



## **Student Handbook**

*“Building Champions with a Future and a Hope”*

**2009-2010**

Advantage Academy - North Duncanville  
Advantage Academy - Grand Prairie  
Advantage Academy - Rowlett  
Advantage Academy - Waxahachie



# ADVANTAGE ACADEMY

**1998-2009**

## District Officials

**Allen Beck, Ph.D., Founder and Superintendent**  
**Angie McDonald, Assistant Superintendent**

**Samuel Cooper, Ph.D., Executive Director of Academics**  
**J.K. McDonald, Executive Director of Operations**  
**Kathy Frandina, C.P.A., Comptroller**

## Principals

Betty Sims, Principal, ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - GRAND PRAIRIE

Tonya Williams, Principal, ADVANTAGE ACADEMY – N. DUNCANVILLE

Susan Buchheit, M. Ed., Principal, ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - WAXAHACHIE

Lisa Hiatt, Principal, ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - ROWLETT

## Freedom from Discrimination

Advantage Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title IV or the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. For inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, contact: Director of Human Resources (214-276-5800), Director of Special Education (Tel. 214-276-5800) 618 W. Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX 75116.

### *Advantage Academy Student Profile*

*A student of Advantage Academy is expected to uphold the following qualities adopted from the seven pillars of a Champion:*

- 1. Integrity- To be honest*
- 2. Humility-To be humble*
- 3. Authority-To be a servant leader*
- 4. Stability-To be dependable*
- 5. Community-To be cooperative*
- 6. Prosperity-To be a good financial manager*
- 7. Victory-To overcome obstacles and win with honor*

## Contents

Freedom from Discrimination .....	3
ADVANTAGE ACADEMY SCHOOL BELIEFS .....	9
Vision Statement.....	9
Mission Statement .....	9
History .....	9
School Motto .....	9
CAMPUS INFORMATION .....	10
ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - GRAND PRAIRIE .....	10
ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - NORTH DUNCANVILLE.....	10
ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - ROWLETT.....	10
ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - WAXAHACHIE .....	10
PREFACE.....	11
ACADEMICS .....	12
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS .....	12
STUDENTS with LEARNING DIFFICULTIES .....	14
SUMMER SCHOOL.....	14
ADMISSION/ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWALS .....	15
ADMISSION .....	15
ENROLLMENT .....	16
ASSEMBLIES/CHARACTER EDUCATION .....	17
ATTENDANCE / ABSENCES .....	17
ABSENCES.....	17
COMPULSARY ATTENDANCE .....	18
ATTENDANCE for CREDIT .....	18
TRUANCY .....	19
TRUANCY POLICY .....	19
TARDY POLICY .....	20
CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS/ SERVICES/ GUIDELINES .....	20
COMPETITIVE FOODS FOR SCHOOL CAMPUSES .....	21
CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBERS .....	21
CHEATING/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM.....	22
CLASS RANK .....	22
CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS and EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES .....	22
COMMUNICATION.....	23
CURRICULUM .....	24

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct) .....	24
DISCIPLINE RECORDS .....	24
DONATIONS .....	24
DRESS CODE AND GROOMING STANDARDS (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct) .....	25
DUAL CREDIT/COLLEGE COURSES.....	25
ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY .....	25
EMERGENCY DRILLS .....	26
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.....	26
EMERGENCIES INVOLVING STUDENTS.....	26
FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) .....	26
FEES/FINES .....	26
ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY FEES.....	27
FOOD AND DRINK .....	27
FUND-RAISING.....	27
GRADING GUIDELINES .....	27
GRADING SCALE .....	27
GRADUATION .....	28
GRADUATION CEREMONIES .....	28
GRADUATION EXPENSES .....	28
GRADUATION PROGRAMS .....	28
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....	29
HEALTH RELATED MATTERS.....	29
BACTERIAL MENINGITIS.....	29
FEVER .....	31
HEAD LICE .....	31
IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION .....	31
MEDICATION.....	31
PINK EYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS):.....	32
RASHES.....	32
VOMITING AND DIARRHEA:.....	32
INAPPROPRIATE DISPLAY OF AFFECTION.....	32
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct).....	32
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/ SCHOLARSHIP .....	32
LIBRARIES.....	33
LOST AND FOUND .....	33
MISSED ASSIGNMENTS/HOMEWORK .....	34

MOVIE & VIDEOS..... 34  
 PARENT NOTIFICATION and WAIVER of PARTICIPATION..... 34

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS ..... 35

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ..... 35

PARENTAL GUIDELINES ..... 35

PARKING/ VEHICLES on CAMPUS..... 36

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ TEXAS PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MINUTE OF SILENCE ..... 36  
 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE..... 36

POSTERS ..... 37

PRAYER ..... 37

PRIVACY..... 37

PRINCIPAL CONFERENCES ..... 37

PROGRESS REPORTS (Refer to Grading) ..... 37

PROHIBITED ITEMS ..... 37

PROMOTION/RETENTION..... 37

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL ..... 37

SAFETY ..... 38

SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRATION PROGRAM ..... 38

RETURNED CHECKS ..... 39

SCHEDULE CHANGES ..... 39

SCHOOL DAY ..... 39  
 ARRIVAL ..... 39  
 DISMISSAL ..... 40

SEARCHES ..... 40

SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ DATING VIOLENCE ..... 40

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct) ..... 41

STUDENT RECORDS ..... 41  
 RECORD VIEWING ..... 42

TARDIES (Refer to Tardy Policy) ..... 43

TECHNOLOGY ..... 43  
 RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:..... 43  
 SAFE USE INCLUDES: ..... 43  
 MISUSE SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO: ..... 43

TEXAS ACHIEVE/CARRER CLUSTERS ..... 44

TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTION MATERIALS ..... 44

TRANSCRIPTS ..... 44

TRANSFERS WITHIN THE DISTRICT..... 44

TRANSPORTATION ..... 44

VANDALISM AND DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY ..... 45

VIDEO CAMERA'S/ MONITORING ..... 45

VISITORS ..... 45

VOLUNTEERS/CHAPERONES ..... 46

WEB SITE..... 46

## **ADVANTAGE ACADEMY SCHOOL BELIEFS**

### **Vision Statement**

Advantage Academy will be a professional learning community and will create a character-based culture of excellence based on the principles that made America “One Nation under God” so that students and educators will be transformed into champions in the areas of their gifting.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to educate children in an academic, character-based environment of excellence and to cultural diversity, partnering with parents, churches and businesses. We are dedicated to providing innovative instruction using technology and quality resources to inspire students to be productive, successful champions by offering them a future and a hope.

### **History**

In 1998, Dr. Allen Beck envisioned a charter school system that would be different from all others, public and private. Building upon the best of what both types of schools have to offer, Dr. Allen Beck set out to provide young people with a school that would mold “academically superior young people of integrity.” As such, his vision makes Advantage Academy accountable to do the following:

- Form students of high character.
- Give students a solid academic foundation of reading, math, science, social studies and technology.
- Form partnerships with our community.
- Provide a safe learning environment.

The primary purpose of Advantage Academy to provide young people with equal-opportunity education, where there exists a program of study for a wide variety of student interests, skills, and aptitudes in such a way that students will have a positive influence on their families, school and community.

