

# STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK

## 2024-2025



[lifeschool.net](https://lifeschool.net)

*Life School admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. Admission will not be based on gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic or athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend.*

*Board Approved July 17, 2024*

# Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
<b>SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 About Life School .....	3
1.2 Charter Schools.....	3
1.3 Life School’s Mission Statement.....	3
1.4 Statement of Non-Discrimination.....	4
1.5 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001 .....	4
1.6 Absence and Tardiness.....	5
1.7 Attendance .....	8
1.8 Attendance for Credit or Final Grade .....	9
1.9 Dismissal Procedures.....	10
1.10 Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work.....	10
1.11 Distribution of Materials or Documents.....	10
1.12 Dress and Grooming.....	11
1.13 Driver’s License Attendance Verification .....	15
1.14 Food Service .....	15
1.15 General Admission and Enrollment Information .....	16
1.16 Identification Cards.....	17
1.17 Leaving Campus During School Day .....	17
1.18 Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence .....	18
1.19 Prayer and Meditation .....	18
1.20 Recitation of the Declaration of Independence .....	18
1.21 Release of Students from School.....	18
1.22 Review and Reporting of Library Materials .....	18
1.23 Service Animals.....	19
1.24 Student Drivers and Parking .....	19
1.25 Student Fees .....	20
1.26 Student Information.....	21
1.27 Textbooks and Curriculum Materials .....	22
1.28 Transportation .....	23
1.29 Withdrawals .....	24
<b>SECTION 2: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1 Administration of Medication.....	25
2.2 Alcohol-Free School Notice .....	26
2.3 Asbestos Management Plan.....	26
2.4 Bacterial Meningitis Information .....	26
2.5 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs.....	28
2.6 Communicable Diseases.....	28
2.7 Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies.....	29
2.8 Drug-Free School Notice.....	30
2.9 Emergency Medical Treatment .....	30
2.10 Food Allergy Information.....	31
2.11 Freedom from Bullying .....	31
2.12 Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.....	34
2.13 Freedom from Sexual Harassment .....	36
2.14 Head Lice.....	42
2.15 Health and Fitness Screenings and Testing .....	43
2.16 Immunization Requirements .....	44
2.17 Interrogations and Searches.....	46

2.18	Mental and Physical Health Resources.....	47
2.19	Mental Health Promotion and Intervention.....	48
2.20	Pest Control Information.....	49
2.21	Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children.....	49
2.22	Preparedness Training.....	52
2.23	Seizure Management and Treatment Plan.....	52
2.24	Steroid Notice.....	53
2.25	Student Illness.....	53
2.26	Student Injury.....	54
2.27	Student Agreement for Responsible Use of Technology.....	54
2.28	Student Possession of Personal Electronic Devices and Technology Resources.....	60
2.29	Suicide Awareness.....	61
2.30	Tobacco/Vaping Devices.....	61
2.31	Videotaping of Students.....	62
2.32	Visitor and Volunteer Policy.....	62
<b>SECTION 3: ACADEMICS AND GRADING.....</b>		<b>65</b>
3.1	Academic Integrity.....	65
3.2	Academic Programs.....	65
3.3	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test.....	65
3.4	Career and Technical Education Programs.....	65
3.5	College Credit Courses.....	66
3.6	Computer Resources.....	66
3.7	Distance Learning.....	67
3.8	Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations.....	67
3.9	Graduation (High School Grades Only).....	68
3.10	Graduation Ceremony.....	71
3.11	Promotion and Retention.....	71
3.12	Report Cards.....	72
3.13	Required Curriculum.....	72
3.14	Special Programs.....	73
3.15	Standardized Testing.....	76
<b>SECTION 4: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT.....</b>		<b>79</b>
4.1	Purpose of the Student Code of Conduct.....	79
4.2	Authority and Jurisdiction.....	80
4.3	Law Enforcement Agency Interaction with Students.....	80
4.4	Life School Discipline Philosophy:.....	81
4.5	Standards for Student Conduct.....	82
4.6	Disruptions.....	82
4.7	Discipline Violation.....	82
4.8	Discipline Management Techniques.....	82
4.9	Restorative Discipline Practices.....	83
4.10	Procedures for Use of Restraint.....	84
4.1	Procedures for Use of Time-Out.....	85
4.12	Student Code of Conduct Offenses.....	85
4.13	Student Code of Conduct Consequences.....	90
4.14	Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals.....	91
4.15	Placement of Students with Disabilities.....	93
4.16	Gun-Free Schools Act.....	94
<b>SECTION 5: ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS.....</b>		<b>94</b>
5.1	Parent Contact Information.....	94
5.2	Accommodations for Military Families.....	95
5.3	Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction.....	95
5.4	Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.....	96
5.5	Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service.....	96

5.6	General Student Records.....	96
5.7	Notice of Teacher Qualifications.....	97
5.8	Notice of Threat Assessment.....	97
5.9	Parent Portal .....	97
5.10	Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns .....	97
	<b>SECTION 6: IMPORTANT NOTICES AND REQUIRED FORMS .....</b>	<b>100</b>
6.1	Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality.....	100
6.2	Surveys and Activities.....	104
	Directory Information Opt-Out Form.....	105
	Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form.....	106
	Food Allergy Notification Form.....	107
	<b>SECTION 7: GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>108</b>

## Preface

To Life School Students and Parents:

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

The administration, faculty and staff of Life School desire that you understand clearly our school's philosophy, general guidelines, and curriculum offerings so that your child may have a positive learning experience during the school year. The Student/Parent Handbook will assist you in planning and partnering with the school in a joint effort to meet your student's individual needs.

It is imperative students and parents become familiar with this handbook, including our school's uniform requirements, discipline system, and campus operating guidelines.

We have attempted to make the language in this Handbook as straightforward as possible. Please note that the term "parent" is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

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

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

On behalf of the entire Life School staff and community, best wishes for a great 2024-25 school year!

## **SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 About Life School**

Since 1998, Life School has provided families with a tuition-free, high quality public school option. We opened our doors in 1998 with 266 students enrolled at our Life School Oak Cliff campus. Life School is focused on our mission to develop leaders with life skills through strong academics, character training, and partnerships with parents and the community. Additionally, we strive to provide students with a robust experience by offering a wide range of fine arts and athletic programs to support their diverse interests and passions. When a family enrolls in Life School, they are choosing an exemplary education along with a host of extracurricular opportunities that enable students to reach their full potential.

Life School is committed to developing the whole student through our LifeLeader character training program. These 15 character attributes are strategically woven into our talent hiring and evaluation process, student and staff recognitions, positive-behavior interventions and supports, and daily operations to equip our students, teachers and staff to be *Ready to Learn*, *Ready to Lead* and *Ready for Life*.

#### **Life Leader Attributes**

##### **Ready to Learn**

Critical Thinking  
Global Perspective  
Information Literacy

##### **Ready to Lead**

Collaborative  
Effective Communicator  
Ethical Leadership  
Humility  
Problem Solver  
Social Awareness

##### **Ready for Life**

Citizenship  
Goal-Oriented  
Financial Literacy  
Resilient  
Self-Aware  
Self-Managed

### **1.2 Charter Schools**

In February of 1996, the Texas Legislature authorized the creation of state charter schools. These schools are independent public schools and are required to meet state accreditation requirements. Charter schools are organized as 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations that are awarded a contract by the State of Texas to operate a public school system. The non-profit organization governing our school is Life School of Dallas. A Board of Directors has been established to create and implement the policies and procedures of the charter school and to partner with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. Charter schools are accountable to the State of Texas and are monitored by the Texas Education Agency to ensure that they meet both state and federal guidelines. Many rules and regulations that apply to traditional ISDs have been removed from charter schools; yet with this freedom comes fiscal and student academic accountability.

### **1.3 Life School's Mission Statement**

The mission of Life School is to develop leaders with life skills through strong academics, character training, and partnerships with parents and the community.

## **1.4 Statement of Non-Discrimination**

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

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

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

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, is:
  - For Staff: Devonne Hutson, Director of Talent, 132 E. Ovilla Road, Suite A, Red Oak, Texas 75154, (469) 850-5433, [devonne.hutson@lifeschools.net](mailto:devonne.hutson@lifeschools.net).
  - For Students: Joy Shepherd, Director of Student Services, 132 E. Ovilla Road, Suite A, Red Oak, Texas 75154, (469) 850-5433, [joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net](mailto:joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net).
- The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is:
  - Joy Shepherd, Director of Student Services, 132 E. Ovilla Road, Suite A, Red Oak, Texas 75154, (469) 850-5433, [joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net](mailto:joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net).
- The Title VI \ Age Discrimination Compliance Coordinator for concerns regarding discrimination on the base of race, color, national origin, religion, age, and all other discriminating concerns is:
  - For Staff: Devonne Hutson, Director of Talent, 132 E. Ovilla Road, Suite A, Red Oak, Texas 75154, (469) 850-5433, [devonne.hutson@lifeschools.net](mailto:devonne.hutson@lifeschools.net).
  - For Students: Joy Shepherd, Director of Student Services, 132 E. Ovilla Road, Suite A, Red Oak, Texas 75154, (469) 850-5433, [joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net](mailto:joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net).

## **1.5 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001**

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

- Are abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters.

- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

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

Questions concerning assistance offered to homeless students can be obtained from Susan Boggs, District Special Programs Coordinator, [susan.boggs@lifeschools.net](mailto:susan.boggs@lifeschools.net), and (469) 850-5433.

## **1.6 Absence and Tardiness**

A student absent from school shall provide a note that describes the reason for the absence. The note shall be signed by the student’s parent. If the student is 18 or older and/or has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, the student may sign in place of a parent. Parents may be required to notify the attendance office on the day of the student’s absence to report the reason for the absence. You may receive a phone call from school personnel verifying your child’s absence. The note signed by the parent must contain the following information:

- The student’s first, last name and grade
- The date(s) of the absence
- The reason for the absence (example: the student had the flu, a court appearance)
- The parent’s daytime telephone number
- The parent’s signature

Handwritten notes from parents will not excuse an absence. If the student is absent three consecutive days due to illness a doctor’s note should be provided.

Students in grades KG-6 are considered absent after 10:00 a.m. Attendance is taken each class period in grades 7-12 and students must be present in a class at least 30 minutes to be counted present each class period.

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

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



### *Excused Absences*

State law allows exemptions to compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events, as well as temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent:

- An absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's parent provides a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment.
- An absence for a student who is 15 years of age or older to visit a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner license, provided that more than one day of school may not be excused during the period the student is enrolled in high school for the purpose of (i) obtaining a driver's license or (ii) obtaining a learner license, and the school verifies the student's visit to the driver's license office in accordance with procedures adopted by Life School.
- Religious or holy day observance. To be considered a religious holy day, the day should be one generally recognized by the student's religious denomination as a holy day that is required to be observed by all members of that denomination. Church retreats, camps, and mission trips and individual religious rites (baptisms, christenings, bar mitzvahs, etc.) are not considered holy days. For purposes of excusing a student from attending school to observe a religious holy day, Life School may not require documentation from a clergy member or other religious leader, and shall accept a note from the student's parent verifying the purpose of the student's absence.
- An absence for a student in 6th through 12th grade that misses school for the purpose of playing "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in Texas for a deceased veteran.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship.
- Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the principal prior to the absence.
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who need to attend:
  - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, if the student either begins classes or returns to class on the same day as the appointment. A note from health care provider must be provided upon the student's arrival or return to campus. □ Death in the family (copy of obituary or funeral program required).
- A junior or senior student may also be absent with excuse for up to two days per school year for purposes of, respectively, visiting a college or university and/or for a career investigation day for the purpose of determining the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional field, so long as the student obtains permission for the visit from the principal, follows Life School's procedures to verify the visit, and makes up any work missed due to the absence.
- Life School may excuse up to four days of school for a high school student who is 17 years of age or older to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that Life School verifies the student's activities relating to pursuing enlistment.
- Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student who to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or is immediately returned from continuous deployment of at least four months

outside the locality where the parent, stepparent, or guardian regularly resides may be excused up to five days.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, serving as an election clerk and a death in the family, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by Life School.

Notes concerning an absence should be received within three school days of the student's return to school, or the absence may become an unexcused absence. A note must be provided upon return even if the school was previously notified of the absence by phone call. A principal or assistant principal may require a physician's verification of an illness at any time.

### ***Unexcused Absences***

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the campus principal due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence. Handwritten notes from parents **will not** be considered sufficient to excuse an absence.

### ***Tardiness and Late Arrival***

Students must be in the building in their designated area by the campus start time (see times at bottom of school calendar). Repeated tardiness will result in disciplinary action as allowed by the Student Code of Conduct.

#### *Tardy procedures are as follows for Kindergarten - 6th Grades:*

Contact your campus administration for specific information about elementary tardy procedures. **Note:** Three Early Releases/Tardies equal an absence when determining perfect attendance recognition.

#### *Tardy procedures are as follows for 7th - 12th Grades:*

Secondary students must be in the building with their class in their designated area at the campus specific start time. Students are considered tardy when they arrive to a class after it has begun without any prior administrator or teacher approval. Students more than five minutes late to any class without approval will be considered "skipping" class. A tardy more than 15 minutes to any class becomes an absence. All tardies will be subject to disciplinary consequences according to campus procedures. **Note:** Three Early Releases/Tardies equal an absence when determining perfect attendance recognition.

### ***Make-Up Assignments***

Students are expected to complete work missed during any absence from class, including extracurricular and co-curricular, and will receive the grades earned. A grace period equal to the number of days missed, plus one day, is allowed for excused absences. Major assignments are due on the assigned date regardless of absences.

If the student is absent for more than three days, the office should be contacted at the beginning of the school day to obtain the student's make-up assignments by the end of the next day.

In the event that a student has scheduled a make-up exam date and is absent on that day, the student should be prepared upon returning to the class to take the make-up exam.

### ***Late Work***

Late work will be accepted according to the campus late work policy.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

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

## **1.7 Attendance**

Consistent school attendance is an essential component of each student's education. Absences from school will affect a student's ability to succeed in class; therefore, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Additionally, state law mandates compulsory school attendance for children of a certain age. Life School policy addresses attendance for course credit and the impact on a student's final grade later in the handbook.

### ***Perfect Attendance***

Students who attend all days class is in session will receive a perfect attendance award. Students who accumulate three or more tardies and/or early dismissals during the entire year will not receive a perfect attendance certificate. Excused and unexcused absences will count against perfect attendance awards.

### ***Texas Compulsory Attendance Law***

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of six and 19 must attend school, any applicable accelerated instruction programs, and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. Life School staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered "truant" and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In some instances, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, excessive absence may lead to a recommendation for expulsion. Prior to implementing an expulsion for excessive actions, Life School will follow the due process procedures outlined in Section 4.11 (Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals) of the Student Code of Conduct. Life School may also impose a behavior improvement plan to address excessive absences.

