

**Sam Houston State University Charter School  
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT  
2022 - 2023**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This Student Code of Conduct (SCC) provides information regarding SHSU Charter School expectations for student behavior and consequences for misconduct. Please read and review the information in the Student Code of Conduct with your student so that you both have a clear understanding of its content. Once you and your student have reviewed the Student Code of Conduct, you and your student should sign the Parent/Student Acknowledgement Form included in the Student Enrollment Packet. Please contact your student's Teacher or Principal if you have any questions about the Code.

## APPLICATION OF THE CODE

The **Board** of the **Sam Houston State University Charter School** (the “School”) has adopted this Student Code of Conduct (the “Code”) in accordance with Section 12.131 of the Texas Education Code, in order to clearly communicate standards for expected student conduct, the disciplinary consequences which may be applied to students who violate those standards, and the applicable procedures for the implementation of disciplinary consequences. All students must comply with the Code. Definitions of words and phrases used throughout this Code are provided at the end of the Code.

Parents and students are encouraged to contact campus administration with any questions or concerns regarding the requirements and provisions of the Code. Parents and students are expected to review and be familiar with the provisions of the Code. Lack of knowledge or awareness about any School rules, including this Code, will not excuse violations of the Code. Parents and students will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt and understanding of the Code. A copy of this Code is available **at all Sam Houston State University Charter School sites, the Sam Houston State University Charter School administration office, as well as on the Charter School website at (<http://www.shsu.edu/charter-school/>)**.

The School has the authority to create and enforce rules related to student conduct and behavior while on School property, traveling to or in attendance at a school-sponsored or school-related event or activity, whether on or off campus. The School has the authority to issue disciplinary consequences for certain other student conduct that relates to, affects, or shares a nexus with the School, its students, or its employees regardless of when or where the conduct occurs. The School may also issue discipline based on a student’s use of electronic media, whether on or off campus. The consequence given by the administrator is not negotiable; only in cases resulting in expulsion may the consequence be appealed. If a student is suspended or expelled from school, a parent must pick the student up from campus immediately.

Other School rules, codes or policies may apply to a student’s misconduct, and may result in multiple disciplinary consequences issued for the same conduct.

If a student who would otherwise be ineligible for admission to the School provides false information on an admissions application or other enrollment document and as a result of the false information is admitted to the School, the student shall be immediately withdrawn from enrollment from the School upon discovery of the falsification. Falsification of information for the purpose of gaining enrollment in a public school is a criminal offense under § 37.10 of the Texas Penal Code. The School may elect to report the falsification to law enforcement or take any other action permitted by law.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT

The mission of **Sam Houston State University Charter School** is to be the **transformational learning model through a choice education system that can be replicated by Independent School Districts in Texas so young students experience an academic, emotional and social success while they pursue their life ambitions**. To achieve that mission, the School must be an environment safe, secure and free from disruption. Students are expected to demonstrate behavior appropriate to the School’s learning

environment, to treat other students, School personnel, and visitors to the School with respect. As such, each student is expected to:

- Behave in a responsible and respectful manner;
- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others, especially other students, School personnel and volunteers.
- Attend classes and required School activities and events regularly and on time; the official tardy time is 8:00am; excessive tardiness will be addressed by administration.
- Prepare for each class and complete assignments on time;
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students and School personnel in person and online;
- Respect and care for School property and facilities; destruction to school or personal (teacher or other student) property will require restitution.
- Turn off cell phones or other electronic media during instructional time, and otherwise follow policies related to use of technology;
- Cooperate with School personnel in maintaining safety, order and discipline;
- Dress appropriately, in accordance with School's dress code;
- Review and comply with the Student Handbook and other School and campus rules;
- Obey classroom rules and classroom expectations for behavior;
- Refrain from verbal or written acts of bullying whether in person or online;
- Avoid violations of this Code.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

SHSU Charter School students are expected to adhere to dress and grooming standards that do not distract from learning. If at any time a student's appearance distracts from the learning environment, he or she will be asked to change the clothing, hairstyle, or grooming to be more conducive to the goal of learning. The dress guidelines below apply to both male and female students. If your child comes to school in violation of this code, you will be contacted to bring them a change of clothes or shoes. Students should wear clothing that allows them to move freely during recess or P.E. without discomfort or embarrassment for themselves and others.

