



STUDENT HANDBOOK

FEBRUARY 2026

NEW HEIGHTS STUDENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME

The New Heights Charter District is a different kind of school from the other schools you've attended. As a student at The New Heights Center, you can expect to take responsibility for your learning, receive individual attention from our teachers, and gain guidance from our Advising Coaches and staff. Our teachers and staff are here to aid in the progress of your education by setting up a culture where you can rise to the challenge of overseeing your learning....and subsequently, in charge of your own life.

This handbook contains the basic information you will need throughout the year. If you have questions, please feel free to ask your Advising Coach or call the main office at **817.515.2800**. Your question will be routed to the correct staff member. We wish all of you a successful year at The New Heights Center!

What is a Charter School?

In 1995, the Texas legislature passed a law allowing Charter Schools to exist as an educational option to mainstream schools. While still maintaining public school status, Charters differ in that they can develop and use innovative curricula to serve the needs of their students. Like all traditional public schools, Charter Schools are open to the public, accountable to the public, and funded by the public through student average daily attendance.

The New Heights School District

Established in 2022, Transformative Education for Adults (TEA)/New Heights was created to drive multigenerational transformation through lifelong learning and economic independence. Founded by the original experts in adult education in Texas and TEA, New Heights is intended to provide increased access to high school and career education to Texans who have been disengaged from education.

The mission of Transformative Education for Adults and New Heights is to *rapidly increase opportunities for marginalized communities by connecting individuals with relevant and impactful high school education, career and technical training, and college pathways in an environment designed specifically to meet the responsibilities, challenges, and whole person needs of adult learners ages 18-50.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Stay Connected

There are many ways to stay connected and informed at New Heights.

1. Check our website: www.newheightsed.com
2. Call the main line at: 817.515.2800
3. Visit the school: 5901 Fitzhugh Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76119
4. Follow us on social media
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/newheightsed/>
 - Meta/Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/newheightsHS/>

Transportation Assistance

If needed, New Heights may provide temporary bus passes at no charge beginning as soon as the first day of class. These passes are valid for all Trinity Metro buses. Students are eligible for one pass. Students who lose or destroy their bus passes, however, will not be issued a replacement pass. Students who drive their vehicles to school are not eligible for a monthly bus pass. Students must have an attendance rate of 90% or higher for the current term to be eligible to receive a bus pass.

Health Information

To enable schools to take precautions to ensure students' safety, students are asked to disclose allergies, severe allergies, and major health issues to the school by completing the Student Health Form during registration or at any time during the year when an allergy, severe allergy, or major health issue is diagnosed. "Severe allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to an allergen through inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention. All allergies, severe allergies, and major health issues must be accompanied by a written diagnosis from a licensed physician. The New Heights will maintain the confidentiality of the information provided. Anyone may disclose the information to teachers, staff, administration, and any other school personnel within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and district policy.

School Calendar

The current school calendar may be obtained from your Admissions or Advising Coach but is also available on the District website at newheightsed.com. The calendar indicates the beginning and end of each eight-week term, student holidays, and state assessment days.

School Closing

New Heights generally follows the closing or late start determination of the local city school district or campus facility host. If the local city school district or campus facility host is closed or delayed due to bad weather, New Heights will be closed or delayed. Check the New Heights website and/or social media accounts for closing announcements.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Direct Instruction Classes

New Heights believes that our students will be most successful through just-in-time direct instruction. Our instructors work hard to ensure students not only achieve academically but also gain the traits necessary for success in life post-graduation. This philosophy results in real-world connections to long-lasting career pathways.

Required Courses and Career Plan

A key component of our school is full student participation in critical incoming and outgoing courses and Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses. Every student enrolled in New Heights is **REQUIRED** to take and pass credit-bearing Launch Foundational Courses: Career Exploration, Money Matters, and Professional Communication. These courses are structured to allow for

targeted instruction that focuses on career pathways and soft skills for success beyond high school.

Every incoming student will enroll in Launch Courses only for their first term. Incoming students will participate in academic diagnostic testing that will help determine if foundation courses will be needed for English and/or Math and develop a career plan that includes an industry certification or approved alternative.

Career Pathways and Endorsements

Upon enrollment, students will be asked to choose a career pathway. This pathway will be a key focal point during the student's enrollment at New Heights. Students will have the opportunity to enroll in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and co-enroll with Tarrant County College (TCC) and earn valuable certifications in highly marketable careers.

Fitness

Students who participate in physical activity through a Physical Education class will be assessed according to Fitnessgram Guidelines. Students will be informed of their results when they become available to their Physical Education instructor.

ACADEMIC MODEL & PROGRAMMING

Curriculum Overview

New Heights offers an Individualized Diploma Program (IDP). Students primarily earn credits through classes taught via live instruction and may earn credits as rapidly as they complete course requirements. Students are informed of the benefits of the recommended high school plan and additional endorsement options.

