



Sam Houston State University Charter School

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Elementary Student Handbook

2023-2024

SHSU Charter School Student Handbook

2022-2023 School Year

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact Lisa Box:

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Who Are We?

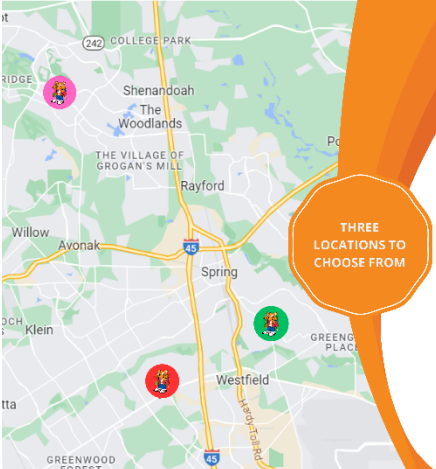
Sam Houston State University Charter School is a TUITION FREE, open-enrollment, public charter school that began in 2017. SHSU Charter School is housed in various pre-existing childcare facilities in the Houston, Texas area with its headquarters located at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

Mission




Sam Houston State University Charter School is dedicated to being a transformational learning model through a choice education system that can be replicated by Independent School Districts in Texas so young students can experience academic, emotional, and social success while they pursue their life ambitions.

Vision

Our vision is to provide the highest quality instruction in a safe and motivating learning environment for all students using a variety of instructional strategies that are research-based best practices in the field to ensure that each student is academically successful in reaching all his/her goals.



SHSU CHARTER SCHOOLS

Spring Woods Campus	Enrolling K-5 1711 Cypress Creek Pkwy. Houston, TX 77090	
Cypress Trails Campus	Enrolling K-5 22801 Aldine Westfield Rd. Spring, TX 77373	
Brighton Academy Campus	Enrolling K-6 10801 Falconwing Dr. The Woodlands, TX 77381	

Central Office located on SHSU Campus in Huntsville

APPLY NOW!

District Administration

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Parent and School Partnership

Parents are an essential component of a child's successful educational experience. You are encouraged to be an active participant in the education of your child. Below are several areas for you to consider in being a successful "partner" with the school staff and your child.

Communication: Keep in close communication with the school staff. Review weekly papers coming home. Look for newsletters, notices from the superintendent and/or principal, or notes from your child's teacher. Communication should be two-way. Initiate questions, respond promptly and stay informed. If questions do arise, do not hesitate to contact the teacher or the school office. SeeSaw is the primary source of direct communication for the entire district, please ensure you have the SeeSaw app installed on your device.

Monitor Progress: Respond to requests from teachers for assistance or to attend conferences. Go over schoolwork with your child on a regular basis. If you detect potential problems, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Be sensitive to changes in work habits, behavior, or feelings. Keep teachers informed of events in your child's life that may impact school performance.

Become Involved: Consider volunteering if time allows. Attend parent organization meetings whenever possible.

Build on Success: Acknowledge your child's successes. Support from the home is very helpful. Reinforce school rules and provide a positive atmosphere for your child. Set high expectations and reward efforts to accomplish goals. Learn from every experience.

Set a Regular Routine: Provide a time and place for your child to complete homework assignments. Identify a location where items to be returned to school are placed. Young children need adequate rest to be at their best. Plan and keep a regular routine whenever possible.

Attendance: Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school and themselves. It is important for students to arrive on time so they have time to prepare for instruction. Start building this habit early so they can learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college and at work.

Keep Education a High Priority: Hold high the importance of doing one's best, whatever the task. Take any opportunity to link what happens at school to things your child encounters outside of school. Read to and with your child.

Success in the early years in school provides a firm foundation for success in life. Your assistance and support is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your time and effort in making this year a special one for your child.

Academic Information

Curriculum

The SHSU Charter School System provides a comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum designed to meet the needs of all students based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Subjects taught at the elementary level include: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, and Fine Arts. Campus support staff provide instruction in PE, music and art, as well as coding and robotics during Specials/ enrichment.

In accordance with state law (policies at EHAB, EHAC, and FFA), the SHSU Charter School System will ensure that students in kindergarten through fifth grade will engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week throughout the school year as a part of the System's physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school campus' daily recess. Students in sixth grade will be required to have moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 135 minutes during each school week.

Parent Teacher Communication

Classroom teachers are required to hold parent/teacher conferences once per semester. Additional conferences to review student progress may be scheduled by parent or teacher request.