- 1) Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be at fingertip in length, or longer.
- 2) Pants and shorts must fit at the waist and not reveal under garments.
- 3) Tops and bottoms must overlap at all times, even when arms are raised. Stomach and/or back may not be revealed.
- 4) Straps on shirts or dresses must be at least 2 inches wide. Strapless, spaghetti straps, and halter tops will not be permitted.
- 5) Students are expected to wear appropriate athletic shoes for PE and play. Tennis shoes are recommended for days students have PE.
- 6) It is recommended that students wear shorts or leggings underneath dresses or skirts.

For increased safety, each student will need to wear an SHSU Charter School shirt on learning excursions/study trips.

## APPROPRIATE USE OF SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

Students have no expectation of privacy with respect to School-owned property, including school-issued technology devices. Students are permitted to use technology devices at the discretion of their classroom teacher and may only access teacher-approved websites, applications, and content.

Students must not tamper with security settings on School-owned devices including browser history and configuration settings. Failure to follow these technology protocols may result in the following:

- 1) Loss of “free choice” technology time
- 2) Loss of technology use during designated classroom technology times
- 3) Assigned seating in proximity to teacher during technology use
- 4) Issuance of supplemental Behavior and Technology Contract

Students are expected to comply with any technology and electronic media use policies and procedures approved by the Board. Students are also expected to demonstrate the same behavior online or while using electronic media as is expected in the classroom, on School property, or at school-related events. Sending, posting, or possessing electronic messages that are disrespectful, disruptive, abusive, obscene, illegal, threatening, harassing or damaging to another person disrupts the learning environment and will not be tolerated. Electronic communication that is explicit in nature is subject to Harassment protocols as outlined in the Bullying section within this Code.

Parent cooperation is essential to achieving the School’s mission and ensuring that students learn in a safe, secure and positive environment. Parental involvement and cooperation is vital in the discipline process. Parents should understand and be familiar with the Code, ensure that his or her child understands and seeks to comply with this Code, and assist the School in counseling students regarding appropriate behavior.

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following conduct constitutes a violation of the Code. Any student found to have engaged in such conduct shall be subject to one or more disciplinary consequences as identified within the Code.

### General Student Behavior

1. Cursing, using offensive language, name calling, ethnic, racial, religious, or gender slurs, other derogatory statements, or excessive volume;
2. Disrespectful behavior towards adults;
3. Failure to timely follow directives;
4. Disruption of instruction or other School activities or operations;
5. Unexcused or excessive tardiness;
6. False statements or false accusations;
7. Bullying (*including cyberbullying*), teasing, or targeting other students;
8. Inappropriate or disruptive cell phone or electronic media use;

## **Violation of School Rules and Policies**

9. Failure to comply with any Student Handbook, or other School or campus rules;
10. Leaving the classroom, School building, mandatory School activities or events, or adult supervision without permission;
11. Skipping a class period or other mandatory activity, in whole or in part, without permission;
12. Violation of School or campus policies or rules related to the use of electronic media, including personal or School-owned electronic devices (*e.g.*, cell phones, tablets, game systems, computers, cameras), or the School's network or Internet connection;
13. Truancy or other failure to attend School without excuse;
14. Defacing, destroying or otherwise modifying School property;
15. Taking photographs or making video or audio recordings of students, employees, or other persons without the consent of the other person;
16. Drawing and/or sharing inappropriate pictures.
17. Soliciting or attempting to solicit another student to violate the Code, School policies and rules, or the law;
18. Taking steps toward violation of the Code even if the act is not completed, as determined by appropriate School administrator;
19. Failing to follow School directives and classroom rules and expectations;
20. Disobeying rules and expectations regarding School transportation;
21. Inappropriate or unauthorized use of School property, including posting or distributing literature or materials without School authorization;