Standards are based on national and state curriculum frameworks with an emphasis on mastering the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) alongside career pathway goals and objectives. Teachers regularly assess students' mastery of the standards. Students also participate in the State of Texas assessment program and other standardized assessments as required by the student's graduation plan. Courses that are linked to a required state assessment will conduct benchmark testing as part of the required coursework. Additional information can be found in the School Guide and students may speak with their Advising Coach for additional information regarding the state testing requirements for graduation.

Family and Community Participation

Community members, businesses, and community volunteers are important components of the New Heights Support Team. New Heights welcomes and appreciates various support services such as but not limited to tutoring students, donating goods, participating on the New Heights School Board or advisory committees, teacher administrative assistance, special project/event/field trip help including chaperoning, performing facility maintenance and cleaning, or other needs as necessary. For more information, please complete the Contact Form on our website at newheightsed.com.

Students with Special Needs

The New Heights staff work as a team to serve the needs of all students. Highly qualified, certified special education teachers and general education teachers work together to provide maximum educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Aid for Students with Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavioral support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of students who are struggling.

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

Special Education Referrals

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

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

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

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

longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

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

Shawnette Gilliam, Special Education Teacher/Coordinator
Phone Number: 817.515.2800
Email: sgilliam@newheightsed.com

Section 504 Referrals

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

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

The person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Shawnette Gilliam, Special Education Teacher/Coordinator
Phone Number: 817.515.2800
Email: sgilliam@newheightsed.com

Additional Information

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

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

English as a Second Language (ESL)

New Heights offers support to identified students to develop proficiency in the English Language. Our ESL Coordinator provides additional ESL supports as requested to meet the needs of students while at New Heights.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions Policy

New Heights admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students at the school.

Admission will not be based on gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic, or athletic ability, or the district the student would otherwise attend. Students may be denied admission or readmission based on documented disciplinary infractions. Under TEC 12.111(a) (6), the school may deny admission to students with documented histories of a criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC Chapter 37, Subchapter A.

The New Heights District does not have a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) campus and therefore is unable to allow students the option to continue their DAEP Order. All students with an order to attend DAEP by a transferring district must complete the DAEP placement before enrolling in New Heights. A student may be expelled if the student does not notify school personnel of a DAEP Order upon enrollment.

Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is ESSENTIAL for students to maximize their education. It is the policy of New Heights that students attend school every scheduled day that school is in session and are strongly encouraged to plan all appointments before or after scheduled classes. Absences from class may result in disruption of mastery of the instructional materials. Students should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences and attend all scheduled classes. Students should notify their teachers and Advising Coach as early as possible when an absence is expected or occurs; prior written or verbal notice of absences is encouraged. Attendance is taken 40 minutes after the start of every class period. Please note that absences are not *excused* absences for credit or state-funded attendance.

To be eligible to receive credit for a class, students must have a class attendance of 90% or higher.

Certain emergencies may be excused at the discretion of a Campus or District Administrator.

New Heights follows a local attendance policy facilitated by Advising Coaches. Students who miss two days of school will be contacted by their Advising Coach. The third day of missed school will result in a conference with the Advising Coach to review options for continued enrollment.

Course Load

Students will set several attainable goals while enrolled at New Heights. This will include a review of the number of classes a student will take each term. Students are encouraged to set an attainable goal regarding schedule and workload. Students will work with their advising coach to create a class schedule that will ensure the student's success.

Child/Elderly/Disabled Person Abuse – Mandatory Reporting

Anyone "having cause to believe that a child, elderly, or disabled person's physical or mental health or welfare has or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect" must report the case to any state or local law enforcement agency and the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$1,000. (Texas Family Code, Chapter 34). Staff may contact the National Hotline for additional support at 1.800.252.5400. According to recent state law, a report of child abuse or neglect must be made to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Service when the report involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the individual. (HB 1970 effective

September 1, 2005). Staff will cooperate fully in the investigation and reporting of Child Abuse as required by law.

Acceptable Technology Use

The computers at New Heights are intended for educational purposes only. Students may not use New Heights computers or network resources to access or distribute offensive, obscene, or abusive material. Students must respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs and data. Students must not use programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer, computing system, or network, and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer, computing system, or network. All computer use should be consistent with accepted classroom standards and the teacher's instructions. Accessing social networking sites should be done minimally and outside of the classroom. New Heights reserves the right to limit or restrict student access to computers if it is determined that social media and/or computers are being used inappropriately or inconsistent with school goals. New Heights computers may not be used in violation of any laws or regulations. New Heights computers and any attached network devices may not be used in a manner that hampers use by others, which includes but is not limited to, the use of proxy server websites or internet radio sites, such as Pandora. Repeated, unsolicited, or unwanted communication of an intrusive nature is not acceptable. Students may not share passwords or user accounts without receiving prior approval from the teacher.