Kindergarten students are required to attend school and are subject to compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

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

### ***Tracking Student Attendance***

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

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

**Notice to Parents:** *Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093; and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a).*

*Life School shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent is needed to discuss the absences.*

## **1.8 Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days a class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences.

A student who is in attendance for at least 75%, but fewer than 90%, of the days a class is offered may have credit restored or earn a final grade if the student completes a plan approved by the principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirement of the class.

If a student attends fewer than 75% of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade, if appropriate. A recommendation may be made by the principal or designee to the school attendance review committee to deny the student credit or a final grade for that class.

Upon being notified of the recommendation to deny a student credit or a final grade, a student's parent may request a hearing before the school attendance review committee to present information regarding why their child's absence should not result in loss of credit. This request must be made in writing within five school days of receipt of notification. The attendance committee may find that denial of credit is appropriate or that the parent has presented compelling evidence that their child should not be denied credit.

The attendance review committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absence:

1. All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered, with consideration given to special circumstances as defined by the Texas Education Code.
2. For a student transferring into Life School after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
3. In reaching consensus about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
4. The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.

5. The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
6. The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
7. The student, parent or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the attendance review committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the committee determines there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the committee's decision beginning with level 2 of the district's grievance process by filing a written request with the appropriate party. The appeal notice must be postmarked to the appropriate campus address within five days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied.

**Any student who is appealing an attendance review committee decision is not eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony.**

### **1.9 Dismissal Procedures**

Students are expected to be picked up promptly at dismissal time. During dismissal, please observe designated procedures for pick up. The campus end times are located at the bottom of the school calendar. Life School is not liable for the well-being of students before/after designated hours.

Vehicle hangtags are issued for grades K-6 for verification of eligibility to pick up. On all campuses, if any questions arise about pick up eligibility, front office personnel will verify driver's license information with the emergency contacts listed in Frontline. Please be sure that all people designated to pick up your child are listed in your emergency contacts; otherwise, the student will not be released. Parent/guardian must submit written notification and proper identification to the campus administration if they require designation of other pick up arrangements.

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

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

### **1.11 Distribution of Materials or Documents**

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

Publications prepared by and for Life School may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the principal and/or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, murals, etc.

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

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

Non-school literature shall not be distributed by students on Life School property if:

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

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

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

### **1.12 Dress and Grooming**

The school's dress and grooming standards are designed to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. Students must come to school cleanly and neatly groomed and wearing clothing that will not be a health or safety hazard to the student or others, and that will not distract from or interfere with the educational atmosphere of the school. Students are required to arrive in proper attire every day.

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

As authorized by state law and the Life School charter, students are required to wear uniforms to school. Parents must provide their student(s) with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. Life School may provide uniform vouchers for economically disadvantaged students. A request for school assistance for purchasing uniforms must be made in writing to the principal or designee and include evidence of the inability to pay. Further details are available in the principal's office.

Regarding extracurricular activities, principals, in cooperation with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extracurricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in

the activity. Students who violate dress and grooming standards established for such an activity may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period determined by the principal or sponsor and may be subject to other disciplinary action, as specified in the Student Code of Conduct.

Students who do not follow the school's guidelines for personal attire and appearance may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, a parent may be contacted to bring an acceptable change of clothing to school, and the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day until a change of clothes is brought to the school.

Life School students are expected to dress in a manner that conveys respect for their learning community and communicates a message of personal confidence and pride. The following specific guidelines must be adhered to:

### ***Dress Code***

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

### ***Guidelines***

1. No inappropriate dress shall be worn at any time. Appropriate undergarments must be worn at all times.
2. A parent may be required to bring a change of clothing for any child wearing an item of clothing that the principal finds to be inappropriate or that interferes with the learning environment.
3. No hats, caps, shower caps, sweatbands, etc. shall be worn inside the school building.
4. Pants must be worn in a proper manner on the waist.
5. Shirts must remain tucked in at all times.
6. Bandanas are not allowed on school property at any time.
7. Tattoos must be appropriate and gang symbols are not allowed.
8. Hair must be kept in a fashion that does not pose a health or safety risk to others. Hairstyles considered by the school administration to be distracting and/or disruptive to the educational environment are prohibited. In addition, hair symbols and/or styles which are identified with inappropriate advertising or statements that are offensive or inflammatory are prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to alcoholic beverages, profanity, sex, tobacco, drugs, gangs, guns and other weapons, excessively violent or gory imagery, and the promotion of violence. Additionally, only natural hair colors are permitted. If there is a discrepancy on what is deemed appropriate regarding hair style or color, the final determination will be made by the campus principal.
9. Facial hair must be neat and groomed for boys.
10. Excessive dress code violations will be treated as defiant and disrespectful behavior and may result in a disciplinary referral.

### ***Uniform Requirements***

Life School is a school of choice that requires students to wear uniforms, as authorized by state law and the Life School charter. Student uniforms make a statement that students belong to a unique school environment with a strong commitment to educational excellence. The uniqueness of the student does not rest in the

apparel they wear, but in the inner qualities and gifts of the student. If you are unable to provide the required uniform(s) for your student, you may contact campus administration for possible assistance.

**Levines Department Store** 511 W. Jefferson Blvd. Dallas, TX 75208

Phone: (214) 948-7396

Fax: (214) 946-2352

**Levines Department Store** 2550 W. Redbird Ln. Dallas, TX 75237

Phone: (214) 330-8186

Fax: (214) 330-8188

**Lands' End** [www.landsend.com/school](http://www.landsend.com/school)

Preferred School Number Search: 900181363

1-800-469-2222

Uniform shirts must have the Life School crest. The following items listed with an asterisk (\*) must be purchased from one of the companies listed above.

***\*Shirts***

- Grades K – 12 – White oxford shirt (button-down collar)
- Grades K – 6 – Red or navy polo shirt, (long or short sleeved)
- Grades 7 – 12 – Hunter green or navy polo shirt, (long or short sleeved)

***\*Sweaters/Sweatshirts/Jackets***

- Grades K – 12 – Navy cardigan, “V” neck sweater or sweatshirt (uniform shirts must be worn underneath)
- Only Life School uniform jackets are allowed to be worn in the building. Non-Life School jackets, hoodies, and sweatshirts may be worn on campus at the discretion of campus administration. Parents should check with campus administration before purchasing these items.

***Spirit Sweatshirts/Jackets***

- Grades K – 12 – May be worn at the discretion of campus administration (uniform shirts must be worn underneath). Parents should check with campus administration before purchasing these items.

***Pants/Shorts***

- Grades K – 6 – Navy pants or walking shorts (no more than 2 inches above the knee).
- Grades 7 – 12 – Khaki pants or walking shorts (no more than 2 inches above the knee).
- The following examples are unacceptable: cargo pants, cargo shorts, jogger pants and denim wear.
- All pants or shorts must be worn with a belt.

***\*Skirts/Jumpers/Modesty Skirts (no more than 2 inches above the knee)***

- Grades K – 3: Plaid jumper
- Grades K – 6: Plaid or navy modesty skirt
- Grades 7 – 12: Khaki skirt
- Girls should wear navy modesty shorts under jumpers and skirts



- If stockings/panty hose are worn, these should be solid blue, black, or white and cover the full length of the leg; knee/thigh high stockings or panty hose with wide netting or holes are not allowed.

***Accessories (Grades K – 12)***

- Belts are required for grades 5 – 12 only and must be worn at the natural waist.
- Undershirts must be solid colors.
- Jewelry
  - Earrings are allowed for males and females.
  - Students may be asked to remove earrings for Athletics/P.E. classes for safety reasons.
  - Piercings anywhere else on the body, except the ears are not allowed.

Jewelry should not cause a disruption to the learning environment or the student may be asked to remove such items. Campus administration reserves the right to make the final decision.

***Shoes (Grades K – 12)***

Appropriate shoes, with non-marking soles, must be worn at all times (can be athletic, loafer style, or dress shoes). The following examples are unacceptable: house shoes, sandals, flip-flops, wheeled shoes, light up shoes, open-toed shoes, or shoes with more than 1 inch heels. Shoes must have both closed toe and closed heel.

***Optional Spirit Wear (Grades K – 12)***

Life School sponsored t-shirts, senior shirts, sweatshirts, spirit wear, college shirts or college jackets may be worn at the discretion of campus administration.

In order to minimize loss and simplify identification, all clothing should be labeled with the student’s first and last name.

***Uniform Infractions***

Uniform infractions will be handled according to campus procedures.

***Free Dress / Jean Day Guidelines***

All free dress or jean day dress must meet the requirements of the district dress code and should not be a distraction to the learning environment. Campus administration reserves the right to make the final determination.

- Pants must be worn at the natural waist.
- Shorts must be the same length as uniform shorts.
- Clothing must not be worn too tightly.
- No midriffs or short skirts.
- No shirts with inappropriate logos or words.
- No tank tops or spaghetti straps.
- No flip-flop sandals.
- No puffy jackets/vest.
- Rules from handbook regarding jewelry apply.

- Students should wear only blue or black denim jeans, shorts or skirts. There should not be any printed logos or emblems on jeans.
- Torn jeans or jeans with holes are not acceptable.

**\*Additional guidelines are at the discretion of campus administration.**

### **1.13 Driver’s License Attendance Verification**

The Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) is required to verify the attendance records of a student between the ages of 16 and 18 that is seeking to obtain or renew a driver’s license. In order for DPS to access this information or, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the attendance information to DPS, written parental permission must be obtained. Students may obtain the required Verification of Enrollment (“VOE”) form from the school office. High school students who do not comply with the 90% attendance rule in the prior semester may be denied approval of a Driver’s License/Verification of Enrollment Form.

#### ***Students with Disabilities***

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

### **1.14 Food Service**

Life School participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches. Guidelines set by the Texas Department of Agriculture (“TDA”) and United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) are followed to meet the nutritional needs of all students. Menus may be obtained at the school office, viewed online at [www.lifeschool.net](http://www.lifeschool.net), or through the Nutrislice App.

Free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student’s participation is confidential. See district website Parent Resources page and click on Food Service link under District Information or contact campus to apply. Students must apply for meal assistance each school year. Parents are encouraged to fill out the application prior to the first day of school.

Parents can pay for student lunches in the following ways:

1. Parents can create a free online account at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) and pay for student’s meals electronically. This account allows parents the opportunity to view their student’s account which will show breakfast and lunch transactions as well as deposits.
2. Students can pay for their meal as they go through the line.

Contact your campus for current meal prices.

Parents will be contacted once a student has accrued a charge informing them they need to apply funds to the student’s account. If funds have not been received after two school weeks, the student will receive an alternate meal that meets TDA and USDA guidelines for school meal service.

Accounts that have a positive lunch balance at the end of the school year will be rolled forward to the new school year. Reimbursements will only be given if a student withdraws from Life School and will not be

returning the following year, or a student's eligibility status changes and there is no potential for the student to use the funds. All refunds must be requested prior to June 30 of the current school year.

### ***State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines***

The TDA places strict limits on any food or drink provided or sold to students other than through Life School's food and nutrition services. More detailed information may be obtained at the school office or online at [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org).

### ***Additional Food Service Guidelines***

- Parents/Guardians are welcome to eat lunch with their child on campus. Parents may only bring lunch for their own children. Students and parents may not bring in or give away food to other students during lunch times.
- Students and parents ***are not*** allowed to use food delivery services to have food brought to school during school hours.

## **1.15 General Admission and Enrollment Information**

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

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

### ***Exclusion from Admission***

As authorized by Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), Life School shall exclude from enrollment those students who have a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problems under Subchapter A, Chapter 37 of the Education Code (meaning students who have been expelled from any school or were assigned to a disciplinary alternative education program).

### ***Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery***

Students wanting to attend Life School must submit an application during the school's open enrollment period, which is designated by the school administration. Applications for admission are available online through the Life School website.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. If Life School receives more applications than it has spots available in any grade level, it will conduct a random lottery through the process adopted by the administration. Each applicant selected during the lottery (up until all open seats are filled) will be offered admission. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the next school year, the

individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

If an application is received after the application period has passed, the applicant's name will be added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who timely applied.

### ***Exceptions to Lottery Process***

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

### ***Transfer of Students Who Are Children of Peace Officers***

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

### ***Transfer of Students Who Are Children of Servicemembers***

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

## **1.16 Identification Cards**

The Life School Student ID card is the property of Life School. Campus administration will set the guidelines for student ID requirements. A replacement fee may be charged for lost, stolen, or destroyed cards. A new badge will not be issued until the fee is paid. Once a new badge has been printed, this fee is non-refundable. The student ID card will be used for verification of current enrollment at Life School and will be used for a variety of activities. The student ID card must be surrendered when a student is no longer enrolled in Life School.

## **1.17 Leaving Campus During School Day**

Upon arrival on school grounds, students may not leave campus at any time or for any reason without checking out in the office. A student driver requesting to leave school during the day must bring a note from his/her parent. Additionally, campus administration will need to obtain verbal verification from the student's parent before the student is allowed to leave. Every parent must show picture identification or vehicle hangtag to school personnel when signing out their student for any reason. The school nurse may also determine if a student should be sent home due to illness and will notify the student's parent.

We request that you do not check out your student after 30 minutes prior to the end of the school day. To minimize loss of instructional time, we will not send for your student until you arrive at school. Please send a positive message to your student about the importance of being in school every day.

### ***Early Dismissal for Secondary Students***

A student scheduled for early dismissal must leave the campus within the class-change period after their last scheduled class, unless the student has obtained a permit from a school staff member to remain at a specific location on campus. A student with this permit must report to the location designated on the permit

prior to the beginning of the next class period. Any student remaining on campus without authorization and without supervision is subject to disciplinary action.

### **1.18 Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

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

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

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

### **1.19 Prayer and Meditation**

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

### **1.20 Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

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

### **1.21 Release of Students from School**

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

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

### **1.22 Review and Reporting of Library Materials**

Not later than January 1 of every odd-numbered year, Life School shall review the content of each library material in the catalog of the school library that is rated as sexually relevant material under Texas Education Code §35.002(a) by the library material vendor and determine, in accordance with Life School Board policy

as to whether to retain each library material reviewed under and shall post a report on the Life School website and/or provide physical copies of the report at the school's central administrative building.

The posted report must include the title of each library material reviewed, the decision of the review committee, and the location of the library material.

### **1.23 Service Animals**

For health and safety reasons, students may not bring animals (including therapy, well-being, comfort, companionship, and emotional support animals) to school. However, Life School will make reasonable exceptions to this policy for service animals because of a student's disability in accordance with applicable law.

“Service animal” means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition, unless otherwise allowed by Board Policy. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability.