## **Violent, Illegal, and Other Serious Offenses**

22. Possession of prohibited items;
23. Conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense, as determined by the School;
24. Physical, verbal or sexual harassment of others;
25. Inappropriate physical or sexual behavior, including jokes, comments, gestures or unwelcome physical conduct or contact;
26. False statements or false accusations;
27. Hazing or initiations;
28. Participation in a gang, soliciting or attempt to solicit participation in a gang;
29. Possessing, distributing, using or being under the influence of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances, including prescription drugs if the student has not been prescribed the drugs or is taking the drugs in excess of the dosage specified by the prescription;
30. Possessing drug paraphernalia;
31. Stealing (regardless of the monetary value of what has been stolen), lying, cheating, or copying the work of another without authorization (plagiarism);
32. Deliberately, and without School authorization, accessing, damaging, or altering School data and records, including but not limited to confidential records, electronic data, networks or systems;
33. Violence of any kind, including dating violence or aggression towards student, teacher, or staff member.
34. Fighting;
35. Gambling;

36. Setting or attempting to set a fire;
37. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of body parts; taking actions to expose the body parts of a student, teacher, or staff member.
38. Retaliation of any form against other students or School personnel;
39. Conduct which requires the student's registration as a sex offender;
40. Possession or distribution of pictures, text messages, electronic messages or other material of a sexual or obscene nature;
41. Endangering the health or safety of others;
42. Bringing a weapon (or any item that constitutes a weapon) to school;
43. Bringing any item that could be determined harmful or could be used to create a hazardous product that could cause injury to a person or school property;
44. Bringing items which are considered fireworks or ammunition, whether they be live or spent.
45. Other conduct as identified within this Code.

## **BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT**

Bullying or Harassment are prohibited student behaviors. Should students or parents suspect that Bullying or Harassment has occurred, he/ she should report it to the classroom teacher immediately. School personnel and administration will investigate all allegations of Bullying or Harassment.

As an entity within Sam Houston State University, the School follows the University's guidance regarding instances of alleged or confirmed Bullying and/or Harassment. The SHSU Title IX Office policies can be found at <https://www.shsu.edu/titleix>. Sam Houston State University defines Harassment as:

*A form of discrimination that's defined as verbal or physical conduct that is directed at an individual or group because of race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's or group's academic or work performance; or of creating a hostile academic or work environment. This conduct can include technology-based communications such as texting, online classroom chats, or social networking sites.*

The Texas Education Code and David's Law defines provisions for Bullying to also include Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that arises from a pattern of acts or one significant act that is 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. The bullying provisions in the Education Code apply to:

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to a 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;

- 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. (This expansion of a school district's authority to include off-campus incidents is one of the most significant aspects of David's Law.)

Depending on the age of the alleged victim and perpetrator, School administration may report incidents of Bullying to local law enforcement in the event that civil and legal ramifications require law enforcement involvement. If you have questions or concerns about Bullying or Harassment on or off campus, please contact your child's teacher and/or the School Principal. Anonymous Bullying Reporting is available on the School website (<https://www.shsu.edu/charter-school/>) by selecting the paw print at the bottom of the main page:



## **DETERMINING APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE**

Depending on the nature and severity of the offense, discipline may be issued by the student's classroom teacher, campus administrator, or administrator's designee, in accordance with this Code. In order to make a determination of misconduct or issue disciplinary consequences under this Code, the authorized School employee must have a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the suspected conduct. The employee's conclusion may be based on any relevant evidence including, but not limited to, observation, other personal knowledge, verbal or written witness statements, other forms of documentation, or information received from law enforcement.

In reaching a decision regarding a student discipline matter, the School may consider the specific facts and circumstances of the situation, including but not limited to:

- The student's intent;
- The student's age and grade level;
- The student's past disciplinary history;
- Whether the student's conduct may have been the manifestation of a disability;
- The extent of the student's cooperation during the investigation of the matter;
- The nature and severity of the alleged conduct;
- Whether the student has previously engaged in similar conduct;
- Whether self-defense was involved;

- The student's remorsefulness for the conduct;
- The severity of the effect or harm of the conduct on other persons or property;
- The frequency of the conduct.
- Consequences are determined on an individual basis.
- Recommendations from the University Title IX Office and local law enforcement

The School may issue discipline based on a determination that a student has engaged in conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense. The School has the authority to make such a determination without regard for whether the student is arrested, charged, or otherwise processed by the criminal justice system for the criminal offense. The School may consider information received from law enforcement or other entities within the criminal justice system in issuing discipline under this Code.