### **School Motto**

“Building Champions with a Future and a Hope”

## **CAMPUS INFORMATION**

### **ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - GRAND PRAIRIE**

300 West Pioneer Parkway, Grand Prairie, TX 75051  
Tel: 972-262-6944 Fax: 972-262-6940  
*Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade Programs*  
*Bilingual Program*  
Betty Sims, Principal

### **ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - NORTH DUNCANVILLE**

4009 Joseph Hardin Dr., Dallas, TX 75236  
Tel: 214-276-5842 Fax: 214-467-4499  
*Kindergarten through Eighth Grade Programs*  
Tonya Williams, Principal

### **ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - ROWLETT**

8200 Schrade Road, Rowlett, TX 75088  
Tel: 972-412-7761 Fax: 972-412-2320  
*Kindergarten through Eighth Grade Programs*  
Lisa Hiatt, Principal

### **ADVANTAGE ACADEMY - WAXAHACHIE**

701 West Highway 287 Bypass, Waxahachie, TX 75165  
Tel: 972-937-9851 Fax: 972-938-0078  
*Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade Programs*  
Susan Buchheit, M.Ed., Principal

## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

The Advantage Academy Student Handbook has been designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the course of the academic school year. We encourage you to take some time to closely review each section of the handbook.

The term “the student’s parent or guardian” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person(s) who have agreed to assume school-related responsibility for the student.

Both students and parents should make themselves familiar with Advantage Academy’s **Student Code of Conduct**, which is a document approved by the Board to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning and academic gain. The Student Code of Conduct is available online and in each School Office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with the **Student Code of Conduct**. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact your campus principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus, the Student/ Parent Acknowledgment Form located at the back of this handbook.

**The Advantage Academy Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct are available online, [www.advantageisd.com](http://www.advantageisd.com).**

## ACADEMICS

### ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

#### 504

Section 504 requires the provision of appropriate educational services; services that are designed to meet the individual needs of qualified students to the same extent that the needs of students without a disability are met. To qualify under Section 504, a student must: be determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities including learning and behavior; have a record of having such impairment; or be regarded as having such impairment.

### BILINGUAL EDUCATION

This is a full-time instructional program offered beginning in Kindergarten, in which both English and Spanish are used for instruction within the regular curriculum. The student's native language (Spanish) is maintained and utilized to enable students of limited English proficiency to have an equal opportunity to master grade level essential elements and objectives while attaining proficiency in all areas of the English language.

#### E.S.L.

English as a Second Language is offered in K5 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for students who speak a language other than English and are identified as being limited in their English proficiency. This program, with instruction only in English, is designed to develop the student's proficiency in listening, comprehension, speech, reading, and writing in the English language to ensure academic excellence in all content areas.

### READING RECOVERY/DYSLEXIA

Students who have been identified through a reading screening to have diagnosed needs may be eligible for special adaptations and multi-sensory teaching programs for reversing reading failure.

### GIFTED and TALENTED

A Gifted and Talented Program is available for students enrolled in grades 3-6, based on teacher or parent recommendations and further evaluation.

New gifted and talented enrollees must be recommended prior to the end of the school year in order to be eligible to enter the GT program the upcoming school year.

A student must maintain an 85% in all coursework in order to participate in the program.

A student may be identified based upon assessment tools, using both formative and non-formative evaluations. A Gifted and Talented student is one who performs or demonstrates the potential to perform at a highly advanced level of accomplishment. Advantage Academy has implemented this program to provide more advanced academic levels to GT students within the already existing schedule and curricular framework.

When a student transfers to the district and is identified as eligible for the GT program, the student's records will be reviewed by the selection committee to determine if placement in the district's GT program is appropriate.

## PRE AP/AP

**Pre-AP courses** are taught using advanced materials and strategies. Students should expect the pace and academic rigor to be above grade level to prepare students for College Advanced Placements coursework.

Typically, successful Pre-AP students are task-oriented, proficient readers who are eligible to organize their time and who have parent/guardian support. Students who are already overextended with academics or extracurricular activities should consider whether they have the time to devote to Pre-AP coursework. Outside study time is at least one to two times the amount of time spent in class per week.

A student may transfer from a Pre-AP at any time during the first 6 weeks of school or at the end of the semester, if spots are available. Transfers beyond the 6 week window may only be granted with administrative approval.

**AP Courses** - Students may enter the AP program if the student has a current overall total grade point average of 90% or above. If accepted into the program, the student must maintain a grade average of 85% or above. Extra requirements may be necessary for those not meeting these standards. Students may petition the program for an entrance waiver. In this case, the students' teacher and the principal must provide a written recommendation. Please note that the overall grade point requirement is according to our district policy. Other educational institutions may have different standards especially concerning college transfer credit requirements.

If a student and parent elect to take the end of course exams for college credit, parents will be responsible for all testing fees. A student may not receive credit toward a degree solely on the basis of a score on an Advanced Placement Test.

If a student desires to transfer back to a regular course, a meeting with parent/guardian, teacher and the student will determine on a case-by-case basis whether a course change in the best interest of the student. Available seats will also be taken into consideration.

## RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Students may be referred by their teacher(s) and recommended for review by a campus student study team.

This committee will evaluate the student's learning progress and make recommendations for improved performance. Parents may be a contributing member of his/her child's campus student study team.

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact their campus principal or counselor to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district

must complete the evaluation and report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must provide a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is the principal at the student's campus.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special Education classes will be offered to students with disabilities for continued skill development. Students, ages 5 to 21, with identified disabilities are eligible for special education services. The disabling conditions are:

- Auditory Impairment (AI)
- Autism (AU)
- Deaf-Blindness (DB)
- Emotional Disturbance (ED)
- Mental Retardation (MR)
- Multiple Disabilities (MD)
- Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
- Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- Learning Disability (LD)
- Speech Impairment (SI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)
- Non-Categorized Early Childhood (NCEC)

## **STUDENTS with LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

### **OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED OR MAY NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

The following students may be required to attend summer school:

1. Any 3rd through 8th grade students who fail TAKS testing and/or two core subjects.
2. High school students who fail one or two classes and need to recover course credit or who fail any portion of the TAKS test.

State and District mandates require that these students participate in the Advantage Academy Summer School accelerated learning program for remediation.

The cost of summer school will entail \$125.00 per course at the High School level. High School students may not recover more than two course credits during the course of summer school. (District fees are subject to change).

The **Student Support Team** with District approval will make final recommendations for summer school participation.

## **ADMISSION/ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWALS**

### **ADMISSION**

Advantage Academy accepts students in grades K5 through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. K5 students must be five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enroll.

The parent/guardian and student must complete all Texas Education Agency enrollment requirements and comply with the charter school's contract requirements prior to becoming accepted as an enrolled student

Any student admitted to Advantage Academy must provide evidence of prior schooling such as report cards and/or a transcript from the previous school attended. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in Advantage Academy for the first time must present a signed statement from a physician or documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of Health, no later than 30 days after enrolling in Advantage Academy. The parent(s) must furnish records which verify the identity of the student.