Promotion/Retention

The SHSU Charter School follows a standards-based grading system. A student will be promoted on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the School. A student who meets the academic standards for promotion in Grades 1-6 cannot be retained by the school or parent.

Promotion to the next grade level will be determined by the student successfully mastering grade level standards.

P.E. Participation

Physical education is an important part of a child's educational experience and is required by state law. A written excuse is required in the event a child needs to be excused from participation in physical education. If he or she cannot participate for a period of more than five days, a doctor's statement must be presented to the school. A note from the physician releasing the student to return to regular participation in physical education will also be required. The School conducts physical fitness assessments of students in grades 3-6 who are currently enrolled in a PE or PE alternative class.

Student Records

Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, allows the System to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a student’s education record without written consent. “Directory information” is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Examples include a student’s photograph for publication in the school yearbook; a student’s name and grade level for purposes of communicating class and teacher assignment; the name, weight, and height of an athlete for publication in a school athletic program; a list of student birthdays for generating school-wide or classroom recognition; a student’s name and photograph posted on a System-approved and managed social media platform; and the names and grade levels of students submitted by the System to a local newspaper or other community publication to recognize academic achievement.

The System has designated the following information as “directory information”: Parent(s) name, parent email, student name, student email, address, telephone numbers, photograph, school the student attends, current grade level, degrees/honors/awards, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and height/weight of an athlete.

The SHSU Charter School System will only release directory information regarding its students to:

- groups that are affiliated with the System and need such information to provide education services to students or the System (school photographers, PTO/PTA, booster clubs, Big Brothers & Big Sisters, System consultants, vendors, advisors, and the like).

Education Records

Virtually all other information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, are considered confidential educational records. Release of these records is restricted only to individuals that have a legal right to them. To request student education records, contact the Central Office PEIMS Coordinator.

Enrollment and Withdrawal

Registration

Parents may register students who are new to the School by applying through the SHSU Charter School website at www.shsu.edu/charter-school. Students previously enrolled in the SHSU Charter School are not required to register each year. Students enrolling in SHSU Charter Schools for the first time should present the following documents:

- Birth certificate of student or other legal proof of identity
- Immunization records (See “Health”)
- Proof of residency—current utility bill, purchase or lease agreement
- Child’s Social Security Card
- Custody papers (if applicable) signed by a judge
- If a child is not living with both parents, an identification document of the parent or guardian enrolling the student
- Residency Requirements

Admissions

Non-Discrimination Policy

Sam Houston State University Charter School’s admissions and enrollment shall be free from discrimination based on race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend under state law.

Admission Application Deadline

The School’s admission application period begins December 1 and ends on February 1. If more than 20 students apply for any class, a lottery will be used to determine the students who are admitted.

Exclusion from Admission

The School reserves the right to exclude from admission a student who has a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems *under subchapter A, Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code within the last three school years, as evidenced by records received from school previously attended by the student, law enforcement, or any other relevant documentation, and may exclude the student from admission on this basis.*

Acceptance Procedure

If the School receives more applications than it has spaces available, then the Charter School shall conduct a random lottery.

Falsification of Information

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.

Immunization Requirements for Enrollment

Students must present records validated by a physician or health clinic for all immunizations required by Texas public schools , prior to enrollment. Waivers for immunization may be requested for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, the School can honor only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or on the [TDSHS website](#).

The form must be notarized and submitted to the Principal within 90 days of notarization.

Grade Level Eligibility

A child is eligible to attend kindergarten if he/she is five years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year. A child is eligible to attend first grade if he/she is six years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year.

Withdrawal of Students from School

A student under the age of 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent or the legal guardian. The campus registrar will initiate the withdrawal paperwork. The campus must receive notice of intent to withdraw at least three days in advance of the withdrawal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be provided to the parent and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record. The System may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for nonattendance if the student has been absent ten consecutive school days and repeated efforts by the attendance officer and/or principal to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

Attendance and Absences

Absences

In the event a student is absent, parents must contact the classroom teacher as soon as possible. Following an absence, parents must send a note explaining the reason for the absence. While it is encouraged that parents also notify teachers of a student absence, parents must send a separate hard copy note or email to Central Office explaining the reason for the absence. Please send email notification of absences to charterschool@shsu.edu.