Actions will not be based on a student's race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sex, religion, disability, or any other unlawful consideration.

## **INVESTIGATION OF DISCIPLINE ISSUES**

In order to determine whether a violation of the Code has occurred, campus administrators or other authorized individuals may conduct an investigation. Investigations of student misconduct may involve, but are not limited to, interviews of other students, employees and adults, review of School surveillance footage, review of relevant documents, review of information on School-owned computers, verification of tips received from other individuals, gathering of physical evidence, contact of or cooperation with law enforcement agencies and officials. Law enforcement may be contacted and informed of student conduct which may constitute a criminal offense.

Students have no expectation of privacy with respect to School-owned property. Cubbies, desks, and other items provided for student use remain School property, and students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in School property or in personal items placed inside School property. School administrators or other authorized personnel may monitor and search student desks and cubbies for any reason. Students will be held financially accountable for damage to school property or a teacher's property. School officials may search any School property, including School property that is within a student's possession or otherwise being used by a student, at any time, with or without notice to the student and without consent. School officials may confiscate any items found during a search, including prohibited items, dangerous items or other items that violate School policy.

A student's person or property may be searched by authorized School officials if the official has a reasonable belief that the search will result in the discovery of evidence of a violation of the Code or of the law. Any personal property which is brought onto School property or to a School-sponsored or School-related activity or event, on or off School property, may be subject to search (*e.g.*, student cell phone, backpack, personal computer, purse, car, etc.).

## DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) are subject to discipline under those laws and in accordance with the provisions of this Code.

The School may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student with a disability under Section 504 who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that the School would take disciplinary action against nondisabled students. The due process procedures afforded under Section 504 do not apply to disciplinary action for the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol. However, a student who is eligible for special education under the IDEA should have a manifestation determination review conducted to address any use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol if such conduct could result in a change of placement.

Any disciplinary action that would constitute a “change in the placement” of a student receiving special education services may be taken only after the student’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee conducts a manifestation determination review in order to determine whether the student’s conduct was a manifestation of his or her disability.

A change in placement occurs if a student is:

1. Removed from the student’s current educational placement for more than ten consecutive School days; or
2. Subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
  - a. The series of removals total more than ten school days in a school year;
  - b. The student’s behavior is substantially similar to the student’s behavior in the previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and
  - c. Additional factors exist, such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

The School will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change in placement.

A student who has not been determined eligible for special education services and who has engaged in behavior that violates the Code is entitled to the protections under the IDEA regarding discipline of a student with special needs described above if the School has knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. Prior knowledge of a disability may occur when (1) the parent has expressed concern in writing that the student is in need of special education or related services, (2) the parent has requested an evaluation of the student in writing, or (3) the School personnel has expressed specific, written concerns to supervisory personnel about the student’s need for special education or related services. If the School does not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary action, the student may be subject to the disciplinary actions applied to students without disabilities. If a

request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary action, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner.

## **TYPES OF DISCIPLINE**

Available disciplinary consequences include:

- Parent conference;
- Verbal correction;
- Counseling;
- Conference with teacher or administrator;
- Education/training;
- Behavior Contract
- Improvement plan;
- School-related assigned tasks or duties;
- Loss or restriction of privileges
- Loss of desired school activities (free recess play, iPad usage, etc.)
- Consequences related to student participation in extracurricular activities, including removal, suspension, or restriction of participation;
- Removal from class to campus office or to another teachers classroom;
- Confiscation of items;
- Lunch Detention;
- Out-of-School Suspension;
- Expulsion.

One or more of these disciplinary consequences may be issued to a student found to have violated the Code. If the Code does not specify the appropriate disciplinary consequence for a particular type of student conduct, the School may issue the disciplinary consequence deemed reasonable and appropriate, with the exception of expulsion. A teacher may have additional rules and consequences for student conduct in the classroom which may result in discipline under this Code or may be enforced in addition to any discipline issued under this Code.