To be eligible for enrollment, the prospective student and the legal parents/guardians of the student must agree in writing to follow the standards of the school and complete all requirements for admission. Students are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis until all spaces are filled.

The child is required to attend school on the first day of the school year to be officially enrolled. If the child fails to attend school on the first day after school begins or their records are incomplete, the child may lose their space for enrollment and that space may be awarded to another eligible child.

Each child must be enrolled by their' legal parent/guardian. Students with a previous expulsion or other serious documented behavioral incidents, such as a felony, probation, parole, or time spent in an alternative education facility such as a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), will not be permitted to enroll in Advantage Academy.

Falsification of information required by these guidelines is a serious offense. In addition to the penalty provided by Section 37.10, Penal Code, a person who knowingly falsifies information required for enrollment of a student in Advantage Academy will be ineligible for enrollment and or subject to withdrawal.

## **PLACEMENT OF NEW STUDENTS**

New students will be placed at the grade level attained outside the district if such students are transferring from a school accredited by a state or regional accrediting organization.

All Advantage Academy students will be required to take ITBS testing at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of the ITBS testing is to determine if the student is on grade-level in all academic areas.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Advantage Academy is an open enrollment charter school, which means any age/grade appropriate child will be admitted to the school, without regard to race, color, creed or intelligence, if space permits. There will be limitations to the number of slots per grade level. This may require students wishing to attend, to be placed on a waiting list until slots become available. Students will be enrolled in the grade level that follows their last completed grade, and must have documentation of promotion from their previous school. Students entering mid-year will be placed in their current grade level. Students who enroll after the first day of school must provide the district with an official attendance report from their previous school district to be eligible for enrollment at Advantage Academy.

Advantage Academy requires that all students be “full time” students. To be considered “full time” each student must have no less than 4 instructional hours per day. With approval from student’s parent/guardian, campus principal, and a district administrator, high school students may be permitted to complete two classes on campus while being enrolled in two dual credit classes off campus per semester.

High school students may be permitted to leave campus before the end of the school day by satisfying one of the following requirements, with prior approval, and the required documentation being on file in the campus office.

- Employment with an approved work study program.
- Involvement in an approved internship program.
- Verification of employment during school hours.

*Although an open-enrollment charter school is a public school, there are differences allowed under the law and our contract with the State Board of Education as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. Since our school is a school of “choice”, this school may not be the best or most appropriate “fit” for everyone. The child and parent/guardian are required to sign written agreements to follow the rules and requirements that govern the operation of all campuses.*

Enrollment applications are available online, via: [www.advantageisd.com](http://www.advantageisd.com).

## **RETURNING STUDENTS**

Students **\*\***in good standing” with Advantage Academy may **re-enroll** for the following school year. High school students must have a current graduation plan, signed by the student’s parent/guardian to be considered for **re-enrollment**.

\*Students will **not** be considered “in good standing” if the student:

- Exhibited signs of being a serious threat to other students, staff, and themselves;
- Had serious disciplinary issues (administrative discretion) at the conclusion of the previous school year;
- Withdrew during the previous school year due to disciplinary consequences;
- Was referred to District Administration under the “Recommendation for Expulsion” requirement.

Students who were absent (excused or unexcused on 18 or more days in the previous school year are subject to the Compulsory Attendance Law.

### **WITHDRAWALS**

If a student must withdraw for any reason from Advantage Academy, the students' legal parent/guardian must notify the school office at least seventy-two hours prior to the student's withdrawal date. At the time of notice, the student's parent/guardian must submit an official withdrawal form and complete the required exit interview with the campus principal.

A student who is 18 or older, or who shows valid proof of marriage, or has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without a legal parental/guardian's signature but is required to complete the same withdrawal procedure.

### **ASSEMBLIES/CHARACTER EDUCATION**

Advantage Academy's commitment to character education is at the heart of its mission in order to assist students to develop the key character qualities in mind and behavior that will enable them to set their personal goals and aspirations high and live like champions! It is Advantage Academy's belief that commitment to character education is essential to the future success of Advantage Academy students and of our employees!

Advantage Academy will involve all students and school employees in character education on a weekly or by-weekly basis by assembling the students in order to provide character education and development in all students. Students who do not abide by District rules of conduct during the assemblies will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **ATTENDANCE / ABSENCES**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

#### **ABSENCES**

When returning to school after being absent, a student must bring a note within 48 hours of the absence, signed by the parent or doctor describing the reason for the absence. Only five (5) parent notes per semester will be accepted before a doctor's note is required. Please request a note from the doctor at the time of the appointment. If a student returns to school without a note, the absence will be considered unexcused. Three (3) unexcused absences in a four-week period or if a student is absent 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year will be considered TRUANT.

When sending a note, please include the following:

- Full Name of Student
- Dates of Absence
- Reason for Absence Each Day

Under Texas Education Code 25.093, any student not attending at least 90% of the total days class is offered will not receive credit.

## **COMPULSARY ATTENDANCE**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

Students enrolled in kindergarten are required to attend school.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed "accelerated instruction" by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; 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 from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the student is over age 18, the student's parents shall not be subject to penalties as a result of their child's violation of state compulsory attendance law.

## **ATTENDANCE for CREDIT**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate.

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

*The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credits depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.*

## TRUANCY

Schools are required by law to file truancy report(s) on parents of students who have accumulated numerous unexcused absences within a specific period of time. Any day a student is absent puts the student behind in his/her learning. It is essential that the school have the support of parents to help our students achieve maximum success and to become champions.

Under the Texas State law, if your child is absent ten (10) or more days within a six-month period, or three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period "without an excuse", you and your child are subject to prosecution. Parents must maintain compliance with the Compulsory Attendance Law in the State of Texas. Failure to comply will be considered a violation of the Texas Compulsory Attendance Law and is considered a Class C Misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 for each offense. Additionally, you may be required to attend a class to help you work with your child to ensure he or she attends school.

## TRUANCY POLICY

It is the policy of Advantage Academy to:

- Send out a warning letter to parent of students who have accumulated **5** unexcused absences (letter must be signed and returned).
- Immediately begin the process to file the appropriate paperwork with a justice or municipal court for students who have accumulated **10** unexcused absences within a six month period.
- Call an Administrative committee hearing for students who have accumulated **18** excused or unexcused absences (considered **excessive** by Advantage Academy) to determine whether student shall lose credit, is retained, or if the appropriate paperwork is filed with a justice or municipal court and student is withdrawn in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Student Attendance and Accounting Handbook.

Please note that no student shall be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance 90% of the days the class is offered.

## **TARDY POLICY**

Texas Education Code 25.085 requires a child to attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided. Promptness is important to reduce interruption of the learning process. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to get the child to school on time.

A student who arrives late to school must check in at the attendance office before proceeding to class and present a written, parent signed letter. If a student is late to any class during the regular school day, he/she will be reported tardy regardless.

The tardy discipline procedure is as follows;

- 1) Three (3) tardies = (1) detention
- 2) Three (3) detentions = (1) ISS
- 3) Three (3) ISS = (1) OSS

## **BULLYING**

“Bullying” occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student’s property, places a student in fear of harm to him/herself or his property, or is so severe, persistent, or perverse that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Advantage Academy will not tolerate any form of “Bullying” against any of its students and will therefore investigate all allegations of “Bullying”.

