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, drill team, academic clubs, special interest clubs, musical performances, dramatic productions, student government, and any other activity or group that participates in contests, competitions, or community service projects on behalf of or as a representative of the District. The term includes any non-curricular event and membership or participation in groups, clubs, and organizations recognized and approved by the Board of Trustees and the school district and sponsored by the district or a campus. All extracurricular activity participants, including elected and appointed officers of all campus organizations, are subject to the provisions of this *Extracurricular Code of Conduct*.

## **II. Jurisdiction**

Student participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged. Benjamin ISD makes extracurricular activities available as an extension of the regular school program, with this important difference: participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student, while participation in the extracurricular program is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct. Students engaging in extracurricular activities represent not only themselves, but also other students and the school district when performing, competing, or participating in extracurricular activities and while wearing uniforms or other clothing that identifies students to the community or public in any setting as Benjamin ISD students. For this reason, their behavior must be exemplary and reflect the finest attributes of the total Benjamin ISD student body at all times and places.

Important goals of the extracurricular program are to give students direction in developing self-discipline, responsibility, pride, loyalty, leadership, teamwork, respect for authority, and healthy living habits.

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, Benjamin ISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than it would for those students who choose not to participate in these activities. Therefore, this *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* extends beyond the Benjamin ISD *Student Code of Conduct* not only in types of behavior prohibited, but also in corresponding

consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline. This *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* will be enforced with all students participating in extracurricular activities:

- regardless of whether school is in session;
- regardless of whether the offense occurs on or off school property or at a school-related event;
- regardless of whether the student is directly involved with the extracurricular activity at the time the prohibited conduct occurs;
- regardless of whether the extracurricular activity is in-season; and
- regardless of where or when the conduct occurs.

It is possible that a student who violates the *Benjamin ISD Student Code of Conduct* will incur consequences from both the appropriate school administrator and from his or her coach or sponsor for the same particular violation. It is also possible that a student participating in extracurricular activities could violate the *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* and be subject to discipline by a coach or sponsor without having violated the *Benjamin ISD Student Code of Conduct*.

### **III. Conduct Expectations**

**The following conduct is expected of all participants. Failure to meet these expectations can result in disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor:**

- Student commitment to a team or organization is expected for the entire season or activity. Students are encouraged to participate in more than one extracurricular activity; however students may not quit one sport or organization in order to participate in another while the sport or club that he or she quit is still active.
- Students who participate in extracurricular activities that involve competition among schools and school districts will conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. This includes behavior toward visiting teams or hosting teams as well as the opponent's fans. Benjamin ISD participants will be noted for clean, tough, competitive play. Praise your opponents and play beyond your ability.
- Students should arrive to practices (including workouts), meetings, and events on time and prepared.

- Students who cannot be present for a practice (including workouts), meeting, or event should call the coach, sponsor, team captain, or club president as soon as they are aware that they will be absent. Each activity will decide when missed practices, meetings, or workouts will be made-up; however, disciplinary action may still be taken if a participant is absent more than two times in a semester.
- Injured or ill students who are unable to participate, but are able to attend a practice (including workouts), meeting or event are required to dress appropriately and sit or stand with the rest of the group.
- Students are required to show respect at all times to coaches and sponsors.
- Students should refrain from wearing hair styles or hair colors that draw attention to themselves. Male students participating in sports are required to be clean shaven.
- Students should follow the rules promulgated in the *Benjamin ISD Student Code of Conduct*. Failure to do so may result in additional disciplinary measures related to the student's participation in extracurricular activities as determined by the coach or sponsor.