Network traffic and computer usage, including email, may be monitored. Students should be aware that such monitoring may occur, and that inappropriate material or activities will be reported to the proper authority. New Heights does not guarantee the privacy of any electronic communication or data stored on New Heights computers or networks.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary action as described in the Student Code of Conduct, including removal from self-paced courses and/or complete loss of computer use privileges on all New Heights campuses. This Responsible Use Policy (RUP) supports our vision of technology use and upholds in our users a strong sense of digital citizenship.

Responsible Use and Digital Citizenship

- **Respect Yourself:** Select online names that are appropriate, be polite, and use appropriate language/content in all online posts.
- **Protect Yourself:** Do not publish personal details, contact details, or a schedule of activities for myself or anyone else. Unless otherwise authorized, you are the owner of your accounts, and responsible for all activity initiated by and/or performed under these accounts. It is your responsibility to appropriately secure your account credentials. You are responsible for maintaining and backing up all your data. If you are uncertain whether a computer activity is permitted or appropriate, ask a teacher or administrator before engaging in that activity. If you mistakenly access inappropriate material, you will immediately notify your teacher or campus administrator.
- **Respect Others:** I will not use technology to bully or tease other people. I will not make audio or video recordings of students or staff without their prior permission. I understand that posing as someone else is forbidden and I will not pose as a user other

than myself when online. I will be careful and aware when printing to avoid wasting resources and printing unnecessary items.

- **Protect Others:** I will help maintain a safe computing environment by notifying appropriate campus officials of inappropriate behavior, vulnerabilities, risks, and breaches involving campus technology.
- **Respect Intellectual Property:** I will suitably cite the use of websites, books, media, etc. I will respect all copyrights.
- **Protect Intellectual Property:** I will request to use the software and media that others produce.
- **General policies:** The purpose of a New Heights user account is to access the New Heights network and facilitate creativity and innovation. We use this network to support communication and collaboration. We use technology to extend research and information fluency, collect and analyze data, and solve problems.
 - Access is a privilege. Access entails responsibility, and inappropriate use may result in the cancellation of those privileges.
 - The New Heights user accounts are owned by New Heights; consequently, they are subject to the Public Information Act. All digital files associated with user accounts may be retrieved by New Heights staff at any time without prior notice and the permission of any user. New Heights reserves the right to monitor all accounts to maintain system integrity and to ensure responsible use.
 - Students should have no expectation of personal privacy in any matters stored in, created, received, or sent through the New Heights computer network or account. These are subject to review by New Heights at any time, with or without notice, with or without cause, and without the permission of any student.
 - A content filtering solution is in place to prevent access to certain sites that may contain inappropriate material, including pornography, weapons, illegal drugs, gambling, and any other topics deemed to be of non-educational value by New Heights. New Heights is not responsible for the content accessed by users who connect via their 3G/4G type service (cell phones, air cards, etc.).
- **Government Laws:** Technology is to be utilized in conformity with the laws of the United States and the State of Texas. Violations include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Criminal Acts – These include, but are not limited to:
 - Unauthorized tampering
 - Cyberstalking
 - Vandalism
 - Harassing email/postings
 - Child pornography
 - Cyberbullying

- Libel Laws – You may not publicly defame people through published material.
 - Copyright Violations – Copying, selling, or distributing copyrighted material without the express written permission of the author or publisher (users should assume that all materials available on the internet are protected by copyright), and/or engaging in plagiarism.
- **Google Apps and Other Third-Party Accounts:** Our District mission, goals, and vision for technology for our students may require accounts in third-party systems. Many of these accounts will be used at school for school-related projects but may also be accessed outside of school. The use of these accounts will help our students master effective and proper online communications as required in the Technology Applications Standards.
 - **Consequences:** If a student breaks this agreement, the consequences may include suspension of accounts and network access. In addition, students may face disciplinary and/or legal action including but not limited to criminal prosecution and/or penalty under appropriate state and federal laws.

The following actions are not permitted and could result in the consequences outlined above:

- Users may not attempt to disable or bypass the New Heights content filter.
- Users may not access or manipulate the information of a private database/system such as grade books and other student information systems.
- Users may not install unauthorized network access points or other connections that may not effectively integrate with existing infrastructure.
- Users may not use their accounts for non-school related activities including but not limited to:
 - Using the internet for financial gain, personal advertising, promotion, non-governmental-related fundraising, or public relations.
 - Political activity: lobbying for personal political purposes, or activities such as solicitation for religious purposes.
 - Users may not send, save, view, forward, or create harassing or offensive content/messages. Offensive material includes but is not limited to, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material, sexual comments, jokes, or images that would violate school policies. The school policies against harassment and discrimination apply to the use of technology.
- The Director of Technology and the Campus Principal will deem what is considered to be inappropriate use of the New Heights computer network. They may suspend an account or network access at any time. In addition, faculty and New Heights staff may request that a user's account be suspended or denied at any time.
- By acknowledging receipt of this handbook, New Heights students are acknowledging that they understand and will abide by the above Responsible Use Agreement and that they further understand that any violation of the regulations above is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Students acknowledge that they have read the Responsible Use Agreement and understand that access is designed for educational purposes only.