A parent of a student who uses a service animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service animal on campus. Life School will attempt to accommodate a request for a service animal as quickly as possible.

### **1.24 Student Drivers and Parking**

Students should park their cars immediately upon arrival at school and not use/enter them until the time of departure from campus at the close of the school day. Students are not to sit in parked cars on the campus at any time. Students who enter their vehicles or go to the student parking lot during this time without permission may be assigned discipline consequences, which may include loss of parking privileges.

Student parking privileges are restricted to the following regulations:

- Students may park only in areas designated by campus administration.
- Students who park in unassigned areas will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Vehicles parked in unassigned areas or otherwise improperly parked are subject to being towed at the owner's expense.
- All student cars must be registered in the high school office.
- All student cars will be required to display a parking hangtag, acquired from the high school for a fee. Any student whose car does not display such a hangtag will be subject to disciplinary action, and the vehicle will be towed at the owner's expense.
- Students who lose their permit/hangtag will have to pay for a replacement.
- Students must obey all traffic regulations. Rules are to be observed at all times while the vehicle is on school property.
- School administrators may search vehicles as allowed by Life School policy and in accordance with applicable law. Anything found in a vehicle driven to school by a student is considered to be in the possession of a student.

Students are not authorized to drive on campus until a *Student Driver Information Form* is completed and returned to the high school office.

Failure to follow any above regulations could result in disciplinary action as allowed by the Student Code of Conduct.

In some instances, it may be necessary for a student to drive to and/or from Dallas County Community College System (“DCCCS”) or Navarro College to attend dual credit courses. Arriving late, leaving early, or leaving campus during the school day for this reason must be approved by the principal. A student that rides with another student to and/or from DCCCS or Navarro must have written permission from both students’ parent(s) or guardian(s) and the principal. Students must adhere to designated arrival and departure times.

### **1.25 Student Fees**

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

1. Fees for materials used in any program in which the resultant product is in excess of minimum requirements and, at the student’s option, becomes the personal property of the student. Fees may not exceed the cost of materials.
2. Membership dues in student organizations or clubs, and admission fees or charges for attending extracurricular activities when membership or attendance is voluntary.
3. Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
4. Fees for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel. However, any student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety established by the Board.
5. Fees for items of personal use or products that a student may purchase at the student’s option, such as student publications, class rings, annuals, and graduation announcements.
6. Fees specifically permitted by any other statute.
7. Fees for an authorized, voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
8. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by Life School.
9. Fees for items of personal apparel that become the property of the student and that are used in extracurricular activities.
10. Parking fees and fees for identification cards.
11. Fees for driver training courses, provided that such fees shall not exceed the actual Life School cost per student in such programs for the current school year.
12. Fees for courses offered for credit that require the use of facilities not available on the school premises or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school’s regular staff, if participation in the course is at the student’s option.
13. Fees for courses offered during summer school, except that the Board may charge a fee for a course required for graduation only if the course is also offered without a fee during the regular school term.
14. A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the school the student attends to and from that school, except that the Board may not charge a fee for transportation for which Life School receives funds under Education Code 48.15(d).

15. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required under Education Code 25.092.
16. If Life School does not receive any funds under Section 48.151 and does not participate in a county transportation system for which an allotment is provided under Section 48.151(i), a reasonable fee for the transportation of a student to and from the school the student attends.
17. A fee for enrollment in an electronic course provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) in accordance with Education Code 30A.155.

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

There will be a returned check fee per individual returned check for insufficient funds. Any person writing checks that are returned for insufficient funds may not be allowed to write a check to Life School and must make future payments to the school in the form of cash or money order.

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

## **1.26 Student Information**

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

No later than 30 days after enrolling in Life School, the parent and school in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. Students will not be denied enrollment because they failed to meet this requirement. However, if identifying records are not furnished within the 30-day period, the district is required to notify law enforcement and request a determination of whether the student has been reported as missing. Additionally, once disciplinary records are received, as authorized by Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), Life School shall unenroll those students who have a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problems under Subchapter A, Chapter 37 of the Education Code (meaning students who have been expelled from any school or were assigned to a disciplinary alternative education program).

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

### ***Establishing Identification***

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



### ***Undocumented Students***

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

### ***Residency Verification***

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

1. A recently paid rent receipt,
2. A current driver's license or identification card issued by the State of Texas,
3. A current lease agreement,
4. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
5. A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
6. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,
7. Visual inspection of the residence,
8. Interviews with persons with relevant information, or
9. Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1st of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only).

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

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

## **1.27 Textbooks and Curriculum Materials**

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

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. Release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged curriculum materials. Students with outstanding curriculum materials, library books, or fines at the end of a school year will not be able to check out school items the following year until the records are clear. Seniors may not participate in graduation rehearsal until all records are clear.

A parent is entitled to request that Life School allow a student to take home any instructional materials used by the student. Life School will honor the request, subject to availability of the instructional materials. A student who takes home instructional materials must return the materials to school at the beginning of the

next school day if requested to do so by the student’s teacher. Life School must provide the instructional materials to the student in printed format if the student does not have reliable access to technology at the student’s home. Life School also is not required to purchase printed copies of instructional materials that the school would otherwise not purchase; Life School may provide the student of relevant electronic instructional materials.

## **1.28 Transportation**

Transportation routes will be designated annually and posted on the Life School website. For the safety of drivers and passengers, students must board school vehicles only at authorized stops and will be unloaded only at authorized stops. Only designated students are allowed to ride in school vehicles. Students may neither ride a school vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities.

Transportation may also be provided to students who are homeless, as required by federal law, or if transportation is required by a student’s Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) for a student with disabilities.

### ***School Trips***

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by Life School to and from the activity. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. Parents and/or non-Life School employees are not permitted to ride on a Life School bus at any time.

### ***Standards for Student Conduct***

Riding a school vehicle is a privilege. School vehicle drivers have the authority to maintain discipline and require seating charts. When riding a school vehicle, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

1. Follow the driver’s directions at all times.
2. Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner and at the designated stop.
3. Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
4. Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
5. Not possess or use any form of alcohol, drug, or tobacco or e-cigarette in a school vehicle.
6. Not put head, hands, arms, legs, or an object out of any window; and
7. Wait for the driver’s signal to leave or cross in front of the vehicle.

If a student with a disability is receiving bus transportation as a result of an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), the Admission Review and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee will have the discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences related to inappropriate behavior in a school vehicle.

### ***Additional Considerations:***

1. The busses will load at the Cedar Hill campus promptly at 6:25 a.m. and leave the campus at 6:35 a.m. each morning. Students not on the bus at that time will need to find alternate transportation to Life Middle School Waxahachie and Life High School Waxahachie. Students missing the morning route will be allowed to ride the bus back to their original campus from LMSW and LHSW.

2. Students may not be left unsupervised before the bus departs. Students must remain with their parent or guardian or an approved before care program before entering the bus.
3. The busses will leave LMSW no later than 3:50 p.m. and leave LHSW at 4:15 PM. Students not on the bus at that time will need to find an alternate ride home.
4. Busses are expected to arrive back at the LSCH campus around 4:20 p.m. Parents or guardians are expected to pick up their student promptly unless after-school care has been previous arranged. Students may not be left unsupervised and student supervision is not the responsibility of the elementary school staff.
5. Students participating in after-school athletics at LMSW and LHSW will need to provide their own transportation home. After-school care is provided at LMSW and LHSW for an additional cost.
6. Riding a school vehicle is a privilege and students should always consider themselves on school property. All rules related to student conduct apply while on Life School buses. Misconduct on Life School busses will not be tolerated, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken if necessary.
7. Transportation is offered for Life High School Waxahachie students to and from Navarro College in Waxahachie and Texas State Technical College (TSTC). Transportation is offered for Life High School Oak Cliff students to and from Dallas College campuses. All students riding on Life School buses are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.
8. If a student is involved in a medical emergency on a bus and EMS determines he/she needs to be transported to a hospital, parents will be notified immediately where to meet them.

## **1.29 Withdrawals**

### ***Voluntary Withdrawal***

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

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

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

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

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

### ***Involuntary Withdrawal***

Life School may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 19 for non-attendance if:

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

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

## SECTION 2: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 2.1 Administration of Medication

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

1. Nonprescription and prescription medication brought to school must be submitted to the campus nurse by a parent along with a written request from the parent and/or a physician or advanced nurse practitioner. The medication must also be in the original and properly labeled container.
2. Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner (“ANP”) and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **In accordance with the Texas Board of Nursing’s Nurse Practice Act, Life School will not administer medications prescribed or fulfilled in Mexico.**
3. Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student’s name, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic baggies or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
4. Medication to be taken in the morning and evening should be administered at home. Mid-day medication will be administered at school per doctor’s orders.
5. If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent and will be administered only if required by the students Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
6. Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to Life School, e.g., enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.

Changes to daily medication requires written instructions from the physician AND written permission from the parent. Parents are responsible for advising Life School that a medication has been discontinued.

#### *Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication*

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

Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires the student to demonstrate his or her ability to self-administer the medication to the student’s physician or other licensed health care provider and the school nurse, if available. Requirements also include written authorization from the student’s parent and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school office indicating the student is capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication. Medication in a student’s possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

## **2.2 Alcohol-Free School Notice**

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

## **2.3 Asbestos Management Plan**

All school facilities have been inspected for asbestos by a licensed Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (“AHERA”) inspector. An Asbestos Management Plan has been created for the school in accordance with federal regulations. Parents may view the Asbestos Management Plan at the campus office.

## **2.4 Bacterial Meningitis Information**

State law requires Life School to provide the following information about bacterial meningitis:

### *What is bacterial meningitis?*

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is the most common and the least serious. Meningitis caused by bacteria is the most likely form of the disease to cause serious, long-term complications.

It is an uncommon disease but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

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

### *What are the symptoms of bacterial meningitis?*

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

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

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

### *How serious is Bacterial Meningitis?*

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

### *How is bacterial meningitis spread?*

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body.

They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes) or when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose.

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

#### How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

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

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

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

**Healthy Habits:** Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Wash your hands. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not having close contact with people who are sick, also helps.

#### Who is at risk for Bacterial Meningitis?

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

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

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

#### For more information?

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

- [www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html).

and the Texas Department of State Health Services:

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/PreteenVaccines.aspx> or
- <https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/meningitis/Meningitis.aspx>.

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

## **2.5 Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

Life School provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. Life School also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

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

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

## **2.6 Communicable Diseases**

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

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

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;

- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or  Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

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

## **2.7 Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

Students, teachers, and other staff will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students and campus visitors should follow the direction of school staff quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. Order rather than speed shall be stressed. Defined instructions for emergency situation will be posted in each room, and students should familiarize themselves with these instructions.

### ***Active Threat Exercises***

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

### ***Emergency Closings***

Information about emergency school closings due to inclement weather and other situations will be sent via phone call and text message through the School Messenger program. Please make sure that your telephone contact information is up to date with your respective school office. A message will also be posted on the following Life School sites:

- Website: [www.lifeschool.net](http://www.lifeschool.net)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/lifeschools.net](http://www.facebook.com/lifeschools.net)
- Twitter: [@lifeschools](https://twitter.com/lifeschools)

Information about emergency school closings due to inclement weather and other situations may also be broadcast on the following television and radio stations: WFAA-Channel 8, NBC-Channel 5, CBS-Channel 11/UPN Channel 21, FOX-Channel 4, WBAP-820 AM, KLTY-94.9 FM, KBEC 1390 AM, or KRLD-1080 AM. **The closing must say “Life School”, not a surrounding school district.**

### **Hold**

The principal or designee will determine whether a situation requires a hold emergency. A hold emergency will be used for, but not limited to:

- Emergency Medical assistance needed for students or staff inside the building.
- A student is running around the inside of the building that could cause possible harm to self or other students.

### **Secure**

The principal or designee will determine whether a situation requires a secure emergency. During a secure emergency, no one is permitted to enter or leave the campus.



## **Lockdown**

The principal or designee will determine whether a situation requires a lockdown emergency. A lockdown emergency will be used for, but not limited to:

- Threat to campus by person(s)
- Man-made Disasters (e.g. gas leak outside the building, power failure, etc.)

## **Shelter in Place**

A chemical or biological hazard outside the building requires similar procedures as the lockdown, plus:

- All air conditioning units must be turned off.
- For their own safety, parents should stay where they are until authorities provide an “ALL CLEAR.”

## **Evacuate**

The principal or designee will determine whether a situation requires an evacuation emergency. An evacuate emergency will be used for, but not limited to:

- Fire, danger, gas leak or bomb threat inside the campus that would require all students and staff to evacuate the building.
- All students and staff will not be permitted to re-enter the building until authorities or campus administration provide an “ALL CLEAR.”

## **Reunification, Child Pickup**

For the students’ safety, some crisis situations may require that the students be kept at the school or alternate shelter with no entry/no dismissal allowed until an “ALL CLEAR” is provided by authorities. This means that parents or guardians might not be able to pick up their student if the situation is too hazardous. If, based on reports from emergency personnel, the danger or threat has passed and the area is safe for children and parents, then Life School will identify the location, time and checkout process for parents to pick up children.

## **2.8 Drug-Free School Notice**

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

## **2.9 Emergency Medical Treatment**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, Life School staff will seek emergency medical treatment unless the parent has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization. This may include transport of the student by EMS to an emergency room, and the parent will be responsible for all expenses. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency contact form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the campus to update any information. Life

School shall not be responsible for costs of treating injuries or assume liability for any costs associated with an injury at school or at any school-related function.

***Unassigned Epinephrine (All Students)***

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.208, Life School has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors. Under this policy, school personnel who are authorized and trained may administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus, at an off-campus school event, or while in transit to or from a school event.

Life School will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an epinephrine auto-injector present during regular school hours.

***Opioid Antagonists (Students in Grades 7-12)***

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.222, Life School has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists for students in grades 6-12 or for students in grades 12 and below. Under this policy, school personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may administer an opioid antagonist to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

Life School will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an opioid antagonist present during regular school hours.

**2.10 Food Allergy Information**

The parent of each student enrolled in Life School must complete a form provided by Life School that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to the school to enable it to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term "severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Life School may also require information from a child's physician if the child has food allergies.

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

**2.11 Freedom from Bullying**

Life School prohibits bullying as defined by this section and in policy, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students in grades 9 through 12 shall receive the following:

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

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

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

The school's bullying policy applies to:

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

Examples of conduct that may be considered bullying may include, but are not limited to:

- Assault
- Confinement
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Hazing
- Name-calling
- Ostracism
- Rumor-spreading
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Theft of valued possessions
- Threats

### ***Reporting Procedures***

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, the principal, or another school employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. Reports of potential bullying may be submitted anonymously.

The principal or designee shall provide notice of an incident of alleged bullying to:

- A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
- A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident.