## **CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS/ SERVICES/ GUIDELINES**

The district participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need and contingent upon application completion; Applications are available in the school office or the Food Services Department. Information about a student’s participation is confidential.

Child Nutrition programs operate under the direction of the Texas Department of Agriculture. A Public School Nutrition Policy was issued in 2004 in an effort to allow students the opportunity to eat a hot school lunch. These policies must be enforced by Advantage Academy campuses:

**Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value** (carbonated beverages, hard candy, or popsicles) may not be available or provided access during the school day. These items may not be given away or sold to students. The exceptions are the three holidays chosen by the elementary campuses as celebrations.

French fries and other fried potato products must be limited to three ounces per serving, and students may only purchase one serving at a time.

Maximum portion sizes have been set for all snacks and beverages sold at each campus cafeteria.

School campuses may not serve any competitive foods or provide access to them directly or indirectly during the school day until the end of the last scheduled class.

Parents may provide any kind of snack for their own child's consumption, but they may not provide any food items for other children in the class.

Parents may only provide lunch, other food items, or drinks to their own child.

## COMPETITIVE FOODS FOR SCHOOL CAMPUSES

The competitive foods policy section for elementary schools states competitive foods (All food and beverages that are not provided by school food service) are not allowed to be provided to students any time anywhere on school premises until after the end of the last scheduled class. The competitive foods policy section for middle/junior high schools states competitive foods (All food and beverages that are not provided by school food service) are not allowed anywhere on school premises from 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after meals. The competitive foods policy section for high schools states competitive foods (All food and beverages that are not provided by school food service) are not allowed during meal periods in areas where reimbursable meals are served and consumed.

The intent of the policy is to encourage the consumption of nutritious food by students and to limit access to high-fat, high-sugar items during the school day. Therefore, the only food that may be made available to elementary school students on campus during the school day, at times other than meal periods, is one nutritious classroom snack allowed by the policy.

*The nutrition policy does not apply to students who leave campus for approved field trips or to travel to athletic events, UIL, or other related competitions. The school day is considered to have ended for these students. School activities, athletic functions, and etc. that occur after the normal school day are not covered by the policy.*

**For more information contact the Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division, Tel. 888.TEX-KIDS, [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org).**

## GUIDELINES

- Advantage Academy IS A CLOSED CAMPUS (students are not allowed to leave for lunch)
- During lunch students are to remain in the lunch room at all times and are not allowed to leave campus, return to the halls, or go the student parking lot or playgrounds.
- Cutting in line or saving place in line is not acceptable.
- Students will place trash in designated containers. Students, who do not dispose of trash and clean up the area where they ate, will be subject to cafeteria duty or other forms of disciplinary action.
- Students are not allowed to order commercial food to be delivered to campus.
- Students must present their Student ID Badge and money to the cashier at the time of purchase.
- Lunches provided by parents or guardians may only be consumed by their child. Parents or guardians may not give lunches to students who are not their legal student. Many children are allergic to specific foods or food product.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Parents must inform the School Office if changes are to be made to student address or telephone numbers in order to keep their students demographic information current. If a family

moves within the district or changes their home or work number(s), parents must notify the School Office in writing. It is important that student records be kept current at all times, so parents can be notified of any illness or emergency.

### **CHEATING/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM**

Advantage Academy's definition of student academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Student copying of another student's homework or test answers with or without that student's permission.
2. Using cheat notes during a quiz, test, or closed note and book assignment.
3. Having access to a teacher's answer sheets or books.
4. Obtaining test questions from students who have already taken tests.
5. Copying themes and other written paper from other students or alternative reference materials without properly quoting the source.
6. Allowing another student to copy homework or test answers.
7. Claiming work taken from the Internet or other resources as theirs.
8. Use of cell phones or other electronic devices during testing or class time to relay answers, take pictures of a quiz, test, or closed classroom assignment and then communicate its content to another student for academic gain.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's original ideas or writing, as one's own, without proper credit given to its original source. Plagiarism is considered cheating and if a student cheats, that student will be subject to disciplinary action and the loss of credit for the work in question.

### **CLASS RANK**

A student's class rank can be obtained by contacting the Districts Compliance Department. Class rank is calculated twice a year, following the close of each semester. Ninth grade students will not be ranked until the completion of their first year of high school. Local courses are not included in GPA or class rank.

### **CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS**

The school day should not be interrupted needlessly. Parents and students are asked to observe the following guidelines (list is non- inclusive):

- Deliveries such as forgotten lunches, money, or supplies are to be left in the office and will be delivered to the appropriate student by office personnel.
- In the case of an emergency, office personnel will deliver EMERGENCY telephone messages.
- Parents are not allowed to speak to their child's teacher during the school day; they should call the school office or e-mail the teacher, teachers are required to return the call within 24 hours. Parents are encouraged to make appointments to meet with teachers so the instructional day will not be interrupted.

### **CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS and EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Students are encouraged to become involved in one or more school clubs and/or organizations. Club eligibility requirements vary, but club sponsors will provide specific club requirements and fees involved.

The objective for each of these clubs will be the following:

- Create leadership skills in students.
- Teach students the importance of giving back to their school and their community.
- Allow students to continue to learn outside of their classroom setting.

**Participation in any Advantage Academy club, organization or any extracurricular activity is a privilege not a right.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication between school and parent/guardian is vital to student success. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's teachers on a regular basis. Additionally, we will utilize newsletters, the website, parent conferences and meetings, e-mail, phone calls, and take-home folders, as well as other vehicles for sharing information and gaining feedback.

Parents/guardians are required to keep their child's contact information current.

## **COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

The purpose of the community volunteer service program is to create an opportunity for students to engage in volunteer service that benefits the community and people in need. The program will be required of all 9<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The students will be required to accumulate a total of 40 hours of community service before they are eligible to graduate from Advantage Academy. The Government credit will be awarded only to students who complete the 40-hour requirement. Students who have not completed 40 hours of community service by the time they complete Government will be assigned a grade of "Incomplete" by the administration, until they have completed the required hours. Students will be awarded ½ (.5) local credit in "Community Service" which will be recorded on their transcripts, as a grade of "Pass" when they have completed the 40 hours.

Community service hours must be completed through a local non-profit organization. Class ranking points will not be awarded for this credit. The focus of the program is for students to accumulate community service hours by participating as a volunteer to assist those in need.

### **Resources for Community Service Hours**

Resources students may use for community service may include, but are not limited to the following: Hospitals, food banks, social service agencies, nursing homes, retirement centers, churches

For help in finding community service organizations talk to your HS Advisor or Principal.

Activities for which the student will NOT receive approval include, but are not limited to:

- Services for which students receive a grade or personal gain (i.e. Eagle Scout)
- Activities for which the student receives payment or gifts;
- Activities during the student's school day without approval, which would include out of school suspension.