Attendance for elementary schools is officially recorded at 10:00 a.m. each day. If possible, routine medical appointments should be scheduled before or after this time period. If a child is absent at 10:00am due to a doctor's appointment or begins classes and leaves for a doctor's appointment, he/she will be counted present if the parent brings the child back to school on the same day with a doctor's statement that verifies the appointment. Texas law states that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school. It also requires the campus to request a conference to discuss the student's absences.

Official Attendance-Taking Time

The System must submit attendance of its students to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken at elementary schools at 10:00 a.m.

Compulsory Attendance

Students who are at least six years of age, or who have been previously enrolled in first grade, and who have not yet reached their nineteenth birthday shall attend school for the entire period the program is offered. A child enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten is required to attend school and is subject to compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

School employees must investigate violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission to be absent from school; from any class; from any required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action. A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code Section 25.093 and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Section 65.003(a) of the Family Code if the student is absent for 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period. School officials will notify parents or guardians of these absences and request a conference with the parent or guardian to discuss the absences.

State law requires that students must be in attendance for a minimum of 90% of the instructional days per year in order to be promoted. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the instructional days per year may be referred to the campus attendance committee for review.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up the work. These include the following activities and events:

- Documented health care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health care provider must be submitted to the campus upon the student's arrival or return to campus.

- Mental health or therapy appointments
- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours, if the child is in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services
- Accommodations for Children of Military Families
- Authorized school sponsored activities
- Religious holiday observance
- Required court appearances
- Activities related to obtaining United States’ citizenship
- Services as an election clerk
- To sound “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran

When a student is absent from school, the student – upon return to school – must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. **Seesaw messages to the teacher will not be accepted as a excuse for student absence.** The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the School to be excused or unexcused. The School considers excused absences to be events that are intentional and/or unavoidable.

Examples of excused absences include (but are not limited to):

- Illness and a doctor’s appointment
- Illness without doctor appointment
- Religious observation
- Traveling to family funeral or event
- Unforeseen transportation problems

Examples of unexcused absences include (but are not limited to):

- Sleeping In
- Running Late
- Traffic

Attendance Recovery

Should a student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the Principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health care provider verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s absence from school. Students that accrue ten or more absences (and/or their parents) may have to participate in attendance recovery protocols including:

- Attendance conference with Principal and Attendance Committee
- Supplemental Attendance Orientation Training
- Saturday School for accelerated instruction (available in December and May)

School Day Hours of Operation

Students attending the full day kindergarten program through sixth grade attend school for at least seven hours each day, including intermissions and recesses. Elementary school hours are from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Leaving Campus

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as possible. Also note that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the Principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not be released before the end of the school day. State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The System has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

- For students in elementary, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up a student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign back into the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

Tardies and Early Dismissal

Punctuality is an important trait that shows respect and consideration for fellow students and teachers and prepares students for the academic day. The student who is excessively tardy or the student who consistently leaves the campus early will miss valuable instructional time. This loss of instructional time in a class could result in the student not receiving credit for the class or possibly for the school year. Each campus may have specific tardy policies that will be communicated to students and parents. Compulsory attendance regulations apply to students who may miss a portion of the school day as well as those who are absent.

Make-Up Work

Students are expected to make up any work missed and will receive grades earned on the make-up work. Students will have the same number of days to complete assignments as they were absent. Make-up work will not be given in advance, however during a lengthy illness (no less than three days), special arrangements may be made with the teachers and/or Principal.

Emergency School Closings and Openings

Should weather conditions require schools to be closed or to open late, notice will be published on the school website, on district Facebook, and shared via the SeeSaw messaging app. All changes to school openings will be made as close to 6:00am as possible.

Safety and Security

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance to the SHSU Charter School. All Charter School campuses undergo annual surveys for safety improvements, and the School consistently evaluates how to improve systems for student safety. Parents are expected to cooperate with campus and district initiatives for school safety.

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the Board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior – both on and off campus – and consequences for violation of these standards. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct as well as campus and classroom rules.

Authorized Person Picking Up Students

Under normal circumstances, either parent of the student will be allowed to pick up a student at school. In the event the parents are separated or divorced, and the school is furnished with a copy of a court order wherein one of the parents is granted custody of the child, the child will be released only to the parent who has possession under the order at that time. Any student requiring pickup from an adult that is **not** his/ her primary guardian should have parent/teacher communication via SeeSaw, at least one hour prior to the anticipated pickup. Any adult seeking to pick a student up on a regular basis that is not a primary guardian must have a driver's license and emergency contact on file with the school.