Student Cell Phone Use

New Heights is a school for adults who are expected to use their cell phones for instructional purposes only. Students are expected to adhere to classroom rules regarding the use of cell phones in the classroom. Cell phone use in the hallway should be kept to a minimum and be respectful of the learning environment. Students should not use their cell phones to record audio, video, or pictures of other students without their permission. Cell phone misuse may result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

The staff at New Heights are guided by ethical behavior regarding confidentiality. Counseling issues, medical services and reports, special programs information, and state assessment scores are kept confidential. Access to student folders is strictly monitored and limited to staff who need information. The school is legally required to report any form of abuse and credible threats towards another person.

The Superintendent maintains a comprehensive system of student records and reports dealing with all facets of the school program operation. These data and records are stored safely and securely and are conveniently retrievable for utilization by authorized school personnel.

Cumulative Record

A cumulative record that complies with TEA requirements and standards shall be maintained for each student from entrance into New Heights until withdrawal or graduation from New Heights. This record moves with the student from campus to campus and is maintained at the campus where they are currently enrolled until graduation or withdrawal. Records for students who are no longer enrolled shall be retained by New Heights for the period required by law.

Directory Information

Directory information shall include the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, dates of attendance, the total number of credits earned, grade level, diplomas and awards received, and the most recent previous school attended by the student. Directory information will be released to any individual or organization that has submitted a written request unless the student has signed to reject the dissemination of directory information. Students may request to reject the dissemination of directory information at any time by contacting 817.515.2800.

Student Rights

When a student reaches 18 years of age, the rights accorded to the student's parent, and the permission or consent required of the student's parent under this policy shall apply only to the student. There is one exception to this rule: an adult who has petitioned for and received guardianship over an adult student retains parental rights.

Due Process Hearings

Due process hearings will be held by the designated Campus Administrator. They are responsible for determining guilt or innocence. They make recommendations for retention or expulsion, and

they can impose additional consequences/sanctions. The designated Campus Administrator will provide documentation of the hearing for the student's file. They are to notify the student of decisions made and are responsible for explaining the appeal process.

If a student commits an offense that warrants expulsion, the student will be suspended, and a due process hearing will be scheduled. The student (and/or guardian) will be notified of the hearing by letter, in person, or by phone. If the District makes a good-faith effort to inform the student of the time and place of the hearing, the District may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, or another adult representing the student attends. The following people may be present at the hearing: Campus Administrator(s), District Administrator(s), student's Advising Coach, and student. The purpose of this hearing is to describe the student's behavior and verify that New Heights has followed all behavior intervention processes. The student may appeal the decision to the New Heights District Superintendent. Expulsions are in effect for the time determined by the Administrator.

Complaints and Grievance Procedure

Occasionally a student has a complaint or concern with some aspect of the program at New Heights. The following steps are in place so that the complaint will be addressed in a fair and timely manner:

1. The student is encouraged to resolve the conflict with the person against whom there is grievance.
2. If a resolution is not achieved, or if the student is not satisfied with the resolution, they will submit a written account of the grievance to the appropriate Campus Administrator. After a copy of the complaint is received, an informal conference will be scheduled within five working days. This meeting will allow all parties to resolve the complaint. New Heights encourages the resolution of the complaint before the conference.
3. Complaints not resolved through the meeting with a Campus Administrator will be forwarded to the New Heights District Superintendent. The Superintendent will review the complaint and meet with all parties concerned within three (3) working days.

Students have the right to appeal any recommendations made through a hearing. An appeal must be made to a Campus Administrator within thirty days of the hearing. If the conflict is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal to the New Heights District Superintendent. If still unresolved, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Directors. Requests to be added to the Board agenda must be made in writing two weeks before the scheduled School Board meeting.

Emergency Procedures

New Heights conducts safety drills in conjunction with Tarrant County College protocol at our Stop Six Campus and as required by the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC). Students are to move quietly and orderly to the exit assigned to the room they are in at the time of the drill.

In addition to regular fire drills, lockdown, hold, secure, and weather- or emergency-related disaster drills may also be conducted.

Enrollment Procedure

Anyone between the ages of 18 and 50 who wants to earn a high school diploma may enroll. Students who have already completed a GED are eligible to apply to New Heights. All prospective students must submit a completed application form to be considered for admission. New applicants and former students may apply online at www.newheightsed.com or call 817.515.2800. Students who are enrolled during the last term of the school year and plan to return for the first term of the next school year will complete annual registration over the summer. Enrollment is open year-round. Returning students, siblings of current or returning students, and children of the school's founders and staff members will receive priority.