If a student withdraws from the School before completing assigned Out-of-School Suspension or Expulsion, the School shall send documentation of the discipline to the next school that enrolls the student. When expulsion is an appropriate punishment for a violation and a student withdraws from the School before the expulsion process is completed, the School may choose to complete the expulsion process and send documentation of the expulsion decision to the next school that enrolls the student. If the student returns to enroll in the School at a later date and has not been required to complete the disciplinary consequences previously required, the School may require the student to complete the discipline upon return.

The Code shall be applied and enforced consistently and equitably among students, with the understanding that every disciplinary situation will differ and decisions will be made based on the individual facts and circumstances of a given situation.

## DETENTION

A student may be assigned to one or more sessions of detention for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified by phone and in writing of the student's conduct and assignment to detention. Detention will be held outside of the instructional day, either before or after school, during lunch period, or during recess. While in detention, the student will be provided the appropriate class assignments and will be expected to complete those assignments as if the student were in the regular classroom.

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

A student above grade three may be suspended for one or more school days for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. A student in grade three and below may be suspended if the student engages in conduct detailed below as also eligible for expulsion. The student's parent or guardian will be notified by phone and in writing of the student's conduct and the length of the period of suspension. A student may not be suspended for more than three consecutive school days. During a period of suspension, the suspended student may not enter onto school property or participate in or attend school-sponsored or school-related events or activities. The student's teachers will provide assignments that the student will be expected to complete during the period of suspension. Student assignments or other class work completed during a period of suspension will be accepted for grading if completed in a timely fashion.

## REASONS FOR EXPULSION

A student **may** be expelled from the School if he or she is found to have committed any of the acts listed below.

1. **Weapons.** The student used, exhibited, or possessed any of the following while on School property or while attending a School-sponsored or School-related activity on or off School property:
  - a. A firearm;
  - b. An illegal knife;
  - c. A club; or
  - d. A prohibited weapon.
2. **Violent Conduct.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location:
  - a. Aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, capital murder, criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated robbery, manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, or continuous sexual abuse of a child or children;
  - b. Assault against another student, an employee, or a volunteer of the School;
  - c. Deadly conduct;
  - d. A Title V felony under the Penal Code.

3. **Disruptions.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location:
  - a. False alarm or report or terroristic threat involving a public school;
  - b. An offense related to an abusable volatile chemical;
  - c. Breach of computer security if the conduct involves accessing a computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a public school and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes School district property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system;
  - d. Criminal mischief if the conduct is punishable as a felony;
  - e. Public lewdness or indecent exposure.
  
4. **Drugs and Alcohol.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code:
  - a. On School property, at School-sponsored or School-related event, or within 300 feet of School property:
    - i. Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of any amount of marijuana, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage.
  - b. Regardless of location:
    - i. Sells, gives, delivers to another person or possesses or uses or is under the influence of marijuana or a dangerous drug, as defined by the Health and Safety Code, if the conduct is punishable as a felony.
    - ii. Sells, gives, delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage, as defined by the Alcoholic Beverage Code, commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, and the conduct is punishable as a felony.
  
5. **Other.** The student, while on campus or at a School-sponsored or School-related event, on or off campus:
  - a. Engages in conduct that constitutes a felony;
  - b. Commits an assault;
  - c. Commits frequent violations of this Code that cause significant disruption to the School environment or substantial interference with the instructional process.

## **EXPULSION PROCESS**

If the school administrator or administrator's designee determines that the student's conduct warrants expulsion, the administrator shall provide written notice to the parent, guardian, or adult student of the proposed expulsion of the student. The written notice shall also include the reason(s) for the proposed expulsion and the date, time, location and procedure for the expulsion hearing. The student is entitled to a hearing with the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, during which the student and/or the student's representative (*e.g.*, parent, guardian, attorney, other) will have the opportunity to review and respond. The Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, may place reasonable restrictions on the conduct of the hearing, including the length of the presentations. At the end of the hearing, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, may issue a decision

immediately or may wait until a later date to communicate a decision. The administrator shall send written communication of the decision to the parent or guardian. If the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, determines that expulsion is appropriate, the written decision ("Expulsion Order") shall include the length of the term of expulsion.