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved with their student in the selection of community volunteer service activities

## **COMPLAINTS**

Complaints from Advantage Academy students, parents, and other citizens should be resolved at the lowest administrative level, if possible, such as with the teacher if the concern is at the classroom level or with the principal if the concern is at the campus level.

Complaints or concerns can be addressed simply with a phone call or a conference with a teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, parents should submit a written complaint, and request a conference with the campus principal. If the problem cannot be resolved at the campus level, the original complaint should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent.

## **CURRICULUM**

The school curriculum includes core academic courses set forth by the State of Texas, which include but are limited to courses in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, Fine Arts, Career and Technical Programs, Physical Education, and elective course offerings.

## **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The law specifies that certain general information about students be considered “directory information” and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. The primary purpose of information being designated as directory information is to allow schools and the school district to include this type of information in school and district publications and information.

That information may include:

- A student’s name, age, and grade level.
- Date and place of birth.
- The student’s photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- The student’s dates of attendance, enrollment status, degrees, honors and awards received in school.
- Major field of study.

The parent or an eligible student may prevent release of any or all directory information regarding a student. This objection must be made during the enrollment process.

## **DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct)**

### **DISCIPLINE RECORDS**

It is the policy of Advantage Academy to properly secure, maintain and communicate all discipline records for a minimum of three years.

### **DONATIONS**

Donations made to the District shall become sole property of Advantage Academy, not of the accepting individual or organization.

Donations made to Advantage Academy must meet the following guidelines:

- Donations must have purpose consistent with Advantage Academy purposes.
- Donations shall not place restrictions on the Advantage Academy school programs.
- Donations shall not require the exclusive endorsement of a particular business product.

- Donations shall not establish curriculum guidelines.
- Donations shall not conflict with Advantage Academy policies and procedures nor actions set forth by the Board of Trustees.

## **DRESS CODE AND GROOMING STANDARDS (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct)**

### **DUAL CREDIT/COLLEGE COURSES**

Advantage Academy offers dual credit in conjunction with surrounding community colleges. This provides students a way to earn high school and college credit at the same time. A student may request in writing to be permitted to earn credit for college course(s) taken in approved institutions.

Students/Parents are responsible for all costs associated with enrolling in college course(s) and will be required to provide the District with an official college transcript showing a numeric grade earned and indication of the credit received. A student will be required to earn a minimum of “C” to qualify for high school credit. College course credit may not substitute for courses required for the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement Graduation Plan.

Dual credit courses are available for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students may petition to take dual credit classes, but must submit their petition in writing to the Registrar for evaluation with final approval by the Principal.

In order to be eligible, a student must have completed 10<sup>th</sup> grade, have passed the previous year’s TAKS tests, and have passed the requesting college’s admission entrance requirements and entrance examination.

- Dallas County Community College District: <http://www.dcccd.edu>  
telephone 214-378-1824
- Navarro Community College: <http://www.navarrocollege.edu>  
telephone 1-800-NAVARRO

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

Personal cell phones and other unauthorized electronic devices may not be used during normal school hours. Cell phones and other electronic devices will be confiscated if seen or heard. Campus Administrators will follow district guidelines pertaining to confiscating and returning of such items, which is as follows:

- 1st offense** – 5 day confiscation, \$15 dollar return fee; parent will be required to retrieve the device from the school office
- 2nd offense** – \$25 dollar return fee; device will be returned to *parent* at the conclusion of semester

- Confiscated cell phones will include SIM card.
- All cell phones and other unauthorized electronic devices will be confiscated by school administrators if deemed **disruptive/inappropriate** during any school sponsored event or activity, on or off school property.
- Students are not permitted to have cell phones or any other unauthorized electronic device in their possession during TAKS testing or in any school testing environment. Students found to be in possession of such devices will face appropriate disciplinary consequences.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Advantage Academy is required by state law to conduct numerous emergency drills per school year. Each campus conducts disaster drills usually just prior to tornado season. These drills develop safety practices that will help students move quickly and orderly to assigned areas during an emergency. Teachers will review the rules of safety with their students. During a drill or actual emergency, the students' personal safety will be the main priority.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Advantage Academy follows state laws and district guidelines in the case of individual or school-wide emergencies. Each campus has a trained Emergency Response Team, which will coordinate all emergency procedures. In case of an emergency, students should follow emergency procedures and the directions of their teachers. Telephones will not be available for student use during school emergency situations.

When alarms sound, students must follow the direction of teachers, the Fire Marshall, the police, or ERT members in charge, quickly, quietly, and in an orderly fashion. Students who do not follow instructions or disrupt emergency procedures will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed necessary by District Officials.

## **EMERGENCIES INVOLVING STUDENTS**

In the event of an emergency or crisis which involves a student:

Student's parent/ guardian will be notified as soon as possible.

If a child has a medical emergency, the hospital must obtain parental permission before performing any procedures.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

Both federal and state law safeguards student education records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and "eligible" students certain rights. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

## **FEES/FINES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to a student. A student is expected to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain fees or deposits including:

1. Club dues and supply fees
2. Fees for optional courses offered for credit
3. Security deposits
4. The materials for a class project the student will keep
5. Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel
6. Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, class rings, etc.
7. Student accident insurance and insurance on school-owned instruments
8. Uniform maintenance
9. Parking fees and student identification cards
10. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment
11. Athletic Fees
12. Library and textbook fees
13. Summer school fees
14. Technology fees

### **ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY FEES**

Advantage Academy students enrolled in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade are to pay a \$30.00 annual Technology Fee. This fee will assist in supporting the coverage of curriculum costs, software purchases, licensing agreements, and student support services, online services, the purchase of support equipment and minor technology repair and maintenance. Students are to remit payment upon registration.

### **FOOD AND DRINK**

No type of food, candy, gum, or drinks other than bottled water are allowed anywhere on school property, during the normal school day, except in the lunchroom during the students scheduled lunchtime. If students are caught with food, candy, gum, or drinks, other than bottled water, student will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

**No drinks (including water) are allowed in the schools computer labs or any other instructional setting where computers or other technical or electronic devices are being used.**

### **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups, classes, athletics, and/or parent groups, boosters may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. A Fund Raising Permission form must be submitted 30 days prior to the event. Student participation in approved fund-raising activities shall not interfere at anytime with the regular instructional program.

All fund-raising projects are subject to final approval from the districts central office.

### **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Advantage Academy teachers are required to record all student grades in their official grade book.

Report cards are issued to students on a regular basis. The report card is computer generated and will be sent home on the Friday following the end of the reporting period as indicated on the Advantage Academy calendar. The report card must be signed by the student’s parent and returned to school. An official report card will be mailed to the student’s address on file in the school office following the academic school year.

A grade below 70 indicates a student is not meeting the passing standard for the course. If a student receives a grade at or below a 70 in any subject during a grading period a parent/teacher conference is recommended in order to discuss the student’s academic progress.

### **GRADING SCALE**

#### **KINDERGARTEN**

<b>Excellent</b>	90-100%
<b>Satisfactory</b>	80-89%
<b>Needs Improvement</b>	70-79%
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	69% or below

#### **FIRST THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE**

##### **Numerical grading scale**

90-100% = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
Below 70% = F

**High school Pre-AP/AP courses are graded on a 5.0 scale**

## GRADUATION

### GRADUATION CEREMONIES

A student must meet all credit and course requirements set by the State of Texas and Advantage Academy as well as pass all sections of the state mandated TAKS test in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. Students failing all requirements of the State and District will not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies. Participation in graduation exercise is a privilege not a right.