Students must be in attendance on their first day of school to be enrolled. Students who miss their first day of school may not be enrolled.

Onboarding Activities

Once an application is received, it is processed by our Admissions Team. The student will be contacted to clarify their application responses and to register for essential onboarding activities. These activities will include meeting with an Admissions Coach that allows incoming and returning students to complete important enrollment forms, submit documents, complete diagnostic testing, and choose their class schedule for their first term. Additionally, these activities allow incoming students to review their schedules, tour the school facilities, discuss solutions for any barriers to success at school, and conduct an in-depth review of what to expect at New Heights. Attending these onboarding activities provides the best foundation for a new New Heights student to see success and earn their high school diploma.

Fees

New Heights provides a student identification card to all students upon enrollment. A fee may be charged for the replacement of this student identification card according to the following fee schedule:

- 1st Card – no fee
- 2nd Card Replacement – no fee
- Additional Card Replacements - \$5.00

New Heights may waive any fee or deposit if the student is unable to pay. A waiver request must be made in writing to the Campus Principal or designee and include evidence of inability to pay.

Grade Levels

Incoming students are classified as grade 9 until credit and testing history can be verified. Once the student's transcript has been received and entered into our Student Information System, the student's grade level will be updated according to the following:

- 9th Grade – 22-12.5 credits remaining
- 10th Grade – 12-6.5 credits remaining
- 11th Grade – 6-3 credits remaining
- 12th Grade – 2.5-0 credits remaining and STAAR EOC complete

Note: "Credits remaining" refers to the high school credits only. Required certification coursework is not included.

Grade levels are updated at the following times throughout the school year:

- Upon entry of the student's transcript
- At the end of Term 3 and the end of the school year
- Upon completion of graduation requirements

Immunization Requirements

Immunizations are an important part of public health. Texas law requires students in Texas schools to be immunized against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. Please be aware that students without the required immunizations or a valid exemption will not be allowed to attend school.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

A student shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a child-care facility or public or private elementary or secondary school in Texas.

Vaccine Required (Attention to notes and footnotes)	Minimum Number of Doses Required by Grade Level			NOTES
	K – 6 th	7 th	8 th – 12 th	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP/DTP/DT/Td/Tdap) ¹	5 doses or 4 doses	3 dose primary series and 1 Tdap/Td booster within last 5 years	3 dose primary series and 1 Tdap/Td booster within last 10 years	For K – 6th grade: 5 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine; 1 dose must have been received on or after the 4 th birthday. However, 4 doses meet the requirement if the 4 th dose was received on or after the 4 th birthday. For students aged 7 years and older, 3 doses meet the requirement if 1 dose was received on or after the 4 th birthday. For 7th grade: 1 dose of Tdap is required if at least 5 years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. For 8th – 12th grade: 1 dose of Tdap is required when 10 years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. Td is acceptable in place of Tdap if a medical contraindication to pertussis exists.
Polio ¹	4 doses or 3 doses			For K – 12th grade: 4 doses of polio; 1 dose must be received on or after the 4 th birthday. However, 3 doses meet the requirement if the 3 rd dose was received on or after the 4 th birthday.
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella ^{1,2} (MMR)	2 doses of MMR	2 doses of measles and 1 dose each of rubella and mumps vaccine		The 1 st dose of MMR must be received on or after the 1 st birthday. For K – 6th grade: 2 doses of MMR are required.
Hepatitis B ²	3 doses			For students aged 11 – 15 years, 2 doses meet the requirement if adult hepatitis B vaccine (Recombivax [®]) was received. Dosage (10 mcg/1.0 mL) and type of vaccine (Recombivax [®]) must be clearly documented. If Recombivax [®] was not the vaccine received, a 3-dose series is required.
Varicella ^{1,2,3}	2 doses			The 1 st dose of varicella must be received on or after the 1 st birthday. For K – 12th grade: 2 doses are required.
Meningococcal ¹		1 dose		For 7th – 12th grade, 1 dose of meningococcal vaccine is required upon enrollment. For students 11 – 12 years of age entering 7 th grade, 1 dose of meningococcal vaccine is required.
Hepatitis A ^{1,2}	2 doses			The 1 st dose of hepatitis A must be received on or after the 1 st birthday. For K – 6th grade: 2 doses are required. Special note: a child will not be considered delinquent in this series until 18 months have elapsed since receiving the 1 st dose.

¹ Receipt of the dose up to (and including) 4 days before the birthday will satisfy the school entry immunization requirement.

² Serologic evidence of infection or serologic confirmation of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, or varicella is acceptable in place of vaccine.