Once a report of bullying, including cyberbullying, is received, Life School will track the progress of the report and investigation of the reported incident(s) and shall monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents to assist the school with bullying prevention efforts and determination of its response to the incident.

### ***Investigation of Report***

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

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

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

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

### ***Confidentiality***

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

### ***Appeal***

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Life School Student or Parent Complaints and Concern policy, as described in Section 5.10 of this handbook.

## **2.12 Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

### ***Statement of Nondiscrimination***

Life School prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Life School also prohibits dating violence, as defined by this handbook. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of school policy.

### ***Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)***

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

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

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

Life School also considers gender-based harassment to be Prohibited Conduct. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student’s gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student’s gender, or the student’s failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student’s or the harasser’s actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

Prohibited Conduct may also include dating violence, which occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student’s family members or members of the student’s household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engaged in these behaviors.

### ***Retaliation***

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

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

### ***Reporting Prohibited Conduct***

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** The following procedures apply to all allegations of Prohibited Conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, please see the procedures outlined in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment,” Section 2.13 of this Handbook.

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

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

### ***Investigation***

To the extent possible, Life School will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of Prohibited Conduct will be promptly investigated. The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by Life School, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the principal or the student's teacher(s) will be involved in or informed of the investigation.

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

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

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

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

### ***Appeal***

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the school's student and parent complaint process described in Section 5.10, beginning at Level Two.

## **2.13 Freedom from Sexual Harassment**

Life School prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student.

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

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Life School's educational programs or activities;
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

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

motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

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

### ***General Definitions***

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

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

A “formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Life School investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

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

### ***Reporting Sexual Harassment***

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator in Section 1.4 of this Handbook, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

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

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

### ***Notice of Allegations***

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



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

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

### ***Grievance Process***

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

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

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

If a formal complaint is not made, Life School reserves the right to investigate and respond to Prohibited Conduct in accordance with school policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

### ***Consolidating Formal Complaints***

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

### ***Dismissal of Formal Complaints***

Life School must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint. Life School must dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

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

Life School may dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

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

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

### ***Investigating Formal Complaints***

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

- Life School will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on Life School and not on the parties.
- Life School cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless Life School receives that party's voluntary, written consent to do so.
- Life School will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- Life School will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
- Life School will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for

either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. Life School may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.

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

### ***Determination Regarding Responsibility***

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

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

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

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

### ***Appeals***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Emergency Removals***

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

### ***Informal Resolution***

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

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, Life School must:

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

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

### ***Retaliation Prohibited***

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

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

### ***Confidentiality***

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

### ***Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination***

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in "Freedom from Sexual Harassment" applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described in the "Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation," Section 2.12 of this Handbook.

## **2.14 Head Lice**

Head lice (which are not an illness or disease) are common among children and may spread easily through contact during play or when students share items such as headphones, brushes, combs, hats, or other items that come in contact with hair. In the event that any student is identified with live lice, the parent or guardian will be promptly contacted and encouraged to pick up the student from school. The school nurse will discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse. When an

elementary student has head lice, Life School will also provide written notice to the student's parent and the parents of each child assigned to the same classroom as required by state law.

## **2.15 Health and Fitness Screenings and Testing**

### ***Acanthosis Screening for Diabetes***

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

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

### ***Athletics Participation***

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

- An athletics program;
- Marching band; or
- Any extracurricular programs identified by the Superintendent.

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

### ***Fitness Testing***

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

### ***Spinal Screening***

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

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

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

*Exemption:* A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the

superintendent or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### ***Vision and Hearing Screenings***

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually. A student may be screened using photo screening to detect vision disorders or an electronic eye chart as a substitute for a printed eye chart to assess visual acuity. Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the TDSHS or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

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

## **2.16 Immunization Requirements**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule. To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read the "2023- 2024" Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students in Grades K–12" document issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Specific immunization information is available on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school>.

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

Life School will ensure compliance with immunization laws and regulations and will comply with laws and regulations regarding reportable diseases.

### ***Provisional Enrollment***

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

A school nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, then the student is not in compliance and Life School shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

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

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

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

*Out-of-state or out-of-country transfer students*: A student transferring from another state or country, must be up to date on all vaccines prior to being enrolled. The student must obtain the first doses of the required vaccines and then they can be admitted provisionally as long as they are progressing towards receiving the remaining required vaccines as fast as is medically feasible.

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

#### ***Exclusions from Immunization Requirements***

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

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

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

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

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



### ***Immunization Records Reporting***

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

## **2.17 Interrogations and Searches**

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

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

School administrators and, in some instances, law enforcement officials have the right to search a student's desk, locker, purse, gym bag, backpack, personal property (including but not limited to cell phones or other electronic devices), any other item carried or possessed by a student, in the student's pockets or vehicle, by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent. If the student refuses a search by school administrators, he/she may be subject to disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (including expulsion).

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

### ***Computers and Electronic Devices***

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

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

### ***Desk and Locker Searches***

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks or other school property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of Life School. Life School will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

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

### ***Vehicles on Campus***

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

### ***Random Drug Searches***

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

### ***Possession***

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

## **2.18 Mental and Physical Health Resources**

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

- The District Nurse: Maggie Ortiz, [margarita.ortiz@lifeschools.net](mailto:margarita.ortiz@lifeschools.net), 469-552-9200
- The Director of Student Services: Joy Shepherd, [joy.sherpherd@lifeschools.net](mailto:joy.sherpherd@lifeschools.net), 469-850- 5433.
- The local public health authority. Information about local health departments can be found online at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regions/lhds.shtm>
- The local mental health authority. Information about local mental health or behavioral health authorities can be found online at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substanceuse/mental-health-substance-use-resources/find-your-local-mental-health-or-behavioral-healthauthority>.

### ***Policies that Promote Physical and Mental Health***

Life School has adopted Board policies that promote student physical and mental health, including:

- Food and nutrition management,
- Wellness and health services,
- Physical examinations,
- Immunizations,
- Medical treatment,
- Communicable diseases,
- Crisis intervention,

- Trauma-informed care,
- Student safety,
- Child abuse and neglect,
- Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and
- Freedom from bullying.

Life School has also developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement these policies. Please contact the Director of Student Services, Joy Shepherd, at [joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net](mailto:joy.shepherd@lifeschools.net) for information on these policies and procedures.

## **2.19 Mental Health Promotion and Intervention**

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

Life School has also developed protocols for staff members to notify the campus counselor/administrator to identify a student who may need intervention.

The campus counselor/administrator can provide additional information about the school's intervention program, as well as materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment, and accommodations available at school.

### ***Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)***

Life School has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.
- If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health concern or substance abuse, Life School has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the campus counselor/administrator for additional information.

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

health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

### ***Information on Student ID Cards***

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

## **2.20 Pest Control Information**

Life School periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 24 hours before application. Students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the superintendent or designee.

## **2.21 Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

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

### ***What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?***

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

### ***What is Trafficking?***

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

### ***What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?***

Other maltreatment of a child under the Texas Family Code includes "abuse" or "neglect" of a child.

### ***Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children***

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

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

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or Principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The DFPS also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be

available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).

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

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

### ***Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, or Other Maltreatment***

**For Staff:** Life School trains staff in all content areas addressed in this section. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration. The training includes prevention techniques for and recognition of sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and all other maltreatment of children, including sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children with significant cognitive disabilities.

**For Students:** School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings.

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

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

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

These websites are also helpful:

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

***Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, or Other Maltreatment*** Possible warning signs of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Fear of being alone with adults.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior.
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school

Possible warnings signs of sexual trafficking include:

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

Possible warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

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

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

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

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child

obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

### ***Available Counseling Options***

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

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

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

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

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

## **2.22 Preparedness Training**

Life School will annually offer instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (“AED”) to students in grades 7–12. The instruction may be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification. Students shall receive this instruction at least once before graduation.

Life School will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security’s Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

## **2.23 Seizure Management and Treatment Plan**

The parent of a student with a seizure disorder may seek care for the student’s seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school activity by submitting to Life School a copy of a seizure management and treatment plan developed by the parent and the physician responsible for the student’s seizure treatment. The plan must be submitted to and reviewed by Life School:

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

Beginning January 1, 2024, a seizure management and treatment plan must be submitted on the [form](#) adopted by the Texas Education Agency and provide the following:

1. The student's name and date of birth;
2. The names and contact information of the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment, and at least one other emergency contact;
3. Any medical history significant to the student's seizure disorder;
4. The type, length, and frequency of the student's seizures;
5. A description of each type of seizure the student has experienced;
6. The student's seizure triggers or warning signs;
7. The student's ability to manage seizures and the student's level of understanding of the seizures;
8. The student's response after a seizure;
9. The basic first aid to be provided to the student during a seizure, including whether the student needs to leave the classroom after a seizure and the process for the student's return to the classroom, if applicable;
10. A description of what constitutes a seizure emergency for the student;
11. A description of seizure emergency protocol for school personnel to follow in the event of a seizure emergency for the student;
12. A treatment protocol for any medications or other procedures to be administered by school personnel to the student during school hours, including:
  - a. Each daily or emergency medication, including (i) the name and dosage of the medication and the time at which the medication is to be given; (ii) common side effects for the medication; and (iii) any special instructions regarding the medication; and
  - b. Whether the student has a vagus nerve stimulator and, if so, appropriate magnet use for the stimulator;
13. Any special considerations or precautions applicable to the students; and
14. The signature of the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment.

## **2.24 Steroid Notice**

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

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

## **2.25 Student Illness**

When your child is ill, please contact Life School to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The following are guidelines that will be followed for the students of Life School. Students with any of the following will be sent home:

- Fever - 100.0 degrees or greater (the student should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Vomiting - (the student should be vomit free for 24 hours before returning to school) □ Diarrhea



- Reddened eye with watering and/or crusting
- Head lice
- Rash of unknown origin
- Feels too badly to remain at school

## **2.26 Student Injury**

While student safety is a high priority for Life School, under State law, the school is not responsible for medical costs associated with student injury.

## **2.27 Student Agreement for Responsible Use of Technology**

The purpose of this section is to set forth the policies governing the use of all Life School technology resources by students while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school- sponsored activities on- or off-campus, as well as the use of all school technology resources via off-campus remote access. Please read the following Responsible Use Policy carefully. Life School reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this policy at any time.

### ***Introduction***

Life School is pleased to offer students access to school computers, communications systems, the Internet, and a wide array of other technology resources to promote educational excellence and enhance the classroom experience. Technology can expand a student’s access to educational materials, prepare students by providing work force skills and college readiness, and lead to personal growth. The school recognizes, however, that access to technology must be given with clear guidelines, expectations, and supervision to protect students. This policy is designed to allow parents/guardians, teachers and administrators to be partners while instructing students on how to be responsible users of technology.

Life School will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals when using electronic mail, while on social networking websites and/or chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

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

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

### ***Using the Internet and Communication Systems<sup>1</sup>***

Life School provides technology resources to students for the express purposes of conducting research, completing assignments, and communicating to the faculty, staff, and others to complement their educational experience. Just as students must demonstrate proper behavior in a classroom or school hallway, they must also behave appropriately when using any Life School computer networks, software or websites

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<sup>1</sup> “Communication Systems” include educational-related communications between and among Life School and students by email, web sites, cell phones, pagers, text messaging, instant messaging, blogging, podcasting, listservs, and/or other emerging technologies.

sanctioned or used by Life School, and any personal technology used in an educational setting. Access to Life School technology is a privilege, not a right. Students must comply with all standards set forth in this policy at all times in order to retain the privilege of using Life School's technology resources.

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

Life School may allow students to bring personal technology devices (i.e., tablets, e-readers, smartphones) for use during the school day for authorized use upon campus administration approval. Students that use personal technology devices will be required to comply with all aspects of the Student Agreement for Responsible use of the Life School Electronic Communications System and/or Student Code of Conduct in the use of such devices at school. A student's personal technology device may be subject to search by campus administrators in connection with determining if a student has committed a violation of this policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct.

Life School remains committed to integrating technology to enrich its curriculum and enhance students' educational experience; thereby allowing for better preparation for job skills and college success. Access to the Internet enables students to use extensive online libraries, databases and websites selected by Life School for use in instruction.

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

### ***Proper and Responsible Use of District Technology Resources***

Life School requires students to use all technology resources, including any websites or software used in the classroom, in a manner consistent with the following rules. Life School will hold students responsible

for any intentional misuse of its technology resources, or any other failure to comply with the rules in this policy. When using Life School technology systems outside the school, parents should strive to ensure that students do so in compliance with the rules set forth in this policy, as Life School is unable to supervise students' technology use at home. Life School's content-filtering software will not work in a student's home, so parents are encouraged to place content-filtering software on their home computers or take any other steps necessary to monitor students' Internet usage at home.

Students who unintentionally access inappropriate material in connection with their use of any Life School technology, including websites and software used in the classroom, shall immediately stop accessing the material and report it to a supervising adult. Parents are also encouraged to report to Life School any time a student accesses inappropriate material on a school-issued device or through the school's network. Life School shall take immediate steps to ensure such material is blocked from further viewing at school by its content-filtering software. It is each student's responsibility to follow Life School's guidelines for appropriate and responsible use of technology resources.

All Life School technology resources, including but not limited to school computers, communications systems, and the Internet, including any websites or software used in the classroom, must be used in support of education and academic research and in accordance with the rules set forth in this policy.

Responsible uses of Life School's technology resources include, but are not limited to:

- Use of the Internet in the classroom must be directly related to school assignments and projects. □ Original creation and presentation of academic work.
- Students are responsible at all times for their use of Life School's technology systems, and must assume personal responsibility to behave responsibly, even when technology provides freedom to do otherwise.
- Students must at all times use Life School's technology resources, including email, wireless network access, and digital tools/resources to communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
- Students must immediately report threatening messages or discomfoting Internet files/sites to a teacher.
- Students must only open, view, modify, and delete their own computer files.
- Students will be assigned individual network and email accounts and must use only those accounts and passwords they have been granted permission by Life School. All account activity should be for educational purposes only.

### ***Inappropriate Use of District Technology Resources***

Activities that are barred and subject to potential disciplinary action and loss of privileges include the following:

- Attempting unauthorized access, or "hacking," of Life School computers or networks, or any attempts to bypass Internet content-filtering software used by Life School, as well as erasing, renaming, transferring, or making unusable in any fashion any other individual's files or programs.
- Causing congestion on the network or interfering with the work of others, e.g., chain letters, jokes, or pictures to lists or individuals.
- Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the student is not an intended recipient or logging into a server or account that the student is not expressly authorized to access. For purposes of the

section, “disruption” includes, but is not limited to, network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, forged routing information for malicious purpose, and any other form of network monitoring designed to intercept data not intended for the student’s host.