#### **IV. Prohibited Conduct**

**Benjamin ISD students who participate in extracurricular activities are prohibited at all times from:**

- possessing, smoking, selling, or otherwise using tobacco products;
- possessing or using drug paraphernalia;
- possessing, selling, or delivering to another person look-alike drugs or items represented to be drugs or contraband of any kind;
- possessing, selling, giving, delivering to another person, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, or any dangerous drug;
- engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to glue, aerosol paint, or volatile, mood-altering chemicals;
- engaging in serious misbehavior, as that term is defined in the Benjamin ISD Student Code of Conduct;

- attending any event at which underage drinking, smoking, or drug use is occurring (students will be allowed a slight concession for an amount of time long enough to determine that a violation is occurring and to leave the premises);
- riding in a vehicle containing alcohol unless a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult is present and aware of the presence of the alcohol;
- stealing;
- conduct that causes injury or harm to persons or property;
- using profanity, lewd or vulgar language, or obscene gestures;
- fighting;
- any conduct resulting in arrest and/or citations from law enforcement officers;
- inappropriate touching including “making out” in public places, sexual gestures, or exposing parts of the body that are ordinarily covered up in public;
- inappropriate behavior in public places.

**TRAINING RULES** – The public use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or possession or use of non-prescribed controlled substances or paraphernalia will not be tolerated. The use of any of the above items is illegal on school property and on any school-sponsored activity or trip. The use of these substances can become habit forming and addictive. Abuse of these substances is unhealthy and expensive, and in extreme cases of abuse and/or long term use, it will lead to health problems, family problems, and possibly social problems. In extreme cases, severe and sometimes life threatening injuries and/or premature death occurs due to accidents that can occur while under their influence. When an infraction of training rule is reported to a coach and/or administrator, a thorough inquiry into the reported infraction will be conducted and discipline action will be imposed only after there is proof and/or admission that an infraction occurred. **In order to help student athletes to avoid using these dangerous substances, the following consequences will be used for infractions that occur outside of a parent’s or legal guardian’s direct supervision and/or outside the student’s personal residence.**

*1<sup>st</sup> Offense*- Running 36 miles in twelve school days. At coaches discretion miles may be run in a shorter amount of time. Cannot participate in any athletic event until miles are run. If 36 miles are not run in twelve days, a student will start over 36 miles in twelve school days.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Offense*- Running 72 miles in 24 school days. At coaches discretion miles may be run in a shorter amount of time. Cannot participate in any athletic event until miles are run. If 72 miles are not run in 24 days, a student will start over 72 miles in 24 school days.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Offense*- one year suspension of all athletics.

These rules apply starting in Jr. High and continued through Senior year. **These rules do not start over every year, they are cumulative.**

**MISSING GAMES, WORKOUTS, OR TARDINESS** - An athlete who misses a game or workout for any reason will be expected to perform physical conditioning activities to make up for the missed physical conditioning activities that takes place during a regular workout or contest. This conditioning is not punishment. It is considered to be make-up work. The same policy is in place in the academic classroom; missed assignments must be made-up. An unexcused absence will result in a more severe conditioning activity. Except in extreme circumstances, any absence that is not reported prior to missing a game or practice is unexcused. It is the responsibility of the student athlete to personally communicate to the coach ahead of time if a game or practice is going to be missed. The supervising coach will determine whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused and will administer and monitor the conditioning activity. For each excused workout absence, an athlete will be required to:

- run two (2)miles;
- for each excused game absence an athlete will be required to run five (5) miles;
- for each unexcused workout absence, an athlete will be required to run five (5) miles;
- and fifteen (15) miles for each unexcused missed game. Running must be done in consecutive days, as quickly as possible.

Discretion of coaches of the rules will be used. Athletes who miss practice for any reason can expect limited or no playing time during games and contests immediately following the absences. Unexcused absences that occur more than once during a season are sufficient cause for permanent dismissal from the athletic program and may be done at the discretion of the supervising coach. Disciplinary action will also result from frequent tardiness, especially if it becomes habitual. A coach may, at his discretion, delay the running in case of illness.

The intention of this rule is not to make recovery difficult for those students with a serious health problem. A student who has a serious illness (mono, hepatitis, etc.), injury or surgery causing loss of 24 or more consecutive days of absence from workouts and games (mandated by doctor's orders) may be excused from the makeup work at the discretion of the coach. Absences from athletic practice and non-district games during the Christmas Break will be considered an excused absence (2 miles), if the athlete makes the coach(es) aware of the missed practice or game in advance.