Electronic Devices

Use of School-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the System. Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. If a device is believed to contain illegal contraband, the device will be turned over to law enforcement as required by state law. The device will not be returned to the student or his parent until the illegal contraband is removed from the device. This could take a substantial amount of time, particularly if the device is considered evidence of a crime.

Students may not use personal electronic devices on school grounds during instructional time. Any cell phones, tablets, and smart watches may stay in student backpacks, turned off during the school day.

Video/Pictures on Social Media

The School includes a Student Directory parent consent form in the initial student enrollment packet. If you do not wish for your student to be published in district social media or newsletter publications, please indicate that on the photo release form.

Child Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children

As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. 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. 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 Child Protective Services (CPS). Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include 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. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse 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 may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse or neglect, 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.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see the [DFPS webpage for available programs](#).

Information available on [The Child Welfare Information Gateway website](#), [KidsHealth website](#), [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault website](#), and [The Attorney General of Texas website](#) might help you become more aware of child sexual abuse.

Child Abuse Reporting

Any person who has cause to suspect that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall make such reports as required by law to Children's Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or on the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' website](#).

Volunteers

We appreciate the efforts of parents, grandparents and community volunteers who are willing to serve our School and students. If you are interested in volunteering, you must annually complete a volunteer application and criminal history background check. You can access the volunteer form on the website at www.shsu.edu/charter-school under the Students and Parents menu.

Visitors to School

We welcome visitors to our schools as our COVID Protocols allow. All volunteers must self-screen for symptoms of illness prior to volunteering. All parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification when they arrive on campus. Campus-specific volunteers shall be coordinated through each campus' lead teacher and PTO organization.

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or System police officer has the authority to refuse entry or eject a person from System property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and the person poses a substantial risk or harm to any person, or the person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and the person persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or rejection.

Outdoor Safety/Heat Precautions

Historically the outdoor temperatures remain hot at the beginning and end of school each year. The heat index becomes an important factor with outdoor activities. Each campus considers the heat factors (temperature, humidity and sunshine) at their campus and will monitor all outdoor activities carefully. Opportunity to drink plenty of fluids will be provided as well as encouraging students to drink fluids during the evening hours at home. The staff of each campus is aware of the signs and symptoms of heat stress. Students will be taken to the school nurse if symptoms of heat stress are suspected. Dehydration is the most common cause and the effects are cumulative. If symptoms of heat stress become severe and persistent it is important to seek medical care immediately. Inclement weather is carefully monitored. Students will remain indoors if there are warnings of thunderstorms and lightning.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather and Active Threat

The School will rely on SeeSaw as the primary source of communication for emergency purposes. An emergency purpose may include early dismissal or delayed opening because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. Please ensure all parent guardians have access to the SeeSaw messaging platform at the beginning of the school year.

From time to time, students, teachers and other System employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

General Campus Regulations

Distribution of Materials

Publications prepared by and for the System may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

School newspapers and yearbooks are available to students. All student school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor or principal.

Non-school Material from Students or Others

Students and other organizations must obtain prior approval from the Principal before posting, circulating, or distributing copies of printed or written materials. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

Possession and Use of Electronic Devices

The System is not responsible for any item brought to school by a student. A student bringing any electronic device including cell phones, smart phones, smart watches, radios, CD players, iPods, MP3 players, video/audio recorders, DVD players, electronic readers, cameras, Apple Watches, etc., does so at his or her own risk.

The System permits students to possess telecommunications devices including cell phones. These devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of any device that has the capability to take pictures or audio or video record is prohibited in instructional areas. These items are also prohibited if used to cheat, audio/video record, or photograph another student or staff member without that person's permission, or when the use creates a disruption.

If a student does have an electronic device, it should be put away in a student backpack and turned off during the school day. Permission to use the device at school should come from the principal or classroom teacher. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items. The School is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic devices, or other items.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages, images or videos that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is System-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may be reported to law enforcement. If a device is believed to contain illegal contraband, the device will be turned over to law enforcement as required by state law. The device will not be returned to the student or his parent until the illegal contraband is removed from the device. In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the School's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

Parent/Teacher Organizations

Elementary schools may have a parent-faculty/teacher organization. Meeting times and dates vary with each campus. Contact your school's lead teacher for more information and watch for information in the school newsletters or campus website.

Celebrations

Please be aware that students in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with your student's teacher prior to bringing any food to the classroom. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.

Classroom birthdays may be recognized but must be scheduled after the end of the class lunch period with prior approval from the classroom teacher. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, you may send in individually prepared, store-bought items (such as cookies or cupcakes) at the very end of the school day, after receiving teacher approval.