- Engaging in abusive, harassing, insulting, ostracizing, intimidating, or any other online conduct that could be considered bullying and/or damaging to another’s reputation while using any Life School technology resource, including the use of any website or software used by Life School.
- Engaging in any conduct potentially constituting “cyberbullying,” which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:
  - Creating a social networking site or web page that masquerades as another person’s personal site and using it to embarrass the other person.
  - Making it appear that a person is posting malicious comments about a friend to isolate the person from his or her friends.
  - Posting a person’s personally identifiable information on a site to put the person at greater risk of contact by predators or strangers.
  - Posting abusive comments on someone’s social networking site.
  - Recording and distributing media with the intent to manipulate or embarrass others.
  - Sending abusive comments while playing interactive games.
  - Sending abusive text messages to cell phones, computers, or Internet-connected game consoles.
  - Sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.
  - Sending, posting, or sharing statements encouraging another person to commit self-harm.
- Engaging in any conduct that damages or modifies, or is intended to damage or modify, any Life School equipment, network, stored computer file, or software, to include any conduct that results in a person’s time to take any corrective action.
- Engaging in sexual harassment or using language of a sexual or otherwise objectionable nature (e.g., racist, terroristic, abusive, threatening, demeaning, slanderous) in public or private messages.
- Exporting software, technical information, encryption software or technology, in violation of international or regional export control laws.
- Intentional or neglectful transmission or direct placement of computer viruses or other unauthorized programs on to Life School equipment, networks, stored computer files, or software.
- Interfering with or denying service to any other user other than the student’s host (for example, denial of service attack).
- Participating in online chat rooms or using instant and/or text messaging without prior approval by a classroom teacher, coach or administrator. This may include, but is not limited to, participating in chat rooms, accessing non-school email accounts, accessing non-school related websites, and accessing social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Port scanning or security scanning.
- Presenting any copyrighted, registered, or trademarked work as that of the student.
- Refusing to submit to a search of a personal electronic device in accordance with the Student Responsible Use policy and Student Code of Conduct.
- Revealing an account password to others or allowing use of an account(s) by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being done at home.
- Searching, viewing, communicating, publishing, downloading, storing, or retrieving any inappropriate or offensive material, or any material that is not related to the permitted activities set forth above.

- Sharing online any personal information of another student or staff member, including name, home address, or phone number.
- Taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as “sexting.”
- Tampering with, removing components from, or otherwise deliberately interfering with the operation of computers, networks, printers, user files, or other associated peripherals. Such actions will be taken as acts of vandalism and/or theft.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software for which Life School or the end user does not have an active license.
- Using a website or software program implemented by Life School in a manner outside the scope of the use specified by the classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Using any programs/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, or disable, a user’s terminal session, via any means, locally or via the Internet/Intranet/Extranet.
- Using any Life School technology for games, role-playing multi-user environments, gambling, junk mail, chain mail, jokes or fundraising activities without prior approval by a classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Using any Life School technology resource to engage in any activity that violates any board policy, the Student Code of Conduct, campus rule, local, state, and/or federal law.
- Using any Life School technology resources for any commercial and/or for-profit purpose, to include personal financial gain or fraud, and making fraudulent offers of products, items, or services originating from any school account.
- Using obscene or profane language on any Life School technology resource, to include posting such language on any website or software used by Life School.
- Using Life School or personal technology during the administration of state standardized testing, End of Course, and/or final examinations unless expressly allowed to do so by a classroom teacher.
- Using technology for plagiarism or otherwise representing the work of others as the student’s own.
- Using USB, bootable CD’s, or other devices to alter the function of any Life School technology equipment, network or software.
- Vandalizing, tampering, or accessing without permission the equipment, programs, files, software, system performance, or other technology belonging to Life School or someone other than the student.
- Violating the rights of any person or company protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, any downloading, installation, or distribution of “pirated” or other software products.

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

### ***Privacy and Security***

Students are expected to use school technology resources responsibly and in a safe and secure manner. Students shall not share their individual logins, passwords, or access to school technology with others without the prior approval of a teacher, coach or administrator. Students shall sign off or log off all school equipment, software, or Internet sites once they are done with their session in order to protect the integrity of their logins, passwords or access.

### ***Student Resources***

Life School will provide information to students concerning:

- Access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet.
- Appropriate online behavior, including interacting with others on social networking websites and chatrooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.
- Measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to minors.
- Safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communication.
- Unauthorized access, including "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

### ***Branding and Logo Use***

Unless otherwise allowed by Life School, the Life School name and logos may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, facsimile transmission, scanning, or other methods not yet invented, or by using any information storage and retrieval system, except with the prior written permission of Life School. Any such usage may subject the student to disciplinary actions. All Life School logos may be the intellectual property of Life School and may be protected by applicable laws, including copyright and trademark laws.

### ***Vandalism***

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

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. Life School will, in accordance with Board Policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of Life School's network.

### ***Consequences for Violations of the Policy***

Violation of Life School's policies and procedures concerning responsible use of technology resources will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

- Any disciplinary consequence, including suspension or expulsion, allowed under the Student Code of Conduct and deemed appropriate by Life School.
- Denial, revocation, or suspension of a user's access to Life School's technology resources, with or without cause or notice for lack of use, violation of policy or regulations regarding acceptable network use, or as a result of disciplinary action against the user.
- Referral to law enforcement authorities.
- Termination of a system user account.

Violations of law may also result in referral to law enforcement authorities, as well as disciplinary action by Life School. Life School will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the school's computer systems and networks.

### ***Limitation of Liability***

Life School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the technology resources it provides to students and/or a student's personal electronic devices. Life School is not responsible for any damages that a student may sustain, including those arising from non-delivery of information, erroneous delivery of information, service interruptions, unauthorized use by a student, loss of data, and any potential exposure to inappropriate material from the Internet. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the student's own risk, as Life School makes no representations, and denies responsibility for, the accuracy or quality of the information. In exchange for being allowed to use Life School technology resources, students and their parents hereby release Life School, its directors, employees, and representatives from any and all claims for damages that arise from the intentional or neglectful misuse of Life School's technology resources by the student.

## **2.28 Student Possession of Personal Electronic Devices and Technology Resources**

### ***Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones***

For safety purposes, Life School permits students to possess cell phones while on school property or during school-related activities. However, these devices must remain on silent during the instructional day and shall not be visible during classroom instruction. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as notebook computers, laptops, tablets or other portable computers.

The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event. Parents should not call or text their children and expect an immediate response during the school day.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. School officials may power on and search the device if the student and parent have signed the Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form permitting the student to possess an electronic communication device at school and there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation.

Personal wireless and mobile devices will be provided filtered access to the Internet as well as access to any web-based student applications (e.g., Discovery Education Streaming, Moodle) that would normally be accessible to students from home. Life School is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal electronic devices, or for damage, or unauthorized access to the device nor the data that resides therein. Students and parents assume any and all risks associated with bringing a personal electronic device to a campus or school-related event. In addition:

- All students with personal electronic devices being used for approved school business must use Life School's wireless network, which is filtered according to federal guidelines for Internet access in public schools.
- Personal electronic communications such as e-mail, instant messaging, chat, blogs, etc., are prohibited at school unless the teacher and/or administrator has approved the use of an application for educational purposes.

- School officials may power on and search a student device if there is a reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation and if a student and parent have signed the Electronic Communication Device Commitment form authorizing the student to possess the device at school.
- If a student uses a personal electronic device in an inappropriate manner, he or she may lose their privilege of bringing a personal device to school. Additional consequences may be imposed based on the Responsible Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any campus-based consequences for violating the usage rules for personal electronic devices.
- Personal electronic devices are never to be plugged into the wired network (e.g., computers, wall jacks, other school equipment, etc.).
- Student selection of appropriate, tasteful screensavers and wallpaper is expected.
- It is Life School policy that students are not allowed to access the Internet unless supervised by a teacher or staff member.
- The student must take full responsibility for configuring and maintaining their personal electronic devices. Life School will not provide technical support for these devices.
- When personal electronic devices are not in the student's possession, the student must secure them. Life School will not store, nor will it accept responsibility for storing, any student's personal electronic device on school grounds. Life School is not responsible for lost/stolen/damaged personal electronic devices, whether stored or not, while on school property.

### ***Telecommunication Device Penalties***

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to established disciplinary measures, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

- **1st Offense** – Return cell phone/telecommunication device to the parent or guardian at the end of the school day plus pay a \$15 administrative fee.
- **2nd Offense** – Return cell phone/telecommunication device to the parent or guardian after end of third school day from time of confiscation and pay a \$15 administrative fee.
- **3rd Offense** – Student is not permitted to have a cell phone/telecommunication device at school for the remainder of the semester, or if confiscated during the 2nd or 4th nine weeks, the student may not be permitted to possess a cell phone/telecommunication device the following semester.

Any student violating this policy or refusing to turn over an improperly used or exhibited electronic device to school staff will be subject to disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Life School will not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated items.

### **2.29 Suicide Awareness**

Life School is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access the following Web sites or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area:

- <http://www.texasuicideprevention.org>
- <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhservices-search>

### **2.30 Tobacco/Vaping Devices**



Life School prohibits the following in accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.006 and Texas Health and Safety Code § 161.081:

1. Any adult and/or student from smoking or using cigarettes, tobacco, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, vapor, smokeless, or any other substitute form of cigarettes, tobacco, or tobacco-like products, as well as the use of any devices which are used for the purpose of transmitting any type of tobacco or tobacco-like products at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property or while on school vehicles.
2. Students from possessing, using, selling, giving, or delivering any type of cigarette, tobacco, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes (as defined by section 161.081 of the Health and Safety Code), vapor, smokeless, or any other substitute form of cigarettes, tobacco, tobacco-like products, as well as the use of any devices which are used for the purpose of ingesting or transmitting any type of tobacco or tobacco-like products while in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near Life School property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property.

Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **2.31 Videotaping of Students**

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

Student and parent use of camera phones or other devices on school property for recording (audio and visual) is strictly forbidden per FERPA unless approved by superintendent or his/her designee.

### **2.32 Visitor and Volunteer Policy**

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

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

- Volunteers **MUST** go through a background check conducted by our district office. Once the check is cleared, volunteers are notified and may begin helping on campus. Until this clearance is obtained, they are not to be involved in any educational or extracurricular activities.

Visitor and volunteer registering process is subject to change based on individual campus procedures.

Please note that we request parents and other visitors to a classroom to only record, video or audio, or take photographs of classroom activities after receiving permission from the teacher or a campus administrator.

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

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

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

### ***Procedures for Parents in the Classroom***

As part of our mission to partner with parents, observing students in a classroom setting can provide parents with helpful insight into their child's "world." In order to maintain an orderly, respectful, and secure educational environment for the students and staff of Life School, we ask that all parents be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the code of conduct as set forth in the Life School Handbook and the guidelines below:

- Classroom observations may begin after Labor Day each school year and end on the last school day in April. Observations are limited to only those designated as the parent/guardian of an enrolled Life School student.
- It is recommended that the parent schedule the observation with the teacher to ensure that he/she will be present on the date of the observation and to ensure students are not taking district assessments.
- In an effort not to disrupt the learning environment, each classroom is limited to two parents at one time and is limited to 30 minutes.
- When arriving at the classroom, ensure cell phones or other electronic devices are turned to silent, and let the teacher know who your child is and that you are there for a parent observation. No audio/video recordings or pictures may be taken during an observation.
- A seat will be provided for parents at the back or side of the classroom. Please remain in this area throughout the observation period.
- While in the classroom, please refrain from interacting with the teacher, your child, or other students.

If, after observing, you have questions concerning any area of the classroom, please feel free to contact your child's teacher by phone or email.

### ***Parent Expectations:***

- Help children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
- Ensure that children bring only items appropriate and related to the instructional program at school.
- Know school and classroom rules and help children understand them.
- Convey to children a supportive attitude toward education and Life School.
- Build good relationships with teachers, other parents, and your children's friends.
- Help children deal effectively with peer pressure.
- Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.
- Insist children be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
- Provide a place for study, and ensure homework assignments are completed.

### ***Conduct While on School Property***

Schools are a place of work and learning. Certain limits must be set for parents and other district citizens who visit our schools and classrooms. All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. The building principal or his/her designee is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds. The following rules apply to all visitors on school property:

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student of the school will be considered a visitor.
- All visitors to the school must report to the receptionist upon arrival at the school. They will be required to sign the visitor's register and will be issued a visitor's badge, which must be worn at all times while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the badge to the front desk and sign out before leaving the building.
- Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings or public gatherings, are not required to register.
- Parents or citizens who wish to observe a classroom while school is in session are required to arrange such visits with the classroom teacher(s).
- Teachers are expected not to take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to the principal or his/her designee. Unauthorized persons will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
- All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property contained in the Code of Conduct.

### ***Conduct Prohibited on School Property***

No person shall:

- Intentionally injure any other person or threaten to do so.
- Intentionally damage or destroy school property or the property of a teacher, administrator, other district employee or any other person lawfully on school property, including graffiti or arson.
- Disrupt the orderly conduct of classes, school programs or other school activities.
- Use abusive, profane or vulgar language towards any person on Life School property (abusive language includes, but not limited to, shouting, yelling, disrespectful communication, etc).
- Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive to the school program.
- Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability

- Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.
- Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place to which this code applies.
- Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations or other restrictions of vehicles.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence of either on school property or at a school function.
- Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers.
- Loiter on or about school functions.
- Gamble on school property or at school functions.
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
- Willfully incite others to commit any of the acts prohibited by this code.
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance or board policy while on school property or while at a school function.

Consequences for engaging in prohibited conduct may include revocation of campus and extra- curricular access privileges and/or appropriate legal action.

## **SECTION 3: ACADEMICS AND GRADING**

### **3.1 Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to be honest and to display a high standard of integrity in the preparation and presentation of work for credit in classes. A student’s attempt to present the work of another, including work created with the use of artificial intelligence (AI), as his or her own will be viewed as a serious offense, and the student may be subject to a grading penalty and/or discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **3.2 Academic Programs**

More detailed information regarding high school programs can be found in the Life School Course Guide, which is available on the district website at [www.lifeschool.net](http://www.lifeschool.net) in the parent resources tab, or a copy can be obtained at the high school campus.

### **3.3 Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test**

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

### **3.4 Career and Technical Education Programs**

Life School offers Career and Technical Education programs in a variety of Programs of Study. For a complete listing of CTE courses, please reference the district course guide.

Admission to these programs is based on student interest and completion of any prerequisites required by Life School.

It is the policy of Life School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

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

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, who are identified in Section 1.4 of this Handbook.

### **3.5 College Credit Courses**

Students in grades 9 – 12 may have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at Life School, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (“AP”), International Baccalaureate (“IB”), or college preparatory;
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with a university or community college, which may be offered on or off campus;
- Enrollment in courses taught at colleges, universities, or technical schools; and
- Certain CTE courses.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Additionally, not all options are available at each campus. Please see the course guide for more information. Depending on a student’s grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of- course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student’s desired degree plan.