**EQUIPMENT** - The athlete is responsible for all equipment and clothing issued by the athletic department. The athlete is responsible for the replacement cost of any items lost, stolen, or ruined through misuse or abuse. Each athlete is required to keep all equipment locked up and secure at all times except when in use. **Athletes are required to workout and play in school issued clothing and equipment unless specific permission is given by a coach to the contrary.**

**TEAM TRAVEL ARRANGMENTS** - Athletes are required to travel both to and from athletic contests in school transportation. Parents may request to have a student return with them following a contest provided that the parent picks up the student in person. A written note may also be requested by the coach releasing the school from liability. A student may not be released to anyone other than the parent(s) or legal guardian. In

extenuating circumstances and with prior written approval that has been filed in the principal's office, a student may be released to another adult. It is the responsibility of that student to make sure that travel bags, uniforms, shoes, etc. and personal belongings are taken with them or removed from school vehicles and secured in a locker room and/or locker by another student.

**TRAVEL ATTIRE** - Athletes are expected to dress in good taste while representing the school. Some examples of items that are inappropriate for travel include tank tops, any kind of clothing or cap that advertises an alcohol or tobacco product, T-shirts that are sexually suggestive or that represent deviant behavior, etc. The coach may request that a particular type of attire be worn for special occasions (play-off games, tournaments, etc.) and the supervising coach will always make the final decision as to what attire is deemed appropriate.

**TRAVELING ON SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION** - Since many of our trips are on school

nights, an atmosphere for studying should be maintained for those who need it. Radios, CD players, and ipods, etc. will be allowed only if used with earphones. All riders will clean buses and travel vehicles after each trip. The supervising coach will make the decision concerning student cell phone use.

**LOCKER ROOMS** – The athlete locker rooms are expected to be kept neat and clean. Towels should be kept in appropriate areas and trash, tape, etc. should be placed in wastebaskets. Clothing and other items should be kept clean and laundered on a regular and consistent basis. Personal belongings and valuables should be kept locked up in lockers when not being worn or used to insure security. **EACH ATHLETE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OR HER OWN PERSONAL PROPERTY AND ANY SCHOOL ISSUED PROPERTY AS WELL.**

**TRAINING ROOM AND WHIRLPOOL AREA** – These areas are for treating injured athletes. Do not use these areas or the supplies in them without permission.

**WEIGHT ROOM** – The weight room will be kept clean and organized after each usage. During team lifting periods no cups, cans, drinks, candy, etc. will be allowed. All weights and equipment should be replaced on weight racks and in the appropriate area after each use.

**ADDITIONAL RULES** – Each coach for the athletic period has the prerogative to establish additional rules pertaining to the activity supervised. These rules may include attendance and participation at practices, curfews, dress codes, and other general conduct for practices, contests, trips, etc.

## **V. Procedures**

The coach and/or sponsor will determine whether an *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* violation has occurred.

Upon determination of an *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* violation, the following individuals will be notified:

- the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s); and/or
- the appropriate school counselor to provide counseling, support, and guidance in dealing with issues associated with alcohol, drugs, mood-altering chemicals, and other prohibited activities.

Nothing in this *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* limits the authority of a coach or sponsor to impose reasonable sanctions, including extra workouts, for students who breach team or organization conduct expectations but do not engage in prohibited conduct.

## **VI. Disciplinary Action**

Coaches and sponsors will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Coaches and sponsors will strive for consistency in meting out punishment for *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* violations, but will also exercise sound professional discretion. Violation of any of the above-mentioned rules by a student participating in extracurricular activities will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- suspension from all extracurricular activities for the following time periods:
- removal from office in the case of a student office holder who commits an offense.

The principal will not ordinarily interfere in a coach or sponsor's judgment regarding appropriate discipline but has the authority to increase or decrease the punishment based on his or her assessment of the situation.

## **VII. Insurance for Students in Extracurricular Activities**

Benjamin ISD is not responsible for injuries of its students who are participating in sports. However, Benjamin ISD will carry insurance covering participation in practice or competition for athletes. The coverage for each injury will vary according to the accident. More detailed information can be obtained by calling the Benjamin ISD. We will answer any questions you have concerning our athletic program of insurance and injuries.