### GRADUATION CLASSIFICATION

Students who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in either the 2004-2005, 2005-2006 or 2006-2007 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program (22 credits)
- Recommended Program (24 credits)
- Distinguished Graduation Plan (26 credits)

Freshman	6 credits
Sophomore	12 credits
Junior	18 credits
Senior	24 credits

Students who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2007-2008 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

- Minimum Program (22 credits)
- Recommended Program\* (26 credits)
- Distinguished Graduation Plan (26 credits)

Freshman	7 credits
Sophomore	7 credits
Junior	21 credits
Senior	26 credits

Note: \* indicates the minimum requirement all students must follow unless another plan has been approved by the District and parent/guardian provided additional requirements are met.

### GRADUATION EXPENSES

Because students and their parents/guardians will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation-such as purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior pictures-both students and parent/guardian should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. Students meeting the requirements for graduation are responsible for all expenses incurred by the student.

### GRADUATION PROGRAMS

The District offers one district graduation for all Advantage Academy sites. Graduation for all Advantage Academy sites will be held at a central location as dictated by the Superintendent. Graduating students will be eligible to achieve the ranking of class valedictorian or salutatorian based upon the district's highest ranking. Determination for either ranking will be based on Advantage Academy numerical grade policy and shall be calculated at the end of the fifth six

weeks of the student's final 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. In order to be eligible for either ranking, the student must have been enrolled consecutively in Advantage Academy for both their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> academic school year.

The following course categories will be averaged in a student's grade point average: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Language, Physical Education, Fine Arts, and Technology.

Students enrolled in dual credit classes, will be required to provide the District with an official transcript for all dual credit classes, no later than one week before commencement.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass the statewide exit-level exams.

A student entering Grade 9 in the 2009-2010 school year and thereafter shall enroll in courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements for the recommended high school program specified in 74.63 of this title (relating to Recommended High School Program) unless the student, the student's parent or other persons standing in parental relation to the student, and a school counselor or school administrator agree that the student should be permitted to take courses under the minimum high school program specified in 74.62 of this title (relating to the Minimum High School Program). High school courses successfully completed prior to Grade 9 and the 2008-2009 school year shall count toward graduation in the manner established in this chapter for credit in the year the course is successfully completed.

The grade 11 exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities set forth by the State to take the test.

Any student who was in grade 9 or higher on January 11, 2001, is eligible to graduate under the former TAAS exam.

## **HEALTH RELATED MATTERS**

Each Advantage Academy campus has an assigned school nurse aide who is available when needed. If a student is injured or feels ill, the teacher will send him/her to the clinic. The emergency information card on file in the office must be kept current regarding telephone numbers and people to be notified in case of accident or illness if parents/guardian cannot be reached. Provisions should be made to have your child picked up if diagnosed ill.

### **BACTERIAL MENINGITIS**

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

#### **What is meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

**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 a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

**How serious is bacterial meningitis?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability. How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by 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 for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

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

**How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a 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 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

**Where can you get more information?**

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

## FEVER

A student with a temperature > 100 will be excluded from school. The temperature must be below 100° for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

## HEAD LICE

If your child has head lice, he/she must be excluded from school until he/she has received treatment with a special shampoo and after the removal of all nits. If your child has a known or suspected case of head lice, please notify the school nurse so that all children in the class can be checked. Students will be sent home from school when the nurse finds live lice or nits. Students must report to the nurses' office with parent/guardian in the morning, each time student is returning to school due to being sent home for lice infestation. School nurses will check the hair. If there are nits present, the child will be sent home again.

## IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION

Advantage Academy adheres to the State of Texas immunization requirements stipulated in the Texas Education Code, Article 2.09, which requires specific immunizations for children attending schools in the state of Texas. No person may be admitted to any school in the district unless they have been fully immunized and such immunizations are current and up-to-date. Students transferring from another school district may be provisionally enrolled for a period of not more than thirty days while awaiting the transfer of records. For specific immunization requirements, please check the Advantage Academy website or contact the campus nurse.

## MEDICATION

A school nurse has the right not to administer a medication if he/she feels it is not in the best interest of the student. If this decision is made, the nurse should contact the parents or legal guardian and explain the rationale for the decision. The parents must contact the physician and confirm the medication and obtain a written statement for the student including medication, dosage, possible side effects, and criteria to monitor in order to prevent toxicity. If parents cannot be contacted, the nurse will contact the doctor directly. Parents may arrange to come to the school and give medication to the child or arrange to have it taken on an alternate schedule where it is not administered at school.

**If a student must take medication during school hours, the following school rules must be adhered to:**

- Only medication that cannot be scheduled for other than school hours may be given.
- All medicines must be taken to the clinic where they will be kept in a locked area.
- All medication must be properly labeled and in its original container.
- A note **signed by parent/guardian** must accompany the medication requesting that a particular dosage be administered at a particular time - **short-term medications**.
- A note **signed by the physician** must accompany the medication requesting that particular dosage be administered at a particular time - **long term medications**
- The student is responsible for reporting to the clinic to take the medication. The parent is responsible for picking up the medicine to take home at dismissal or at the end of the year.
- The nurse can dispense non-prescription medicines if they are sent in the bottle or container with the child's name attached and are accompanied by a note from parent/guardian giving times and dosage.
- Any medication given on a daily basis over 10 days must have an authorization signed by both the physician and parent/guardian.

- All prescription medications must be in the appropriate prescription bottle with a prescription label bearing the student's name, the name of the medication, and instructions for giving the medication.
- In compliance with House Bill 1688, a student can possess and self-administer asthma medicine while on school property if the school nurse receives a written authorization statement from both the student's parent and the student's doctor. Parents may arrange to come to the school and give medication to the child or arrange to have it taken on an alternate schedule where it is not administered at school.
- Parents and/or physician must send written reason for limited physical activity.

### **PINK EYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS):**

A student with red painful/itchy eyes especially with discharge/crusting should have a medical evaluation. This is very contagious and students must be excluded from school until they have completed 24 hours of prescription antibiotic eye medication.

### **RASHES**

Students with a "questionable" rash should be referred for a medical diagnosis.

### **VOMITING AND DIARRHEA:**

A student with vomiting or diarrhea must be excluded from school.

### **INAPPROPRIATE DISPLAY OF AFFECTION**

Advantage Academy students are prohibited from engaging in any type of "Inappropriate Display of Affection" wanted or unwanted. Any act of kissing, hugging, touching etc. between students that campus administration deems inappropriate during school hours, while on school property or while attending a school related activity will be classified as "Inappropriate Display of Affection", and is subject to disciplinary action consistent with the Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

All Advantage Academy campuses are required to have the same attendance days. Anytime there is a question of inclement weather or hazardous road conditions, the District, putting safety first will strive to make an informed decision that is in the best interest of the majority of our parents, students, and staff.