³ Previous illness may be documented with a written statement from a physician, school nurse, or the child's parent or guardian containing wording such as: "This is to verify that (name of student) had varicella disease (chickenpox) on or about (date) and does not need varicella vaccine." This written statement will be acceptable in place of any and all varicella vaccine doses required.

Information on Bacterial Meningitis

Senate Bill (SB) 31 requires a school district to provide information relating to bacterial meningitis to its students each school year. The legislation instructs the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to prescribe the form and content of the information and the procedures for notifying students. If you would like to obtain a copy of SB 31, please visit the Texas Legislature Online at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>.

What is Bacterial Meningitis?

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

- Two common types of bacteria cause meningitis:
 - *Strep pneumonia* causes pneumococcal meningitis; there are over 80 subtypes that cause illness.
 - *Neisseria meningitides*—meningococcal meningitis; 5 sub-types cause serious illness—A, B, C, Y, W-135.
 - What are the symptoms?

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

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have severe headaches, high temperatures, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness, joint pains, drowsiness, or confusion.

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?
If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, even with prompt treatment, bacterial meningitis can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability, such as deafness, blindness, amputations, or brain damage (resulting in mental retardation or paralysis).
- How is bacterial meningitis spread?
Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live outside the body for long. They are usually spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing or by sharing drink containers, utensils, or cigarettes.)

The germ **does not** cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. Being a carrier helps to stimulate your body's natural defense system. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or other serious illnesses.

- What is the risk of getting bacterial meningitis?
The risk of getting bacterial meningitis in all age groups is about 2.4 cases per 100,000 population per year; however, the highest risk group for the most serious form of the disease, meningococcal meningitis, is among children 2 to 18 years old.
- How is bacterial meningitis diagnosed?
The diagnosis is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and

laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood. Spinal fluid is obtained by a lumbar puncture (spinal tap).

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?
Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

Vaccines against pneumococcal disease are recommended both for young children and adults over 64. A vaccine against four meningococcal serogroups (A, C, Y, W-135) is available. These four groups cause most meningococcal cases in the United States. This vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90%), but it can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

- What you should do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis.
Seek **prompt** medical attention. For more information, contact the Manager of Health Services for the RGK Foundation Downtown Youth Center for Health, your family physician, or the staff at the Austin Department of Health and Human Services. You may also call the Regional Texas Department of Health office and ask about the meningococcal vaccine.

Non-Discrimination

New Heights is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, religion, color or mental or physical disability or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Harassment under Title IX (sex), Title VI (race, color, or national origin), and Section 504 and Title II of ADA (mental or physical disability, including a perception that the person has any of those characteristics or that the person is associated with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of those characteristics) is a form of unlawful discrimination that will not be tolerated by the school. Harassment is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student that creates a hostile environment, and that can result in disciplinary action against the offending student. Harassing conduct can take many forms, including verbal acts, graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening or humiliating.

This nondiscrimination policy covers admission or access to school programs and activities, including Career and Technology Education programs. Enrollment in these programs is open to all New Heights students who meet the academic prerequisites.

New Heights will ensure all students are given opportunities to take diagnostic assessments that will measure their academic and linguistic levels which will be necessary for success at New Heights and Tarrant County College (TCC).

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Campus Principal at 817.515.2800.

Notification of Rights under the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students who are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”) certain rights concerning the student’s educational records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day New Heights receives an access request. Eligible students should submit to New Heights Administration a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The New Heights Administration will make access arrangements and notify the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Eligible students who wish to ask New Heights to amend a record should submit a request in writing to the Campus Principal, clearly identifying the part of the records they want to be changed and specifying why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the eligible student, the school will notify the eligible student of the decision and their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member, or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its employees and who is under the direct control of the school concerning the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, therapist; a person volunteering to serve on an official committee; or a volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by New Heights to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office

- New Heights designates the following information as directory information: student's name, mailing address(es), telephone number(s), photograph, the campus of attendance, student's current grade level, dates of attendance, enrollment status, and honors and awards received in school. New Heights shall release directory information for the following designated purposes upon request:
 - For school-related purposes, including but not limited to newsletters, graduation-related services & products, campus directory, school website, awards, honors, local newspaper/media, displays, extracurricular programs or events, school photographs, school videos, and other activities deemed to be school-related purposes as determined by New Heights;
 - New Heights affiliated groups or individuals that require directory information to provide education services to New Heights students; and
 - To military recruiters and institutions of higher education, as required by federal law.

Directory information shall not be released for the above-stated purposes if the student denies the release of the information on the form included in the registration process.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from students' education records, without the consent of the eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the eligible student, FERPA regulations require the school to record the disclosure. Eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining the prior written consent of the eligible student:

- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.
- To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and Local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the student's state (SEA).
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
- To state and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, before adjudication, the student whose records were released.

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, to (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs, or (c) improve instruction.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.

Searches and Interrogations

Administrators, teachers, and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students are expected to cooperate with school officials and the lack of such cooperation may lead to further disciplinary action.