The parent, guardian or adult student may choose to **voluntarily** waive the right to an expulsion hearing by signing a hearing waiver form provided with the notice of proposed expulsion. If the hearing is waived, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, will review the relevant evidence and issue a written decision to the parent as described above.

The School will notify the independent school district in which the student resides of the student's expulsion within three business days of the Expulsion Order.

## TERMS OF EXPULSION

The period of expulsion may be determined by many factors, including the severity of the conduct and the existence of a continuing risk of harm to other students and employees.

**PERMANENT EXCLUSION FROM ADMISSION PERMITTED:** A student expelled from the School is not eligible for readmission to the School at any time.

During a period of expulsion, the student is prohibited from entering onto any School property and attending any School-sponsored or School-related events. Failure to comply with this prohibition will result in the filing of criminal trespass charges against the student. Except as otherwise required by law, students will not receive educational services or receive course credits during a period of expulsion.

## DISCIPLINE APPEAL PROCESS

With the exception of expulsions, student discipline decisions at the campus level are final and not appealable. A parent or legal guardian may appeal an expulsion decision by filing a written appeal with the Superintendent **within** 10 business days of the date of the Expulsion Order. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the record of the expulsion proceedings at the campus level, along with any other relevant information, and will issue a written decision to the appealing party within 10 business days of receiving the request for review.

If the appealing party is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, he or she may appeal that decision to the **Sam Houston State University Charter School Board** by filing a request for review with the Superintendent's office **within** 10 business days of the date of the decision. The Superintendent shall notify the **Board Chair** and arrange for the **Board** to hear the complaints of the appealing party at the next available board meeting. The Superintendent shall notify the appealing party of the location, date and time of the hearing in front of the **Sam Houston State University Charter School Board**. The decision of the governing body is final. An expulsion action will not be delayed during the appeal process.

## TRUANCY

State compulsory attendance law requires that every child at least 6 and younger than 19 years of age attend school. The School enforces the compulsory attendance laws by ensuring the regular attendance of currently enrolled students through the application of truancy prevention measures and, if necessary, referral of students to truancy court.

A student's absence is excused if the absence is specifically authorized by School policy or rule, or is otherwise approved by the campus administrator. Any absence that is not excused shall be considered an "unexcused" absence. Refer to the Student Handbook for specific examples of excused and unexcused absences.

The School will provide written notice to parents if their student has incurred three unexcused absences, and will begin the implementation of truancy prevention measures, which shall include one of the following:

1. The creation of a behavior improvement plan that includes a specific description of required or prohibited behavior, the period of the plan's effectiveness (not to exceed 45 days), and penalties for additional absences;
2. Referral to counseling, mentoring, community-based services, or other services to address the student's truancy.
3. Student and/or Parent attendance at an Attendance Orientation Training

A student will be considered "truant" if the student fails to attend school, without excuse, on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. In rare occasions, parents may also be subject to prosecution for criminal negligence if the parent fails to secure the student's attendance.

Before the School makes a referral to truancy court, the Principal, as the School's Truancy Prevention Facilitator, will create and oversee the implementation of truancy prevention measures for the student. The School will not refer a student to truancy court if the student's truancy is the result of pregnancy, foster care, homelessness, and instead may offer additional counseling for the student.

As an alternative to revoking enrollment, the School may require the student to comply with a behavior improvement plan to address the student's lack of attendance. If the student fails to comply with the behavior improvement plan, the School may revoke the student's enrollment. Attendance Recovery opportunities will be available for students once a semester, and are scheduled as needed by the Principal, in cooperation with Parents.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to further detail and define the terms of this Code. The **Sam Houston State University Charter School Board** shall have final authority to interpret or amend any terms or provisions within this Code.

**Abusable volatile chemicals:** Those substances as defined in Texas Health and Safety Code § 485.001.

**Alcoholic Beverage:** Those substances as defined in Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code § 1.04.

**Assault:** Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

**Bullying:** Written or verbal expression or physical conduct that (1) has 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; or (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

**Club:** An instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

**Controlled substance:** Substances as defined in Chapter 481 of the Texas Health & Safety Code or 21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

**Deadly conduct:** Recklessly engaging in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Electronic media:** Refers to all forms, kinds and types of electronic devices, communication systems, networks, software, websites, and any other technology resources including, but not limited to, social media, text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing or file sharing Web sites, cellular telephones, portable electronic devices, computers.