Student Dress/Grooming

Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. The School prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations. Refer to the School Code of Conduct for specific dress code requirements.

Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Dating Violence

The System believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and School employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. System employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect. The University has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; and graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. Two types of prohibited harassment are described below.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. However, a person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a System investigation 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.

Bullying

Bullying is defined in Section 37.0832 of the Education Code 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, physical conduct that has the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property or placing a student in a 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 the student; materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined Section 37.0832 of the Education Cede as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. The System is required to adopt policies and procedures regarding: 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 or 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.

Bullying is prohibited by the System and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, assault, demands for money, confinement, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name- calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism.

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, principal, or another System employee to obtain assistance and intervention.

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. The School will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by completing the bullying form located on the SHSU Charter School webpage.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has 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. Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

The principal, may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the School. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal.

Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support

The System 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 contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area. You may also go to [the Texas Suicide Prevention website](#) and the [Texas Department of State Health Services website](#) for information.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The SHSU Charter School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion, age, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by law. The following System staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements: Ronny D Knox, Ed.D., Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Ronny D Knox, Ed.D. – Superintendent; 1908 Bobby K Marks Drive, Box 2119, Huntsville TX 77341; (936) 294-3347.

Students Who Are Homeless

Students who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain System provisions including: proof of residency requirements; immunization requirements; educational program placement, if the student is unable to provide previous academic records, or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness; credit-by-exam opportunities; the award of partial credit (award credit proportionately when a student passes only one semester of a two semester course); eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and graduation requirements.

Federal law allows a homeless student to remain enrolled in what is call the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing. For more information, please contact the System's Homeless Liaison (Ronny D Knox, Ed.D.) at 936-294-3347.

Students in Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)

In an effort to provide educational stability, the System strives to assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care, or who is in conservatorship of the state with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the System. A student who is placed in foster care and who is moved outside of the System's or school's attendance boundaries is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. Students who are in foster care and who enroll after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities outside the System's established testing windows, and the System will grant proportionate course credit by semester. Please contact the Foster Care Liaison (Ronny D Knox, Ed.D.) at 936-294-3347 for more information.

Patriotic Activities and Minute 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 principal to excuse their child from reciting the pledges. State law also requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity so long as the silent activity does not interfere or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. State law 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 unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the System determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

Asbestos Management Plan (2021-2022)

The SHSU Charter School Asbestos Management Plan can be found in the Principal's office on each campus. Any questions regarding the management of asbestos or the plans should be directed to the Superintendent by calling (936) 294-3347. **Craig Toney** serves as the Asbestos Designated Person for the SHSU Charter School System.

System Services

Special Programs

The System provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, or who are English language learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the System or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs can learn more about the programs through the SHSU Charter School Office by calling 936-294-3347.

Child Find

The System shall ensure that all children residing within the System who have disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. The System shall have a practical method of determining which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services. This requirement applies to highly mobile children (including migrant and homeless children) and children who are suspected of being in need of special education but who are advancing from grade to grade. 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(3), 1413(a); 34 CFR300.125.

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

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the System'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. For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of Systems to meet the needs of all struggling students. A parent may request an evaluation for special education services at any time.

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

- [Texas Project FIRST](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is your child's teacher, who will then notify the principal.

Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A child determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services, may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine if the child is in need of services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is the System's 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator, Ronny D Knox, Ed.D. can be reached at 936-294-3347.

English Language Learner

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an Emergent Bilingual (EB) student, is entitled to receive specialized services from the System. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both School personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a EB student. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to EB students who qualify for services.

Health Services

Health and Screening

Health related services, under the guidelines of the Texas Department of Health, provides a screening program for vision and hearing for all new students and grades Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, 5th. Scoliosis screening is required in grades 5. This screening is mandated by the Texas Department of Health. If you would prefer to have this done by your physician, please send the results to the SHSU Charter School Office at charterschool@shsu.edu.

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let them know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools must exclude students with certain illnesses for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until he/she is diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. Please refer to the district COVID Protocols for illness related to COVID-19.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, and it is determined that the student should go home, the parent will be contacted by the campus Lead Teacher. The System is also required to report certain contagious diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or the local health authority.