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, a Campus Administrator will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- A Campus Administrator will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- A Campus Administrator ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Campus Administrator considers to be a valid objection.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their belongings and vehicles parked on school property. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that vehicles are locked, and the keys are not given to others. Students shall not place, keep, or maintain any article or material that is forbidden by law or District policy in vehicles parked on school property.

School officials may search persons, belongings, or vehicles parked on school property if there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by law or District policy. Students shall be responsible for any prohibited items recovered during a search.

If a vehicle subject to a search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the District shall contact local law enforcement officials, or take necessary action to ensure the safety of the school environment. A student who refuses to unlock his or her vehicle when requested may be denied vehicle access to the school property in the future.

Service Animals

A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities, such as guiding people who are blind; alerting people who are deaf; pulling wheelchairs; and alerting and protecting a person experiencing a seizure. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

A student who requires the use of a service dog to access the general education curriculum must submit a request in writing that includes an explanation of the disability and what work or task the dog has been trained to perform to the Campus Principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service animal on campus so that it may be reviewed, and appropriate accommodations made. A determination will be provided to the student within 10 district business days.

Smoking/Tobacco

New Heights is a smoke-free/vape-free campus. The Texas Education Code, Chapter 38, Section 38.006, prohibits the possession or use of tobacco products on school property or at school-related functions that are either on or off school property.

Student Identification Cards and Lanyards

All students will be issued a New Heights student identification card and designated student lanyard upon enrollment. To maintain campus security, students are **REQUIRED** to have their student ID with the designated student lanyard in view above the waist while on campus. Students who do not have their student ID and designated student lanyard may not be admitted on campus. Students who do not have their student ID and designated student lanyard while on campus will be sent to Reception to obtain a new ID. Students are responsible for maintaining their student ID while enrolled at New Heights. Students who lose or misplace their student ID and/or designated student lanyard may receive 1 replacement. Additional replacements are \$5.

Substance Abuse

If a staff member suspects that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the staff member will immediately notify an Administrator. If, after conducting a thorough investigation, the administrator suspects a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol the Administrator will:

1. Conduct a Student Meeting
 - a. For the student to remain at New Heights, the student must attend a conference with the Campus Principal;
 - b. Review consequences; and
 - c. Sign a behavior/expectations contract.
2. Next Steps may include:
 - a. Referral to an Advising Coach
 - b. Referral to counseling services
 - c. Referral to a community-based substance abuse program
3. Other
 - a. Students can be dismissed for refusal to attend the conference; not following through with any referral; or selling, buying, or exchanging substances.

Visitors

A visitor is anyone who is not a current student or New Heights (NH) staff member/contracted staff/approved volunteer or NH staff/NH Board Member. All visitors must report to the main reception area to sign in, provide government-issued identification, and receive a visitor pass. The receptionist will contact the person the visitor came to see and ask them to come to the reception area to greet and accompany their visitor.

Students are **NOT** permitted to bring guests onto the campus or children into the classrooms, except for special occasions such as an Open House. Students may speak to their Advising Coach regarding extenuating circumstances.

Deliveries for Students

New Heights cannot accept deliveries of any kind (mail, packages, food, etc.) for students. We are bound by confidentiality rules that do not allow us to disclose if a student is in attendance we are not authorized to release student contact information.

Weapons and Firearms Prohibited

New Heights prohibits the use, possession, or display of any illegal knife, club or prohibited weapon on school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. This prohibition includes weapons in vehicles on school property.

New Heights prohibits the use, possession, or display of any illegal firearm on school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where school-sponsored activity takes place. This can include grounds otherwise excluded from the definition of “premises” such as public or private driveways, streets, sidewalks or walkways, parking lots, parking garages, or parking areas.

Pursuant to Texas Penal Code Section 46.03, a person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly possesses or goes with a firearm, illegal knife, club, or prohibited weapon listed in Texas Penal Code Section 46.05(a), on the physical premises of a school or educational institution. It is not a defense to prosecution under this section that the person possessed a handgun and is licensed to carry a concealed handgun under the Texas Government Code Chapter 411.

New Heights may not prohibit a person who holds a license to carry a handgun under Government Code Chapter 411, from transporting or storing a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked, privately owned or leased motor vehicle in a parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area provided by a charter school, provided that the handgun, firearm, or ammunition is not in plain view.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

With a focus on workforce development and College & Career Readiness, all students must conduct themselves professionally. Responses to conduct, both positive and negative, support the concept of natural logical consequences. Students at New Heights are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for their learning and to help maintain an environment in which their classmates may learn as well.

Natural logical consequences for positive and professional behavior are numerous and may include increased friendships, increased opportunities and responsibility both on campus and in the community, achieving both academic and personal goals, awards and incentives celebrating achievements, recommendations, and letters of reference attesting to students’ positive and professional attributes. Natural logical consequences for behavior that fails to meet the positive, professional standard are outlined below.