**False alarm or report:** Knowingly initiating, communicating, or circulating a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that is known to be false or baseless and that would ordinarily: (1) cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Firearm (federal):** (1) 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; (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (3) any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or (4) any destructive device, such as an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

**Firearm (state):** Any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use.

**Gang:** An organization, combination, or association of persons composed wholly or in part of students that: (1) seeks to perpetuate itself by taking in additional members on the basis of the decision of the membership rather than on the free choice of the individual, or (2) that engages in illegal and/or violent activities. In identifying gangs and associated gang attire, signs, or symbols, the School will consult with law enforcement authorities.

**Harassment:** Threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another, subjecting another to physical confinement or restraint, maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another's physical or emotional health or safety, or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. alone or in combination with other conduct prohibited by School policy, rules or the Code.

**Hazing:** Any act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization or group. Consent to or acquiescence in the hazing activity does not excuse the student of responsibility for the misconduct.

**Illegal knife:** A knife with a blade over 5 ½ inches; hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown; dagger, including but not limited to a dirk, stiletto, and poniard; bowie knife; sword; or spear.

**Paraphernalia:** Any article or device used or intended for use to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug into the human body, including but not limited to roach clips, rolling papers, needles, baggies with residue, razor blades, bong and pipes.

**Possession:** Regardless of the student's knowledge or intent to possess the item, to have in or on: (1) a student's person or in the student's personal property, such as the student's clothing, purse, or backpack; (2) in any vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from School or school-related activities, such as an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or (3) any other school property used by the student, such as a locker or desk.

**Prohibited item:** Includes but is not limited to (1) alcoholic beverages, marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs; (2) paraphernalia; (3) prohibited weapons; (4) any other item prohibited by this Code.

**Prohibited weapons:** Includes the following items: armor-piercing ammunition, chemical dispensing device, explosive weapon, firearm silencer, knuckles, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, switchblade knife, or zip gun, taser gun.

**Retaliation:** Harming or threatening to harm another: (1) on account of their service as a School employee or volunteer, (2) to prevent or delay another's service to the School, or (3) because the person intends to report a crime or violation of this Code.

**Self-defense:** When the person who is not the aggressor in an encounter uses the minimum force required to remove himself or herself from immediate danger of harm. Actions that escalate or continue the encounter will not be considered self-defense.

**Sexual harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

**Soliciting:** Requesting, commanding, or attempting to induce another student to engage in specific conduct that would constitute a violation of the Code, and with the intent that a violation of the Code be committed.

**Short-barrel firearm:** 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 if, as altered, it has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**Switchblade knife:** Any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or other device located on the handle or opens or releases a blade from the handle or sheath by the force of gravity or centrifugal force.

**Terroristic threat:** Threats to commit an offense involving violence to any person or property with intent to: (1) cause a reaction by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, place to which the public has access, place of employment or occupation, aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance, or other public place; (4) cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service; (5) place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or (6) influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the School).

**Title 5 felony offenses:** Offenses against the person that, depending on the circumstances, may include, but not be limited to the following offenses under the Penal Code: murder; capital murder; transport; assault; aggravated assault; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; improper relationship between educator and student; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; improper photography or visual recording; coercing, soliciting, or inducing gang membership; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment by a person in a correctional facility; continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children; and tampering with a consumer product.

**Under the influence:** When in an employee's professional judgment, the student does not have the normal use of mental or physical faculties likely attributable to the student's use of marijuana, a controlled substance, dangerous drug or alcoholic beverage. Such impairment may be evidenced by the symptoms typically associated with drug or alcohol use or other abnormal or erratic behavior. The student need not be legally intoxicated.

**Use:** With respect to substances, voluntarily injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing a prohibited substance into the body. With respect to objects or devices, putting into action or service or carrying out an action or purpose with the object or device.

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