### **3.6 Computer Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Life School has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes and has a device to student ratio of 1:1. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher’s supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Agreement for Responsible Use policy found in this handbook.

### **3.7 Distance Learning**

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

#### ***Texas Virtual School Network***

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

Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to “no pass, no play” rules related to participation in extracurricular activities. In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding end of-course assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the principal. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

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

### **3.8 Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations**

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

Participation in these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When Life School arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provide by Life School to and from the event. Exceptions may only be made with approval from the activity’s coach or sponsor.

**Please note:** Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation of organization rules is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.

### ***Extracurricular Activity Eligibility (No Pass - No Play)***

A student must pass every subject (a grade of 70 or above) the first six weeks of the school year and each subsequent nine weeks in order to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. The UIL Eligibility Calendar can be found on the Life School Athletic website at <https://lifeschool.net/athletics/life-schoolathletics>. The beginning of the school year, a student will be ineligible for the first six weeks if they have not attained the proper credits according to the following schedule:

- Beginning of 9th grade year: Have been promoted from the 8th grade to the 9th grade.
- Beginning of 10th grade year: Five (5) credits towards state graduation requirements.
- Beginning of 11th grade year: Ten (10) credits towards state graduation requirements.
- Beginning of 12th grade year: Fifteen (15) credits towards state graduation requirements.

Please see the Life School Course Guide for exceptions.

### **3.9 Graduation (High School Grades Only)**

Life School will assist students with enrolling in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education (“SBOE”) for the foundation high school program, or another graduation program appropriate under the law.

#### ***Graduation Requirements***

Students must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from Life School:

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

Transfer students must have completed at least four semesters at a Life High School campus in order to be considered for valedictorian and salutatorian status in their class.

#### ***Additional Graduation Requirements***

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Awareness – Texas law requires high school students to complete a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) awareness and training program in order to graduate. The CPR awareness course is not taken for credit and does not result in CPR certification. Life School will offer CPR awareness training, free of charge, to students during their junior or senior year to satisfy this requirement.

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

### ***Testing Requirements for Graduation***

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

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

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

### ***Foundation Graduation Program***

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade 9 in the 2014 – 2015 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation school program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (“STEM”); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript and diploma. The foundation graduation program consists of 22 required credits for High School graduation. Students may graduate with a “distinguished level of achievement” by completing the foundation program of studies (22 credits) along with an Endorsement (which requires successful completion of curriculum requirements for the endorsement, a total of four credits in math, four credits in science, and two additional elective credits), for a total of 26 credits with the Endorsement.

State law and rules generally prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and the student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit “An Endorsement Opt Out Form” to the counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

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

The Superintendent shall be responsible for providing written notice to each student and the student’s parent or guardian of the testing requirements for graduation and the dates, times, and locations of testing. Notice



of testing requirements shall be provided no later than the beginning of the student's seventh-grade year. The Superintendent shall also provide such notice for students in grades 7–12 who are new to Life School. Notice of the dates, times, and locations of testing shall be provided to each student who will take the tests and to out-of-school individuals.

### ***Texas First Early High School Completion Program***

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

### ***Financial Aid Application Requirement***

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

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

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

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

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

***Students with Disabilities:*** Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal ("ARD") committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program ("IEP") and in accordance with state rules.

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

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. To earn an endorsement under the foundation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the EOC assessments

and receive no modified curriculum in the student's chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

### **3.10 Graduation Ceremony**

Seniors who do not meet the state assessment requirements for graduation will not participate in commencement. Participants in the graduation ceremony will be required to follow the graduation dress code and all other conduct guidelines for the ceremony. In order to participate in the commencement ceremony, a student must complete all graduation requirements. This includes earning all required credits and successfully completing all required state assessments. Any student not doing so will not be allowed to walk with the class during graduation. Student diplomas will not be included in the diploma covers handed to them on stage. The behavior of students and parents will be monitored during the ceremony. Poor behavior by a student or his/her audience may result in a delay in receiving the actual diploma certificate.

### **3.11 Promotion and Retention**

Final decisions of promotion, placement, or retention shall be the responsibility of the child's teacher, principal, and/or the Grade Placement Committee. A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet Life School's requirements for attendance. In addition to attendance standards, Life School will consider the following when making promotion and retention decisions:

- Students in Kindergarten – grade 2 may be promoted from one grade level to another based on the standards-based reporting system which covers grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas. A student shall be considered for retention if mastery of the grade level objectives is not reflected in at least three of the following areas: reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. If a student is being considered for possible retention, a grade placement committee meeting must be held.
- Students in grades 3 – 6 may be promoted from one grade level to another if they have a final cumulative numerical grade of 70 or above in reading and math and an overall average of 70 or above in their core classes (reading, science, language arts, social studies and mathematics).
- Students in grade 7 and 8 may be promoted from one grade level to another if they meet the following requirements:
  - A final cumulative numerical grade of 70 or above in math, and
  - A combined average for reading and language arts of 70 or above.
  - An overall average of 70 or above in their core classes (reading, science, language arts, social studies and mathematics)
- Ninth – twelfth grade students who fail a course for the year will not receive credit for that course. Students may make-up lost credits by enrolling in summer school courses provided by Life School or their local school districts and must pass summer school to make up lost course credits. To be a sophomore, a student must have at least six credits toward graduation, juniors must have at least twelve credits, and seniors must have at least eighteen credits. There are no mid-year reclassifications with the exception of fourth year students who have at least twenty-one credits and who are eligible to complete the remaining graduation credits during the regular school day. For UIL eligibility criteria, please refer to the “Activities Eligibility (No Pass - No Play)” section.

### ***Parent Option for Students to Repeat Grades or Courses***

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **3.12 Report Cards**

Report cards are electronically sent to parent/guardian each progress reporting period and at the end of each nine weeks. A standards based grading system is used in Kindergarten – 2nd grade and a numerical grading system is used in 3rd – 12th grades. A parent/guardian may receive a hard copy upon request.

### **3.13 Required Curriculum**

Life School offers instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of the appropriate grade levels in the following required areas: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education.

### ***Social Studies Coursework***

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

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

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

### ***Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program***

Beginning the 2024-2025 school year, Life School will develop an advanced mathematics program for middle school students that is designed to enable students to enroll in Algebra I in 8th grade. Under this program, Life School will automatically enroll in an advanced mathematics course each 6th grade student who performed in the top 40% on (1) the 5th grade STAAR assessment in math, or (2) a local measure that includes the student's 5th grade class ranking or a demonstrated proficiency in the student's 5th grade mathematics coursework.

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

## **3.14 Special Programs**

### ***About Special Programs***

Life School provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, students with limited English proficiency, including bilingual students and ESL program students, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The manager or coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the campus principal.

### ***Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services***

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Multi-Tiered System of Support

(MTSS)/Response to Intervention (“RtI”). The implementation of MTSS/RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation in writing for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

### ***Special Education Referrals***

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Contact Person for Special Education Referrals***

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is: Candace Johnson at (469) 850-5433.

### ***Section 504 Referrals***

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

### ***Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:***

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is: Susan Boggs at (469) 850-5433.

### ***Additional Information***

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process;](#)
- [Partners Resource Network;](#)
- [Special Education Information Center;](#) and [Texas Project First.](#)

### ***Notification to Parent of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to General Education Students***

Life School will annually notify parents that it provides assistance to students, other than those already enrolled in a special education program, who need assistance for learning difficulties, including intervention strategies.

### ***Bilingual Education (K-5TH)***

A One-way Dual Language Program is provided for children in kindergarten through fifth grade whose home language survey indicates Spanish is mostly spoken at home either by the student and/or the parent(s), and who meet eligibility criteria for the program. Regular instruction is conducted in both Spanish and English.

### ***English as a Second Language (ESL) Education (K-12TH)***

ESL services are provided for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade whose home language survey indicates a language other than English is mostly spoken at home either by the student and/or the parent(s), and who meet eligibility criteria for the program. Regular instruction is conducted in English with sheltered language support as needed.

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

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

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

For questions related to dyslexia, please reach out to our District Special Programs Coordinator, Susan Boggs, at [susan.boggs@lifeschools.net](mailto:susan.boggs@lifeschools.net).

To request a dyslexia evaluation for your child, please reach out to our Special Education Director, Candace Johnson, at [candace.johnson@lifeschools.net](mailto:candace.johnson@lifeschools.net).

### ***Gifted & Talented Program***

Life School serves identified gifted and talented students through programs at each campus.

### ***Services for Title I Participants***

The Title I program provides supplemental academic services for students at-risk of falling behind or not graduating.

### ***Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English***

A student whose primary language is not English may be eligible to receive services in the Bilingual or ESL Program if the student is identified as being limited in English. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (“LPAC”) will determine if the student should be recommended for program placement, and, if so, the accommodations or modifications the student will receive for classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-required testing, as appropriate.

## **3.15 Standardized Testing**

### ***Instructional Program***

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

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

### ***STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)***

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

- Mathematics at grades 3 – 8.
- Reading language arts at grades 3 – 8.
- Science at grades 5 and 8.
- Social Studies at grade 8.

STAAR or EOC assessments are administered for the following courses in grades 9-12:

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

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

There are three testing windows during the school year in which a student may retake an EOC assessment which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment until graduation. Life School shall provide accelerated instruction to any student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a state assessment instrument in the manner required by applicable law.

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

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

### ***Paper Administration of Assessment Instruments on Parental Request***

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

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

### ***Accelerated Instruction***

Life School will provide accelerated instruction in applicable subject areas to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the STAAR exam in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade or an end-of-course ("EOC") assessment. This accelerated instruction will be provided either during the subsequent summer or school year, and consist of instruction meeting the requirements of Education Code § 28.0211(a-1) and 28.0211(a-4), as applicable. The district shall provide notice of a student's failure to perform satisfactorily to the student's parent/guardian at a parent teacher conference or other means.

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

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



### ***Accelerated Education Plan***

Life School will develop an Accelerated Education Plan (“AEP”) for each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment for 2 or more consecutive years in the same subject area in an effort to provide the necessary accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade or course level by the conclusion of the school year. The AEP will be documented in writing, and a copy will be provided to the student’s parent.

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

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

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

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

### ***AEP Grievance Procedure***

A student’s parent may contest the content or implementation of an AEP developed by Life School by submitting a written complaint to the principal within (1) seven calendar days of the parent’s receipt of AEP or (2) within seven calendar days of the parent’s concern that the AEP is not being properly implemented. The principal will conduct a conference with the parent within five school days of the Principal’s receipt of the written complaint and issue a written decision within five school days of the conference. A parent who is dissatisfied with the principal’s decision may appeal through Life School’s student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

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

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

Many colleges require either the American College Test (“ACT”) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (“SAT”) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for

the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the principal or designee.

Note that participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgement on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

### ***Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSI)***

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative ("TSI") assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through Life School as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment or college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

### ***Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS")***

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

## **SECTION 4: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **4.1 Purpose of the Student Code of Conduct**

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

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

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

## **4.2 Authority and Jurisdiction**

Life School has disciplinary authority over a student:

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

### ***Other Offenses Not Specified***

Other misconduct not specified in this Student Code of Conduct may be dealt with by any appropriate discipline management technique(s) at administrator discretion. However, any expulsion consequence must be authorized by the Student Code of Conduct.

### ***Reporting Crimes***

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

## **4.3 Law Enforcement Agency Interaction with Students**

### ***Questioning of Students***

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal or designee will cooperate as outlined below:

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

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply.

### ***Students Taken into Custody***

State law requires Life School to permit a student to be taken into legal custody in the following circumstances:

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

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

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

## **4.4 Life School Discipline Philosophy:**

At Life School, students are expected to adhere to all campus and district expectations which align with the following LifeLeader attributes:

1. **Self-Managed** - taking responsibility for one's own behavior and knowing when and how to modify behavior for the well-being of self and others.
2. **Effective Communicator** - one who communicates with a clear and successful delivery that is well received and understood.
3. **Citizenship** - adhering to laws and rules, contributing to society, and participating in public affairs with wisdom.

## **4.5 Standards for Student Conduct**

Each student is expected to:

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

## **4.6 Disruptions**

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

- For persons other than primary or secondary grade students, any person who disrupts classes or other school activities while on school property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school property. Disrupting the conduct of classes or other school activities includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane □ language or any misconduct.
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property.
- Interferes with the movement of people in an exit, an entrance, or a hallway of a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator.
- Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

## **4.7 Discipline Violation**

A discipline violation includes the planning of or conspiring to commit an offense and/or commission of an offense, at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property or any location Life School maintains authority (see authority and jurisdiction section).

## **4.8 Discipline Management Techniques**

Disciplinary techniques are designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline

will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

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

### ***Techniques***

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

- Assignment of school duties such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Cooling-off time or “time-out.”
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Rewards for positive behavior.
- Detention.
- Expulsion from Life School, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- In-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by Life School.
- Restorative discipline practices.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation (final warning contracts).
- Seating changes within the classroom.
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area.
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, field trips, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Withdrawal or restriction of bus privileges.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

### ***Corporal Punishment***

Life School will NOT administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

## **4.9 Restorative Discipline Practices**

Life School may utilize a wide variety of restorative discipline practices, which are designed to build a sense of school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust, and respect, and emphasize the importance of positive relationships and pro-social relationships between students. Specifically, Life School believes that when students engage in inappropriate conduct, restorative discipline practices may hold the potential to:

- Build trust, respect, and relationships
- Develop self-discipline and positive behaviors
- Encourage accountability and responsibility in the school community
- Establish mutual understanding
- Help students understand the harm caused by the misconduct
- Identify and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who caused the harm
- Increase parent partnerships
- Promote equitable input from all stakeholders
- Reintegrate students who have caused harm in the school community
- Strengthen school culture

Essentially, the restorative approach sees misbehavior or conflict as an opportunity for students to learn about consequences for their actions, develop empathy for others, and learn methods to make amends in a way that strengthens interpersonal bonds.

Examples of restorative discipline practices may include, but are not limited to:

- Affective statements;
- Apologies;
- Community building circles;
- Mediation;
- Relationship building;
- Repairing harm circles;
- Restitution
- Restorative circles or conferences; and □ Restorative dialogues/making agreements.

Restorative discipline practices may take the form of alternatives in lieu of other disciplinary consequences allowed under the Code of Conduct and/or supplemental action taken along with other disciplinary consequences.

Restorative discipline practices are a collaborative process and may not be required or appropriate in all student discipline situations.

#### **4.10 Procedures for Use of Restraint**

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

- Only reasonable force as is necessary to address the emergency may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.
- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

“Restraint” generally means the use of physical force or a mechanical device to significantly restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a student’s body.