## **VIII. Acknowledgement**

A condition to participating in any extracurricular activity or holding any office (elected or appointed) is to sign an acknowledgement that the student has read and understands the *Extracurricular Code of Conduct*. The student's parent or guardian must also sign an acknowledgement. The acknowledgement states that the signing party understands the consequences for engaging in prohibited conduct.

## **Benjamin High School**

### **The Athlete's Commitment**

Individual and team success in athletics results from COMMITMENT. The extent to which I am able to make such commitments reflects my maturity as well as my dedication to my family, friends, school, community, and team. As an athlete representing Benjamin ISD I commit myself to the following standards:

1. To be worthy representative of my teammates and coaches, abiding by the school and community expectations and reflecting my team's values of commitment and hard work.
2. To maintain my health and fitness levels by following the Training Rules, the Code of Conduct, and the General Guidelines for Athletes for Benjamin High School.
3. To reflect the knowledge that a commitment to win is nothing without the commitment to attend and work hard in practice.
4. To attend every practice unless excused by my coach.
5. To understand that my future as a responsible adult relates more to my academic than my athletic success.
6. To find time to satisfy my family relationships and responsibilities.
7. To accept the responsibility of being a true team member: cooperation with teammates, shared responsibilities, positive interaction, and mutual respect.
8. To practice expressing my feelings and ideas intelligently and appropriately.
9. To develop a value system that will enable me to live a happy, healthy, productive lifestyle beyond my athletic career.

I have read and discussed with my parent(s) or guardians these athletic standards, the Training Rules, the Code of Conduct and General Guidelines. We understand the penalties that will be enforced if and when an infraction occurs. Our signatures below reflect our mutual acknowledgements of these standards and my personal commitment to adhere and to live by them.

### **Benjamin Cheerleader & Pep Squad Guidelines**

1. Any cheerleader who does not attend summer camp for any reason not excused by the cheerleader coach and principal will be dismissed from the squad.
2. Cheerleaders will attend all practices called by the cheerleader coach. Cheerleaders are a TEAM, subject to practice rules set forth by the cheerleader coach. Cheerleaders will practice a minimum of once a week during football season. If an extra practice is necessary, it will be on the following day to insure readiness for pep rally and game performances.
3. Cheerleaders and pep squad will not individually, or as a squad, participate in any actions during a pep rally, skit, or game that has not been cleared, in detail, with the cheerleader coach. The entire agenda of the pep rally will be discussed with and approved by the cheerleader coach prior to the pep rally. Nothing will be added to a pep rally agenda without the prior knowledge of the cheerleader coach. The cheerleaders will supply the coach a written copy of the pep rally agenda by 4:00 on Wednesday afternoon.
4. Cheerleaders and pep squad will not participate in any decorating or fund raising, on or off school property, without the complete knowledge or approval of the cheerleader coach and principal.
5. All fund raising activities must be approved by the superintendent.