Students who receive Special Education services are subject to the Student Code of Conduct and will be disciplined by applicable federal laws.

For each violation, any listed consequence may be chosen as they are not in order of severity. Staff may choose to (but are not required to) issue a verbal warning before enforcing any consequences for offenses.

- Potential Consequences (could include but are not limited to)
 - Immediate correction of behavior (i.e. change offensive clothing, place cell phone in an alternate location, etc.)
 - Restitution for damage/repair of property
 - Notify police (of illegal activities)
 - Institute a Behavior Contract
 - Conference with a Campus Administrator
 - Meeting with a Campus Administrator upon return to school
 - Referral to counseling/substance abuse program
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion

New Heights District follows all State and Federal laws. As a result, the police will be called to campus when students are found in possession of any type of drug or alcohol.

- Definitions Within the Student Code of Conduct

Possession—has on one's person, in one's belongings, or one's vehicle.

Under the Influence—Student demonstrates signs of drug/alcohol usage (i.e., smells of marijuana or alcohol, red or glassy eyes, dilated pupils, slurred speech, staggering/stumbling, excessively active, irregular breathing, uncontrollable laughter, excessive trembling, loss of muscle control, extreme difficulty concentrating, or any other unusual behaviors that are not typically exhibited by the student).

Sexually provocative clothing—clothing that reveals breasts, buttocks, genitals, undergarments, pubic hair; or, clothing that depicts sexual acts and/or contains sexual language.

Lewd—conduct that is considered offensive, obscene, and/or indecent.

Bullying—unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Cyber Bullying—involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Threatening/Aggressive/Violent Behavior— any verbal, written, or physical action, gesture, or communication that causes a reasonable person to fear for their safety, or the safety of their property. It includes direct threats, stalking and aggressive body language intended to intimidate or cause fear of harm.

Sexual harassment—unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Suspension—a period during which a student may not attend school for disciplinary reasons. This time may not exceed three days and is considered an unexcused absence.

Expulsion—students are withdrawn from school for up to one calendar year for disciplinary reasons. No other Texas public school is required to enroll a student during the expulsion period.

- Expectations regarding investigations
 - Notify the student of the accusations;
 - Allow the student to relate their version of the incident; and
 - Determine whether the student's conduct warrants disciplinary action or accommodations;
 - Formal Hearings will be audio recorded, and all parties will be notified in the event of an appeal to the Superintendent.

- Outcome of Investigation

The school shall make a good-faith effort to inform the student of the outcome and will notify the student in writing of the decision. The decision shall specify:

- The results of the investigation and consequences, if any;
 - If an expulsion is determined necessary, if it is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period;
 - The expulsion does not take effect until a Campus Administrator has made a ruling at the hearing.
 - The right to appeal a Campus Administrator's decision to the Superintendent within 7 days. Failure to request an appeal in a timely manner constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.
 - If the student chooses to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, the expulsion will remain in effect during this time.
- Appeal to the Superintendent

A student may appeal a Campus Administrator's decision to the Superintendent by notifying the Campus Administrator in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the date of receipt of the Campus Administrator's decision. The Superintendent and a select committee of the Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Campus Administrator at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, or at the discretion of the Board, at a specially called meeting. The Superintendent and Board will notify the student of its decision, in writing, within seven (7) calendar days of the hearing.

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

- No Credit Earned

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

- Due Process Procedures

Students with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other students and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses within the Code of Conduct. If a student with a disability has an IEP that includes disciplinary guidelines, then that student will be disciplined according to those guidelines as required by New Heights. Students for whom the IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined by the standard school policy listed in the Code of Conduct and in accordance with the requirements of New Heights.

STUDENT COMMITMENTS

1. I will respect my school's drug and tobacco-free zone.
2. I will maintain a professional appearance.
3. I will behave in a way that promotes a positive learning environment for everyone.
4. I will follow campus procedures and stay on campus during scheduled class hours; stay away from emergency exits unless directed by staff; enter/leave assigned classrooms on time; take academic success seriously; and be honest in my course and assignment completion.
5. I will exercise appropriate use of my cell phone while attending New Heights.
6. I will show respect for myself and others and the mission of New Heights.
7. I will not behave in threatening or offensive ways toward students, staff, volunteers, or visitors.
8. I will respect school rules, my peers, and the staff.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct have been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies, philosophies and practices, benefits and expectations of New Heights, and your responsibilities as a student. Please read it carefully.

By enrolling in New Heights, you are acknowledging that you have received, read, and familiarized yourself with the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct which outlines information about New Heights, including its goals, policies, practices, procedures, and expectations, and your responsibilities as a student and you understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information and undertake the responsibilities contained in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct.

All students will sign an Acknowledgement Form during enrollment.