“Emergency” means a situation in which a student’s behavior poses a threat of:

1. Imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others; or
2. Imminent, serious property destruction.

In a case where restraint is used, school employees, volunteers, or independent contractors shall document the incident as required by the Texas Education Agency. Additionally, Life School shall report electronically to the Texas Education Agency, following standards provided by the Commissioner of Education, information relating to the use of restraint by a peace officer performing law enforcement duties on school property or during a school-sponsored or school-related activity. The report must be consistent with the requirements adopted by the Commissioner of Education for reporting the use of restraint involving students with disabilities.

#### **4.1 Procedures for Use of Time-Out**

A school employee, volunteer, or independent contractor may use time-out with the following limitations:

1. Physical force or the threat of physical force will not be used to place a student in time-out.
2. Time-out may only be used in conjunction with an array of positive behavior intervention strategies and techniques, and must be included in the student’s IEP or BIP if it is utilized on a recurrent basis to increase or decrease targeted behavior.
3. Time-out will not be utilized in a manner that precludes the ability of the student to be involved in progress in the general curriculum and advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals specified in the student’s IEP.

“Time-out” means a behavior management technique in which, to provide a student with an opportunity to regain self-control, the student is separated from other students for a limited period in a setting:

1. That is not locked; and
2. From which the exit is not physically blocked by furniture, a closed door held shut from the outside, or another inanimate object.

Necessary documentation or data collection regarding the use of time-out, if any, must be addressed in the IEP or BIP. The student’s ARD committee must use any collected data to judge the effectiveness of the intervention and provide a basis for making determinations regarding its continued use.

#### **4.12 Student Code of Conduct Offenses**

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

##### ***Level One Offenses***

1. Cheating/Plagiarism (a grade of zero may be given for class work in question at teacher discretion).
2. Disrespect of a staff member.
3. Dress code violations.
4. Hazing.
5. Littering of school grounds.
6. Lying or giving of false information either verbally or in writing to a school staff member.



7. Tardiness, truancy, or leaving campus without permission.
8. Accumulating unexcused absences on three days or parts of days within a four-week period in the same school year (only for students between the ages of 6 and 19).
9. Throwing objects out of buses or at activities, such as athletic events.
10. Unauthorized use of electronic devices while on school property or at a school-sponsored event including, but not limited to recording other students (audio or visual), taking pictures of other students, utilizing social media. Device will be confiscated and must be picked up by parent from the office; additional consequences may apply.

*Disciplinary Consequences may not necessarily be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required. Failure to comply with the assigned disciplinary measure can result in additional consequences.*

- After school detention.
- Application of one or more Discipline Management Techniques listed above.
- Behavioral contracts or individually developed behavior management plans.
- Confiscation of cell phones or other electronic devices.
- Grade reductions for academic dishonesty.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension for up to five days.
- Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom.
- Restitution/restoration, if applicable.
- Restorative discipline practices.
- Saturday school.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations.

### ***Level Two Offenses***

1. Any periodical, electronic material or other outside material deemed inappropriate by administration (subject to confiscation).
2. Being on any campus without permission other than your assigned campus.
3. Defiance of authority of the teacher, principal, bus driver, supervisor or other school staff member.
4. Disrupting, preventing, or interfering with the lawful transportation of students to and from school or activities sponsored by a school on a vehicle owned and/or operated or contracted by Life School.
5. Disruptive behavior.
6. Fighting.
7. Forgery.
8. Gambling.
9. Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher.
10. Inappropriately using instructional materials, including computers and computer systems.
11. Online impersonation including but not limited to creating fake accounts/pictures of other students or staff members.
12. Persistent Level One Offenses (two Level One Offenses within a school year).

13. Physical aggression – hitting, aggressive play, biting, kicking, pushing, spitting, shoving, pinching, damaging property, etc.
14. Possession of contraband, including but not limited to tobacco.
15. Possession of matches/lighters.
16. Profanity, profane gestures, racial insults, inappropriate language, gestures or contact toward another student.
17. Public displays of affection.
18. Skipping class or being in a non-designated area.
19. Accumulating unexcused absences on six days or parts of days within a nine-week period in the same school year (only for students between the ages of 6 and 19).
20. Selling items or fundraising on campus without prior approval from campus administration.

*Disciplinary Consequences may not necessarily be followed in order and progressive disciplinary measures are not required. Failure to comply with the assigned disciplinary measure can result in additional consequences.*

- Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence or Discipline Management Technique listed above, including multiple consequences as deemed appropriate by Life School.
- Out-of-school suspension for up to five days.

### ***Level Three Offenses – Serious Offenses***

1. Communicating a threat toward another student (verbal or written).
2. Abusing a student's own prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug while on school property or at a school-related event.
3. Engaging in any conduct punishable as a felony, other than the Level IV Offenses, while on school property, within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school sponsored or school related activity on or off school property.
4. Engaging in conduct defined as a felony offense on or off campus and while the student is not in attendance at a school-sponsored or school related activity if:
  - The superintendent or the superintendent's designee has a reasonable belief that the student has engaged in conduct defined as a felony offense other than those defined in Title 5, Penal Code.
  - The continued presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.
  - Engaging in conduct occurring off campus and while the student is not in attendance at a school sponsored or school related activity if:
    - The student receives deferred prosecution for conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5, Penal Code; or
    - A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as a felony offense; or
    - The superintendent or the superintendent's designee has a reasonable belief that the student has engaged in a conduct defined as a felony offense in Title 5, Penal Code.
5. Calling for emergency assistance (911) when no emergency exists.
6. Committing or attempting to commit extortion, coercion, or blackmail.
7. Committing sexual acts which do not qualify as public lewdness or indecent exposure.

8. Committing theft, robbery or burglary or attempting to commit such act.
9. Communicating a false alarm or report, or otherwise making a false alarm of bomb, fire, explosion or other incendiary device, or poison, and/or engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm to induce emergency response.
10. Communicating a threat toward a staff member (verbal or written).
11. Damaging, destroying, and/or altering school computer hardware and/or software by any method including, but not limited to the use of computer software viruses or other electronic means.
12. Engaging in conduct involving discrimination, harassment, threats, bullying, or retaliation against a Life School student, employee, or volunteer, including conduct motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law.
13. Engaging in conduct on campus that constitutes dating violence, including intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship.
14. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense related to abusable glue or aerosol paint or relating to volatile chemicals.
15. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of assault.
16. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or conduct identified as sexual harassment of a student or staff member.
17. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of indecent exposure.
18. False accusations against staff.
19. Leaving school without permission.
20. Persistent Level I Offenses (three or more Level One Offenses) or Level II Offenses (two or more Level Two Offenses) within a school year.
21. Planning, organizing, and/or instigating and/or participating in an activity that causes substantial disruption of the education program, including but not limited to, gang/cult activity, "Hit" lists, "Bullying" or possession or distribution of pornography through any means.
22. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of inhalants.
23. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance or other mind altering substance.
24. Possessing, selling, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, abusing, or being under the influence of marijuana or a cannabidiol (CBD) substance.
25. Possessing, creating, viewing, or distributing pictures, text messages, emails, or other material of a sexual nature in any media format including, but not limited to pictures created using Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Software.
26. Possession, distribution/selling, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, dangerous drugs, nonprescription drugs, possession of drug paraphernalia, or any other substance deemed unsafe by administration.
27. Profanity, profane gestures, racial insults, or inappropriate language, gestures or contact toward an adult.
28. Possessing, distributing, or selling look-alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband.
29. Possessing, distributing, or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
30. Tampering with, changing or altering Life School records or documents by any method, including, but not limited to, computer access or other electronic means.
31. Trespassing.
32. Using a cell phone or other electronic device to take pictures, or make an audio and/or video recording, of another person in a restroom, locker room, changing room, or other similar area.
33. Using or possessing any prohibited item, including but not limited to:

- A “look-alike” weapon (includes but is not limited to BB guns, CO2 guns, air pistols or rifles, pellet guns, or any other device designed to appear to be a firearm or other weapon);
  - A laser pointer for other than an approved use;
  - A pocketknife or any other small knife with a blade less than 5.5” in length;
  - A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
  - A stun gun;
  - Ammunition;
  - An air gun or BB gun;
  - Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic or explosive device;
  - Mace or pepper spray;
  - Matches or a lighter;
  - <sup>2</sup>Tobacco products, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device or accessory to a vapor product; or
  - Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Principal or designee determines that a danger exists.
34. Vandalizing property, including, but not limited to, cutting, defacing, or in any way damaging property belonging to Life School, its staff, visitors or other students.
35. Accumulating unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six- month period in the same school year (only for students between the ages of 6 and 19).
36. Violating Life School’s computer use policies, rules, or agreements, including but not limited to the Student Responsible Use policy, and including conduct involving but not limited to:
- Attempting to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of Life School or its students or employees, and uploading or creating computer viruses, including such conduct off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - Attempting to alter, destroy, or disable Life School computer equipment or data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the Life School system, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption of the educational environment.
  - Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten Life School students, employees, or volunteers, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - Using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.
37. Refusing to allow a lawful student search.

*Disciplinary Consequences may not necessarily be followed in order and progressive disciplinary measures are not required. Failure to comply with the assigned disciplinary measure can result in additional consequences.*

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<sup>2</sup> Possession of e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device or accessory to a vapor product will result in an automatic recommendation for expulsion.

- Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence or Discipline Management Technique listed above, including multiple consequences as deemed appropriate by Life School.
- Out of school suspension for five – ten days.
- Expulsion.

#### ***Level Four Offenses – Most Serious Offenses***

1. Any offense listed in Sections 37.006(a) or 37.007 (a), (b), and (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place.
2. Assault of staff.
3. Creation of any device at school or possession of such a device which could be used as an illegal weapon.
4. Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
5. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of a terroristic threat.
6. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of aggravated kidnapping.
7. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of indecency with a child.
8. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
9. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
10. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of arson.
11. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of criminal mischief, if the offense is punishable as a felony.
12. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of aggravated robbery.
13. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of manslaughter.
14. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of criminally negligent homicide.
15. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of retaliation against any school employee.
16. Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
17. Possessing a firearm.
18. Possession of explosives
19. Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student’s consent.
20. Using, exhibiting, or possessing a firearm, location-restricted knife, club, or a prohibited weapon.

Students found to have engaged in a Level IV Offense shall be expelled. Additionally, commission of any Level IV Offense will result in a notification to law enforcement authorities.

### **4.13 Student Code of Conduct Consequences**

#### ***Detention***

Detention may be held each day during school Monday – Saturday. Students who serve detention must make arrangements to attend and be picked up.

#### ***Suspension***

Life School utilizes two kinds of suspension: in school suspension and out of school suspension.

***In-School Suspension:*** Each campus will develop rules and regulations for students assigned to in- school suspension (“ISS”). Failure to complete an ISS assignment will lead to additional consequences as allowed by the Student Code of Conduct.

***Out-of-School Suspension:*** In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the principal or designee may take into consideration factors including self-defense, prior discipline history, intent or lack of intent, the student’s status as a student in foster care or who is homeless, and other appropriate or mitigating factors.

In addition to the above list of Code of Conduct violations, the principal or designee has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five school days for any of the following additional reasons:

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

***Special Rules for Suspensions Involving Homeless Students:*** Life School may not place a student who is homeless in out-of-school suspension unless the student engages in the following conduct while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

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

### ***Emergency Placement***

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

### ***Removal from School Transportation***

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

## **4.14 Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters provided by applicable state and federal law, and Life School policy.

### ***Process for Suspensions Lasting Up to Five Days***

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

- Notify the student of the accusations against him/her;
- Allow the student to relate his/her version of the incident; and
- Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

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

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

***Process for Out-of-School Suspensions Over Five Days (Extended Suspension) and Expulsion***

Notice: When an administrator determines that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days (extended suspension) or expulsion, but prior to taking any such action, the administrator will inform the principal and the Board's designee and provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action;
2. The date and location for a hearing before the principal or other designated hearing officer within five school days from the date of the proposed disciplinary action; notification of the proposed hearing; and
3. The name of the designated Hearing Officer (the campus principal or other designee). The notice shall further state that, at the disciplinary hearing, the student:
  - May be present
  - Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
  - Shall be apprised and informed of the school's evidence; • May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
  - May be represented by counsel.

*Expulsion Hearing:* Life School shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and Life School shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The Hearing Officer may audio record the hearing.

Within 48 hours (meaning two school days) following the hearing, the Hearing Officer will notify the student and the student's parent(s) of his or her decision in writing. The decision shall specify:

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

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

### ***Appeal of Expulsion Hearing Decision to the Board's Designee***

The student or his/her parent(s) may appeal the expulsion decision to the Board's designee by notifying the designee in writing within five business days of the date of notification of the Hearing Officer's decision. The designee will review the administrative record from the initial disciplinary hearing and conduct an appeal conference with the student and/or parent within five business days of the request to appeal. The designee shall audio record the appeal conference. The designee will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of the appeal decision, in writing, within 24 – 48 hours (meaning two school days) of the appeal conference. If more time is needed for the decision, the Hearing Officer will notify the student/parent within 48 hours of the appeal conference that more time is needed and when he/she will follow up with a decision in writing.

### ***Appeal to Board of Directors***

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

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

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

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

### ***No Credit Earned During Expulsion***

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

## **4.15 Placement of Students with Disabilities**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities (504 or special education under the IDEA) shall be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. A student with a disability shall not be removed from his or her current placement for disciplinary reasons and/or pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the



interim and otherwise in accordance with applicable law. If a special education due process appeal to a TEA special education hearing officer is made, the student with a disability shall remain in the then current education setting in place at the time such appeal is noticed to Life School, unless Life School and the student's parent(s) agree otherwise.

If a student's IEP includes a behavior improvement plan or behavioral intervention plan, the student's ARD committee shall review the plan at least annually and more frequently if appropriate to address:

1. Changes in a student's circumstances that may impact the student's behavior, such as:
  - a. Placement of the student in a different educational setting;
  - b. An increase or persistence in disciplinary actions taken regarding the student for similar types of behavioral incidents;
  - c. A pattern of unexcused absences; or
  - d. An unauthorized unsupervised departure from an educational setting; or
2. The safety of the student or others.

#### **4.16 Gun-Free Schools Act**

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

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

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

## **SECTION 5: ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS**

### **5.1 Parent Contact Information**

Parents are required to provide, in writing, the parent's address, phone number, and email address upon a student's enrollment within the first two weeks of the start of each school year. If a parent's contact

information changes during the school year, the parent is responsible for notifying Life School no later than two weeks after the effective date of the change.

By providing your contact information to Life School, you are giving consent to be contacted at the phone number and email address provided for school-related communication. This includes our automated notification system SchoolMessenger. You can opt-out of SchoolMessenger communication at any point. You will need to contact the school to do so. Parents are responsible for notifying Life School of any changes in their physical address, telephone number, and/or email address so that we can update our records accordingly.