Advantage Academy's campus weather closing information can be found on TV FOX 4, NBC 5, WFAA 8, and Radio 94.9 KLTY. If you do not see your campus listed on the closings or delays list, the school will be on regular schedule. We will not always follow the large ISD's in your area. If there is questionable weather or conditions and your campus is open, for safety purposes the school will not mark any student who arrives late on that day as tardy.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct)**

### **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/ SCHOLARSHIP**

Students requesting letters of recommendation, forms for scholarships, and other information for post-secondary institutions or employers, from teachers or school administration, must submit a request in writing to the School Office for the Principal to review and complete. Letters of Recommendation or Scholarship require a minimum of 24 hour notice to process and may take up to ten (10) business days before they are available.

## LIBRARIES

In an effort to offer an unlimited amount of educational resources and assist in the growth and development of our surrounding communities Advantage Academy encourages their students and families to activate and utilize a membership with their local and surrounding public library:

### City of Dallas Mountain Creek Parkway Public Library

6102 Mountain Creek Parkway  
Dallas, Texas 75249  
Library: 214-670-6704  
[mountaincreek@dallaslibrary.org](mailto:mountaincreek@dallaslibrary.org)

### City of Duncanville Public Library

201 James Collins Blvd.  
Duncanville, Texas 75138  
Library: 972-780-5051  
<http://www.youseemore.com/duncanville/>

### City of Grand Prairie Public Library

901 Conover Drive  
Grand Prairie, Texas 75051  
Circulation: 972-237-5700  
Reference: 972-237-5701  
<http://www.gptx.org/Library/MainLibrary.aspx>

### City of Rowlett Public Library

3900 Main Street  
Rowlett, TX 75088  
Library: 972-412-6161  
<http://www.ci.rowlett.tx.us/Rowlett/Departments/Library/>

### City of Waxahachie Public Library

**Nicholas P Sims Library**  
515 W Main St, Waxahachie, TX 75165  
Library: (972) 937-2671  
[www.waxahachiechamber.com](http://www.waxahachiechamber.com)  
<http://69.149.89.201/libinfo/contact.htm>

### Dallas Branch Libraries:

<http://dallaslibrary.org/>

Dallas Branch Locations: <http://dallaslibrary.org/LocationsMap.htm>

### TexShare Databases, a program of the Texas State Library:

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/texshare/pl/remote.html>

## LOST AND FOUND

Lost items are easily returned if they are labeled with the student's name. Students should turn in any item they find (such as money, clothing, lunch boxes, books, etc.) to the school office. If a student loses something at school, he/she should first check in the lost and found and then with the school office. Periodically, unclaimed articles in lost and found are donated to charity. The school is not responsible for lost items.

## **MISSED ASSIGNMENTS/HOMEWORK**

Missed assignments can be picked up from the school office when your child is absent, please call before 10:00 A.M. to allow the teacher sufficient time to prepare the assignments and have it in the office for you to pick up. Work must be turned in within the same number of days as the student was absent. Students absent will be required to make-up assignments and tests missed. Students will receive the grade of a zero for assignments and tests not completed within the return timeframe.

Homework will be accepted without a penalty if it is turned in on time the day it is due. Homework will be accepted one day late with a grade penalty of ten percent deducted. Homework turned in two days late will have a grade penalty deducted of twenty percent, and homework turned in three days will have a grade penalty deducted of thirty points. Homework turned in more than three days late will have a penalty deducted of all points available and will be given a grade of zero. The teacher may choose to provide a different independent practice activity to ensure that the student has adequate practice on the skill or concept.

## **MOVIE & VIDEOS**

Advantage Academy believes that movies, videos, and other audiovisual materials are important tools in the educational process. At the same time Advantage Academy believes the use of movies and videos should be limited so that they are used legally and appropriately in achieving legitimate educational objectives. Therefore, it is the District's purpose to have a policy that promotes the appropriate educational use.

### **PROPER USE, REVIEW, and APPROVAL, of MOVIES and VIDEOS**

Educators bear the responsibility to ensure that educational activities and support materials are relevant to the curriculum, appropriate for the age and maturity of students, and consistent with specific educational objects. Advantage Academy only allows G and PG movies and videos to be shown to any of its students. All movies and/or videos shown to students will be reviewed and approved by the district.

### **PARENT NOTIFICATION and WAIVER of PARTICIPATION**

Parents shall receive written notification of the proposed showing at least five (5) school days prior to the movie or video's showing.

If a parent objects to a student's viewing of an approved movie or video and personally communicates such objection to the teacher or administrator, the teacher shall not allow the student to view the movie or video. The teacher shall provide the student alternate assignments or course work similar to that done by students who view the movie or video.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents are encouraged to confer with the child's teacher to discuss progress. Parents may schedule appointments through the office or with individual teachers. The teacher may also wish to contact the parent to confer about the child's progress.

Parent-Teacher conference must be scheduled before or after school or during conference periods. Teachers are not allowed to be interrupted during instructional times for phone calls or conferences.

## PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

The schools' PTO works to help foster the relationship between the school, parents and teachers. These groups also work in partnership with the school and community to enhance the educational opportunities and experiences for all young people. Parents are encouraged to join the PTO and become involved in the campus meetings.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher. The following are professional recommendations for how you can encourage your child to do his/her best in school:

- Spend time each day talking to your child about what he or she is learning in school. Offer encouragement.
- Respect learning style differences in your children. Kids have differing interests and talents, encourage those interests and talents.
- Treat each child as an individual.
- Communicate a value for learning. Look over their homework and talk to them about their futures and the skills they will need to be successful.
- Use positive statements such as: "I knew you could do it!" "You're really a smart kid!" "I'm so proud of you!"
- Ask to see your child's schoolwork, daily. Backpacks sometimes have important information to share!
- Stay in contact with your child's teacher. Teachers want to build partnerships with their students' parents. Don't wait if you have questions.
- Talk with your child and together plan a focused time and place for study each day.

***These are the kinds of things that convince students that their parents believe learning is important.***

## PARENTAL GUIDELINES

School policies and/or procedures, and regulations are put in place at all Advantage Academy campuses in an effort to promote safety, security, and discipline and to enhance the learning environment for every child. All parents/guardian should be aware that their child's enrollment at Advantage Academy is contingent on whether or not parents/guardian abide by all board approved policies, procedures, and regulations. Any parent/guardian cited for unsafe or negative behavior on more than two occasions, will cause their child(ren) to be permanently withdrawn by Advantage Academy from this school district.

Parents and parent organizations are required to follow the same standards of conduct as district employees when chaperoning, sponsoring or attending any school or student activity, both on and off campus.

There shall be no student activities, parties, meetings, travel, or other gathering in the name of the school or school organizations unless prior written permission has been received from the Principal and a District representative. All activities will be under the auspices of the School and the District.

Sponsorship and participation in student events, clubs, and other school-sponsored events is considered to be a privilege and not a right. Failure to follow policies and procedures of the District will result in refusal by the District to allow related activities on the campus.