In the case of an emergency requiring the care of a physician and school staff are unable to contact you or the person(s) you have designated as your emergency contact, school officials will determine what steps will be taken to protect the health of your child, including calling 911 and transporting your child to a medical facility. Note that the System has no financial responsibility for the emergency care or transportation of your child.

Medication at School

The System will not purchase medication to give to a student. SHSU Charter School policy allows authorized school employees to administer medication to students during school hours. Medication administered by a staff member requires documentation signed by the guardian prior to administration. All medications dispensed at school should be necessary for the student's optimum health as well as maintain maximum school performance. The System encourages parents to administer medication at home before and/or after school whenever possible. Any medication must be brought to school and picked up by a parent or designated adult, when the student is withdrawn or before the last day of school, the parent should make arrangements to pick up the medication from school. Any unclaimed medications will be safely discarded in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Prescription Drugs and Non-prescription Drugs

The school must receive a written and dated request from the parent or legal guardian to administer any medication. Prescription and non-prescription drugs must be in the original container and properly labeled. Only the guidelines printed on the container will be followed unless a physician order is present. The Surgeon General, the Food and Drug Administration and the Center for Disease Control have recommended that due to the increased risk of developing "Reye's Syndrome", aspirin or products containing aspirin not be given to children under 18 years. If your physician orders aspirin for your child, please send a copy of the physician order. Additional guidelines for medication to be administered at school are:

- All medication must be kept in the secured vault during the school day.
- Over-the-counter medication dosage must not exceed the dose recommendation listed on the bottle. Exception: If your physician, dentist or orthodontist has directed a certain dosage to be given that is greater than that recommended on the bottle, a written order will need to be included with the written permission

from the parent.

- The use of “sample” medication from the physician, dentist, or orthodontist must have signed written instructions from that doctor accompanied by the parent written permission.
- In the interest of safety for all students, students may not bring their medication to school.
- Should your child need to have medication at school, please bring or make arrangements for the medication to be brought by a parent or a guardian. For your convenience, many of the local pharmacies will provide a second labeled container for medications needed at school. Please note: Medication required “daily”, or “twice a day”, should be administered at home. Many “three times a day” orders should also be given at home unless the doctor requests a specific time during the school day. Medication must be signed into the clinic by the parent or guardian.
- A record of each medication given at school is maintained in the clinic.
- Students that have asthma or anaphylaxis may experience times when the symptoms worsen and the physician requests the student carry an inhaler or anaphylaxis medication to be used when needed. Please provide a letter from the physician with complete instructions for use of the inhaler or anaphylaxis medication and permission for the student to carry the inhaler or anaphylaxis medication. It is strongly recommended that a spare inhaler or anaphylaxis medication be kept in the clinic for emergencies.
- Students with diabetes will provide a Diabetes Management Plan developed by the physician and parents.

Insect Repellant

Concerned parents are strongly encouraged to use a repellant on their child before they leave for school, especially young children who may have difficulty applying the repellant safely.

System staff will not provide or apply insect repellant during the school day. Parents who are concerned about mosquito exposure during the school day may send a lotion, wipe-on, or wristband type of repellant for use by their child. For safety reasons, pump spray repellants are discouraged and should not be used indoors. No aerosols are allowed due to the dangers with pressurized cans and aerosols stay airborne longer, thus exposing students with respiratory issues. Parents should label repellant product containers with student’s name. Repellant products should be stored away when not in

use, such as in totes, lockers, backpacks, or some other reasonable location. Students with special needs will be given assistance, with parent permission, on a case by case basis.

Sunscreen

Students may possess and use an FDA approved topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-related event or activity to avoid overexposure to the sun. SHSU Charter School staff will not provide or apply any sunscreen product to a student without parent permission. Parents who are concerned about sun exposure during the school day may send a lotion, or wipe-on sunscreen product for use by their child. For safety reasons, pump spray sunscreen products are discouraged and should not be used indoors. No aerosols are allowed due to the dangers with pressurized cans and aerosols stay airborne longer, thus exposing students with respiratory issues. Parents should label sunscreen product container with student's name.

Sunscreen products should be stored away when not in use, such as in totes, lockers, backpacks, or some other reasonable location. Students with special needs will be given assistance, with parent permission, on a case by case basis.

Food Allergies

The School requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school and inform them of any known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The System has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the System receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

Head Lice

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, and when students share things like brushes, combs, hats and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school will contact the student's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from

any drug or grocery store.

After the student has undergone a treatment, the parent should check in with the school to discuss the treatment used. The school can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. More information on head lice can be obtained from the [DSHS website](#).