## **5.2 Accommodations for Military Families**

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

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

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

## **5.3 Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction**

As part of Life School's curriculum, students in 5th grade receive instruction related to human sexuality. In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the school's health advisory committee or attending committee meetings.
- Use Life School grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

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

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, Life School must obtain written consent from the student's parent.

#### **5.4 Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**

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

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in the instruction will be posted on the district's website.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the school's health advisory committee or attending committee meetings.
- Use Life School grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

#### **5.5 Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service**

Life School will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the school's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

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

Life School has also established procedures for staff to notify the campus counselor regarding a student who may need intervention.

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

#### **5.6 General Student Records**

Life School maintains cumulative education records required by law. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters Life School until the student withdraws or graduates. This record transfers with the student from school to school. A student's school records are confidential and protected from unauthorized inspection or use. A parent/guardian who desires a copy of their student's school records must submit a written request with the student's name and grade, as well as the date of request and signature of the parent/guardian to the school office. This includes requests for a copy of the student's report card. The school will generally process requests in the order in which they are received, and as quickly as administratively possible.

A parent may continue to have access to their student's records under specific circumstances after the student has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

For information concerning the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), including the school's designation of "directory information," please see the Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice) of this handbook.

## **5.7 Notice of Teacher Qualifications**

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

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

## **5.8 Notice of Threat Assessment**

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

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

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

## **5.9 Parent Portal**

The *Life School Parent Self-Serve System* will allow parents to track their child's attendance, grades and other student information using a web browser. This system provides another way in which our faculty and staff are partnering with our students to improve the overall educational experience for our students and our parents. Parents/guardians may register by visiting the Life School website at [www.lifeschool.net](http://www.lifeschool.net) and by clicking on the Parent Resources tab. Please contact the campus if further assistance is needed with registering for parent portal.

## **5.10 Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns**

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

The Board of Directors encourages parents and the public to discuss their complaints and grievances through informal meetings with the appropriate teacher, assistant principal, or other campus administrator who has the authority to address the concerns. Complaints and grievances should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

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

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

### ***Informal Conference***

The following information is intended to provide parents and students an opportunity to resolve questions or problems that may arise. A student and/or parent should first discuss a problem with the appropriate teacher during a scheduled conference. No teacher should be confronted inside or outside the classroom when students are present. If the teacher’s decision is not satisfactory, the complainant may request a conference with the assistant principal. If the assistant principal’s decision is not satisfactory, the complainant may request a conference with the principal. If the principal’s decision is not satisfactory, the complainant may proceed with the formal grievance process. All conferences should be within five calendar days of the event or problem in question. Meetings with administrators and/or teachers must always be made by appointment.

### ***Formal Grievance Process***

The formal grievance process provides all persons with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all informal and/or formal administrative procedures are exhausted, a person can bring concerns or complaints to the Board, as outlined below.

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

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

**Scheduling Conferences:** Life School shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a student or parent fails to appear at a scheduled conference, Life School may hold the conference and issue a decision in the student’s or parent’s absence.

The principal or designee shall serve as the Level One Grievance Officer, and will schedule a conference with the parent or student within five days of receipt of the written complaint to consider the grievance. The Level One Grievance Officer will provide a written response to the complaint within 48 hours (2 school days) of the meeting.

### ***Appeal to the Board's Designee***

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response from Life School has expired, the student or parent may request in writing a conference with Director of School Leadership to appeal the Level One decision. The appeal notice shall be filed within five days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within five days of the Level One response deadline. Additionally, the student or parent shall submit any evidence supporting the complaint, and the date and results of the conference with the Level One Grievance Officer.

The Director of School Leadership or designee shall serve as the Level Two Grievance Officer and shall schedule a conference within five days after the appeal notice is filed. The Level Two Grievance Officer shall have up to 48 hours (2 school days) following the conference to issue a decision.

**Note: A complaint against the superintendent shall begin with the Board of Directors.**

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

If the student or parent did not receive the relief requested at Level Two, or if the time for a response from Life School has expired, the student or parent may appeal the decision to the Board. The appeal notice must be filed in writing within five days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within five days of the Level Two response deadline. Life School shall place the matter on the agenda for a future Board meeting. The superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

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

Life School will determine whether the appeal will be presented in open or closed session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for any presentation of evidence, including any opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal, and an opportunity for questioning by the Board.

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

### ***Additional Complaint Procedures***

This Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances process does not apply to all complaints:

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

## **SECTION 6: IMPORTANT NOTICES AND REQUIRED FORMS**

### **6.1 Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality)**

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include the following:

#### ***The Right to Inspect and Review***

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access to student records. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal or designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect.

Life School will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student for the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's educational records, Life School shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested or will make arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

If the student's educational records contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about the parent's child and/or the eligible student.

### ***The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student's Educational Records***

Parents or eligible students may ask Life School to amend a record they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal or designee a written request that clearly identifies the part of the record they want changed, and specifies why it is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights. Life School will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receiving the request. If Life School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent of eligible student, the school will notify the parent of eligible student of the decision and advise them to their right to a hearing to challenge the content of the student's education records on the grounds that the information contained in the educational records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights.

If, as a result of the hearing, Life School decides the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of Life School. If the school places an amended statement in the student's educational records, Life School is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### ***The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure***

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A "school official" is a person employed by Life School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors; a person or company with whom Life School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

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



Upon request, Life School discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

### ***The Right to File a Complaint***

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education ("Office") concerning alleged failures by Life School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follows:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

### ***Access to Medical Records***

Parents are entitled to access their student's medical records.

### ***Notice of Directory Information***

Under FERPA, Life School must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, Life School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent or eligible student has advised Life School, in writing, to the contrary. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from a student's education records in certain school publications.

### **Directory Information for Purposes of School-Sponsored and School-Affiliated Purposes:**

Life School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-related purposes:

1. Student's name;
2. Address;
3. Telephone listing;
4. Electronic mail address;
5. Photograph (including video image);
6. Date and place of birth;
7. Major field of study;
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received;
9. Dates of attendance;
10. Grade level;
11. Most recent educational institution attended;
12. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and
13. Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes are those events/ and activities that Life School conducts and/or sponsors to support the educational mission of Life School. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Extracurricular programs or events (e.g., school plays, concerts, athletic events)

2. Publications (e.g., newsletters, yearbooks, etc.);
3. Honor roll and other student recognition lists; and
4. Marketing materials of Life School (e.g., print media, website, videos, newspaper, etc).

Directory Information for Purposes of Military and College Recruiters:

Life School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purposes of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

1. Student's name,
2. Address, and
3. E-mail address; and
4. Telephone number.

Life School will comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for high school students' names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone listings unless a parent or eligible student has advised Life School in writing not to release a student's information without prior written consent.

Directory Information Supplied to Law Enforcement Authorities:

Life School has designated the following categories of information as directory information for purposes of responding to requests for general student information made by law enforcement officials and authorities:

1. student's name;
2. address; and
3. telephone number.

Release of Directory Information:

Life School shall not release directory information except for the purposes indicated above, namely:

1. disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes;
2. disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students; and
3. disclosure to law enforcement officials and authorities.

As such, there is no directory information available to any persons not meeting the above requirements and purposes.

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

If Life School does not receive a FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form objecting to the release of directory information within ten school days of providing this student handbook, Life School will assume that you approve the release of directory information for the purposes described in "Notice of Directory Information" above. You may alter your decision regarding Life School's use of directory information by notifying Life School in writing at any time during the year.

## **6.2 Surveys and Activities**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (“PPRA”) requires that students may not be required to participate in certain surveys, analyses, or evaluations – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concern:

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

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

### ***“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities***

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

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

**FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (“FERPA”)  
Directory Information Opt-Out Form**

Student First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Campus: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE: Certain information about Life School students is considered “directory information” and may be released by Life School without written consent, unless a parent informs the school otherwise. If you do not want Life School to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Life School in writing within 10 school days after your receipt of this Student Handbook. Please complete and return this form if you want your student’s directory information kept private.**

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

**All Students**

A parent or eligible student is allowed to object to Life School’s release of student directory information to third parties. **Parents, guardians, or eligible students who do not check the box below, or who do not return this form with 10 business days of the release of the Student Handbook, give their implied consent for release of student directory information.**

**NO!** Do not release my child’s (or an eligible student’s) directory information for limited school sponsored or school-affiliated purposes as described in Life School’s directory information designation. I understand that by checking “no,” my child’s (or an eligible student’s) picture and name will not be included in the school yearbook, newspapers, Life School publications, Life School website, etc. My child (or an eligible student) also will not be publicly recognized for academic or athletic achievements (e.g., honor roll), school clubs, or any organizational activities.

**NO!** Do not release my child’s (or an eligible student’s) name, address, and/or telephone number upon request by law enforcement officials and authorities.

**High School Students Only: Release of Information to Military Recruiters or Institutions of Higher Education** Federal law generally requires public schools to provide the name, address, and telephone number of a high school student upon request from a military recruiter or an institution of higher education, unless the parent has advised the school that the parent does not want the student’s information disclosed without the parent’s prior written consent.

**NO!** I do not want my child’s name, address, and telephone number released to a military recruiter or to an institution of higher education (colleges/trade schools, etc.).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Eligible Student Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Eligible Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form

Electronic communications at school and at school-related functions are subject to regulation by Life School.

This Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form grants authority and permission to Life School to regulate electronic communication devices when these devices are brought to and/or used while on school property or when attending school related functions and events. Such communication devices include but are not limited to cellular phones, pagers, PDAs, and pocket computers. These regulations are made necessary in light of the unique opportunities these devices create for violations of law and school policies, and to perpetrate conduct disruptive of an educational environment essential to Life School's educational program. These concerns are exacerbated by electronic security protections and the personal size of these devices, which are often carried concealed in pockets and purses.

Therefore, all students who would possess or use such devices on school property or at school-related activities are required to sign this form together with their parent, guardian or other adult person having the authority of a parent for school purposes.

Each of you, by your signature below, agrees to the following:

- The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, PDAs and other electronic communication devices by a student on school property or at school-related events is subject to regulation by Life School.
- If a student possesses such devices on school property or while attending school-related events, Life School is authorized and has my full consent to confiscate, power on or off, manipulate and do all things necessary to search my device and recover or intercept communications (including but not limited to text messaging) when reasonable suspicion exists that such device has been used to transmit or receive communications in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation.
- I further understand, agree and consent that an electronic communication device used or possessed in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation is subject to confiscation and that Life School is not liable for any loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

### SIGNATURE LINES AND DATES

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Food Allergy Notification Form

Dear Parents,

Life School is required by law to request, at the time of enrollment, that the parent or guardian of each student attending Life School disclose the student's food allergies. This form will satisfy this requirement.

This form allows you to disclose whether your child has a food allergy or severe food allergy that you believe should be disclosed in order for Life School to take necessary precautions for your child's safety.

“Severe food allergy” means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food- borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Please list any foods to which your child is allergic or severely allergic, as well as the nature of your child's allergic reaction to the food. Life School will contact you for a note from your physician if your child has food allergies. **Your child must have an EpiPen prescribed to help in the event of an emergency.**

Food:	Nature of allergic reaction to the food:

Life School will maintain the confidentiality of this form and the information provided above, and may disclose the information to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and Board policy. **Life School will maintain this form as part of your child's student record.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date form received by Life School: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 7: GLOSSARY

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

**Abuse** is improper or excessive use.

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

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

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

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

**Accelerated Instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ACT** refers to the American College Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as eligible or potentially eligible for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parent are members of the committee.

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

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

- Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
- Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
  - Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
  - Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
  - Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
  - Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
  - Knowing that it has located

within it property belonging to another, or ○ When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.

Arson also occurs when a person:

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

**Assault** is defined in part by Texas Penal Code § 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

**Attendance Review Committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 75% of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

**Bullying** is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or Life School; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying also includes "cyberbullying," which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Bullying conduct includes conduct (1) that occurs on or is delivered to Life School property or to the site of a school- sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property; (2) that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and (3) cyberbullying that occurs off Life School property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, Life School, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Delinquent Conduct** is conduct that:

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

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

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

**EOC Assessments Requirements for Graduation:** Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment, should a student choose this option. See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation. See also **Independent Graduation Committee (IGC)**.

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

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

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

**False Alarm to Induce Emergency Response** occurs when a person makes a report of a criminal offense or an emergency or causes a report of a criminal offense or an emergency to be made to a peace officer, law enforcement agency, 9-1-1 service, official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies, or any other governmental employee or contractor who is authorized to receive reports of a criminal offense or emergency when (1) the person knows the report is false and (2) the report causes an emergency response from a law enforcement agency or other emergency responder.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

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

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
- The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
- Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or
- Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Such term does not include an antique firearm.

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

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

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

**Harassment** is:

- Conduct that meets the definition of harassment set in Board policy and/or the Student Handbook;
- Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating or obscene, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety; or
- Conduct including the elements of (1) initiating a communication and in the course of the communication making a comment, request, suggest, or proposal that is obscene; (2) threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property; (3) conveying a false report that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury; (4) causing the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or making repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another; (5) making a telephone call and intentionally failing to hang up or disengage the connection; (6) knowingly permitting a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to engage in harassment; or (7) publishing on an Internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern.

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

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

**IEP** is the written record of the individualized education program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or district wide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

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

**Indecent Exposure** means exposing one's anus or genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person while being reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Independent Graduation Committee (IGC):** In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

**Intimate Visual Material** means visual material that depicts a person (a) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body. It also includes equipment, products, or materials used or intended

for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, or concealing a controlled substance.

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

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

**Prohibited Weapon** means an explosive weapon; a machine gun; a short-barrel firearm; armor-piercing ammunition; a chemical dispensing device; a zip gun; a tire deflation device; or an improvised explosive device.

**PSAT** is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT.

**Public School Fraternity, Sorority, Secret Society, or Gang** means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student.

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

**Reasonable Belief** is a determination made by the superintendent or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

**SAT** refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

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

**Short-Barrel Firearm** is a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

**STAAR Alternate 2** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**State-Mandated Assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the STAAR EOC assessments is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

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

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**Terroristic Threat** is a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

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

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

**Title 5 Offenses** are those that involve injury to a person and include murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; trafficking in persons; unlawful transport; kidnapping; assault (on a public servant); aggravated assault; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; unlawful restraint; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment of a public servant; improper photography; smuggling persons; and tampering with a consumer product.

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

**Truancy** is an absence from school without a valid excuse (See section “About Absence” in this handbook). A student is truant if they fail to attend school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. Repeated truancy will result in a referral to the appropriate administrator and will result in a discipline referral and/or court filing as allowable by statute.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

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

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

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

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