6. Cheerleaders and pep squad are under the direct supervision of a school-appointed Cheerleader Coach. As with any other school-sponsored team, the cheerleaders will recognize the authority of the cheerleader coach and respect all administrative decisions. Failure to do so may result in probation or suspension.
7. Cheerleaders and pep squad will be expected to travel as a squad to and from out of town games. If parents want to have their child ride home with them, a written note must be given to the cheerleader coach before the end of the game. This written release must be signed by their legal guardian prior to leaving the event.
8. Any cheerleader or pep squad member who becomes ineligible academically for any two grading periods will be dismissed from the squad for the year.
9. Any cheerleader or pep squad member who fails to meet attendance requirements as specified in the school policy will be dismissed from the squad for the year.
10. Cheerleaders and pep squad will be expected to work together, promote school spirit at all times, exhibit excellent sportsmanship and citizenship. Any cheerleader or pep squad exhibiting behavior or conduct unbecoming to the office of cheerleader may, at the discretion of the cheerleader coach and principal, be placed on probation or suspended, in accordance with the severity of the offense. While on school property, or while acting as cheerleader or pep squad at any other school location, should a cheerleader or pep squad member be found in possession of or under the influence of any illegal substance or alcoholic beverage, the cheerleader or pep squad member will be dismissed from the squad as well as assessed any punishment in accordance with Student Handbook current for the year. Cheerleaders or pep squad member will also be dismissed from the squad for the involvement of law officers with the matter of alcohol or drug use. Any felony charge by law at any time will constitute immediate suspension, and if convicted will lead to dismissal. Cheerleaders or pep squad member smoking while in uniform will be dismissed from the squad.
11. Cheerleaders who are absent from the practice prior to the pep rally for an unexcused reason will not be permitted to perform at the pep rally. Cheerleaders who are absent from school for more than one half the school day due to illness without a medical note, or for an unexcused reason, shall not participate in the pep rally or ball game that night. Students assigned to in school suspension will be dismissed from activities for that week.
12. All absences and tardies must be accompanied by written excuse before the absence or tardy. If this is not possible, an attempt should be made to verbally notify the cheerleader coach either in person or by phone. Just as in school, an absence with no note will be unexcused. Also, three tardies count as one absence.
13. Cheerleaders and pep squad will be responsible for taking the stereo to and from the gym or games. Cheerleaders and pep squad are responsible for making sure it is returned in its original place immediately after use.
14. Current cheerleaders will aid in teaching cheers to others trying out for cheerleader.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The Student must be eligible according to UIL rules to tryout for and/or hold the position of cheerleader or mascot.

The student must return to the office before the tryouts the Parental Consent Form for Cheerleading/Mascot Position, which contains information regarding parent responsibility toward financial obligation, rules, etc. This form must be signed by at least one parent.

## TRYOUTS

Tryouts for mascot and cheerleader will be judged and tabulated as one third for each of the following:

1. Student body- Grades 8-11 will convene during Tutorials to watch tryouts and vote by secret ballot for 4 cheerleaders and 1 mascot of choice. Parents and other interested parties may attend.
2. Outside judge-An impartial person who has cheerleading affiliation by being a sponsor, former cheerleader, or present cheerleader who does not know any of the candidates will judge the cheerleaders and mascot during last period and after school. This will be a closed session. The remaining candidates and the sponsor will remain in the preparation room. Based on a point system, the judge will consider grooming enthusiasm, technique, and jumps. Tumbling is optional and does not figure into the point-based criteria.
3. Faculty and administration-The teachers who have the candidate in class the second semester will fill out ballots based on academic standing, dependability, attitude, and motivation.

The candidates may try out for both cheerleader and mascot.

The candidates may try out in groups but must be prepared to try out individually if the judge so desires.

The candidates will perform one mutually selected cheer and will perform one cheer of individual choice.

- Four cheerleaders will be selected each year. A mascot will be selected using the same criteria and selection process.
- A cheerleader must pay for the cost incurred while holding the position of cheerleader such as camp clothes, shoes, and camp if required by administration.
- Students trying out must be in attendance at least one full six weeks prior to elections. Elections will be held during April or May of each year.
- A student, to be eligible for tryouts, must have at least an overall average of 70 during the school year prior to elections.
- A cheerleader may not eat, drink, chew gum, or visit with anyone while on the field.
- A cheerleader shall not sit in stands or leave the squad until the end of the game without permission of the sponsor or principal. A cheerleader shall be on the field cheering whenever the football team is on the field playing football.
- A cheerleader is responsible for all uniforms and equipment issued by the school. The cheerleader is responsible for the replacement cost of any items lost, stolen, or ruined through misuse or abuse.



-----**Please Sign and Return**-----

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Benjamin ISD *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* and agree to adhere to these rules as a condition for my voluntary participation in Benjamin ISD extracurricular activities. I understand that failure to do so will result in disciplinary measures related to my extracurricular participation.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Benjamin ISD *Extracurricular Code of Conduct* and understand requirements for my child's voluntary participation in Benjamin ISD extracurricular activities. I understand the consequences that my child will face if he or she fails to adhere to these rules and agree to such terms.

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_