## **PARKING/ VEHICLES on CAMPUS**

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. The school reserves the right to search any vehicle if reasonable cause exists to do so, with or without the presence of the student. Students have full responsibility for the security of their vehicles and will make certain they are locked and the keys are not given to others. Students will be held responsible for any prohibited objects or substances, such as alcohol, drugs, and weapons that are found in their cars and will be subject to disciplinary action. All students must park on the student parking lot. Students must provide a valid Texas Operator's license and proof of insurance to the School Office in order to obtain an Advantage Academy parking permit and permission to park on school property. Parking on adjacent public or private property is strictly prohibited. Loitering on the student parking lot or any other school properties at any time is unlawful.

Students should observe the following automobile guidelines:

- Students choosing to park their vehicles on school property assume responsibility for all loss and damage.
- Students are not permitted to park in the faculty parking lot or other areas not designated for students.
- Students that park illegally, drive recklessly, or otherwise cause a danger to themselves or to others, are subject to disciplinary action including revocation of their parking privileges, towing of the vehicle, and/or other disciplinary action as deemed necessary by the principal.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ TEXAS PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MINUTE OF SILENCE**

With the passing of Senate Bill 83 in the Texas legislature, public school districts now require students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags and to also observe a minute of silence following the recitation of the pledges. During the one minute of silence, each student may reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The **Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag** is an oath of loyalty to the country. The pledge should be recited by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart.

### **TEXAS PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The **Texas Pledge of Allegiance** is an oath of loyalty to the State of Texas. The pledge should be recited by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart.

### **MINUTE OF SILENCE**

One **Minute of Silence** will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

## POSTERS

The school principal must approve signs and posters before being posted in the school or on the school property.

## PRAYER

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

## PRIVACY

Advantage Academy student lockers, purses, backpacks, automobiles, storage areas or containers, computers belonging to the school district, communication systems belonging to the school, electronic devices communication systems may be searched at the discretion of the Principal or district administration at anytime or with reasonable suspicion of activity that is against the law, school district policy, or campus policy.

## PRINCIPAL CONFERENCES

Since the principal may be observing in classrooms or attending scheduled meetings, parents should call the School office in advance to schedule an appointment with the campus principal.

## PROGRESS REPORTS (Refer to Grading)

## PROHIBITED ITEMS

In an effort to ensure safety in the schools, the following items **are prohibited**:

- Knives of any size, including pocketknives
- Fireworks of any kind
- Razors
- Chains
- Laser pointers
- BB guns or pellet guns of any size or shape
- Any object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person
- Any toy resembling a weapon; such as a toy gun, sword, etc.
- Any object used as a weapon

The school is not responsible for any personal items lost or stolen. Students who violate the prohibited items policy will be responsible for damages including any monetary damages.

## PROMOTION/RETENTION

Promotion or retention decisions are for students who have failed two or more core subjects or have failed any TAKS testing for the current school year. A Grade Placement Committee shall consist of the teacher, parent and principal and/or other district administrator. A student may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement with demonstrated proficiency of the grade-level/subject matter; standardized and state testing, including TAKS testing; and attendance.

## RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time. A student who will need to leave school

during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day.

Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day. If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

When a parent arrives to pick up a student, the parent must sign the student out, at which time an office aid will be sent to retrieve the student. Parents are not allowed to go directly to their child's classroom.

For the protection of all involved, anyone wishing to contact any student must check in at the office.

Office personnel will deliver any and all messages to students and teachers. This includes emergency messages.

Anyone who picks up a K-5 student must present their Student Pick-Up Card or possess a valid identification and be listed on the child's Student Release Authorization form.

## **SAFETY**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student, other students, or school staff at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the ***Student Code of Conduct***, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

## **SAT, ACT, and OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACGT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the campus advisor, campus principal, or counselor early during their sophomore or junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the sophomore or junior year. Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take and pass a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to refer to the College Board, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) website for additional details and requirements for college entrance and application requirements.

## **SEXUAL OFFENDER REGISTRATION PROGRAM**

The Sexual Offender Registration Program in Texas, commonly known as Ashley's Law, was passed in 1995. The law requires convicted sexual offenders to register with local law

enforcement officials and for them to pass the information on to school officials if the victim of the offense was a minor. The law leaves to local discretion the decision on what schools can do with the information. In consultation with local law enforcement officials, Advantage Academy has developed a procedure to inform campus principals when the Superintendent receives information on sexual offenders. The information is distributed through our website to inform parents. The information on sex offenders is also available from the local police station. There is no substitute for always knowing where your children are and for maintaining close supervision. Children are our most precious resources and we must do everything in our power to help them understand how to handle themselves in potentially harmful situations.

## **REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 3 weeks. At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the Superintendent and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal.

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 5 days.

## **RETURNED CHECKS**

In the event a non-sufficient funds check is issued to Advantage Academy, the district will utilize an outside collections consultant to pursue reimbursement of the amount issued and the cost and fees associated with the collection of the amount owed.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Students have the opportunity to meet with their counselor before the first day of school. After school starts, schedule changes must be submitted to the Principal within the first 10 days of the semester.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

### **ARRIVAL**

Check with your campus principal for correct school starting times. Advantage Academy does not provide supervision for students at school until 7:30 a.m.

## **DISMISSAL**

A student may not leave the school property for any reason without the student's legal parent or guardian signing the student out in the school office. Advantage Academy does not provide supervision for students after 4:15 p.m.

At the end of the school day, please have your child leave the school grounds as soon as he/she is dismissed with the exception of planned school-sponsored activities. At dismissal time, please observe safety, traffic flow patterns and cell phone use procedures designated at each campus. Different grade levels may use different exits of the buildings.

Parents must never leave their vehicle unattended in our Student Drop-off /Pickup zone. Please be considerate and not block others from exiting our parking lots. If you must enter the school for any reason, park only in designated parking spaces

Advantage Academy does not provide supervision for students at school until 7:30 a.m. or after 4:15 p.m. on regular school days. Students arriving before 7:30 a.m. and/or staying on school property after 4:15 p.m. will be unsupervised. Therefore, for safety considerations, we are asking that you not bring children or leave them unsupervised outside the specified times listed above, unless your child is involved in a school sanctioned activity.

Advantage Academy, its Board of Directors, Principals, Teachers and Employees, together with all those persons employed by and for Advantage Academy will not be responsible or liable by reason of any accident or injury suffered or mishap to students who have been left unsupervised before and/or after the specified times.

## **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Each year the district publishes a list of school supplies students will need. The district lists are available on the district web page. Teachers may require additional items after the beginning of the school year. Students may need to replenish supplies as directed by the students' teachers during the course of the school year. Parents should contact their campus office for more information.

## **SEARCHES**

School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or personal property by establishing a reasonable cause or securing the students voluntary consent. Areas such as school lockers, locker rooms, and athletic lockers may be searched at any time without consent or cause. Personal searches will be conducted out of view of other students. A person of the same gender will conduct the search, with a witness present in the room at all times. Administrators reserve the right to question students regarding their conduct or the conduct of others.

The district has the right to search any vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable cause to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ DATING VIOLENCE**

Advantage Academy employees and students are prohibited from engaging in unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or

school employee. Employees and students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect to avoid behaviors known to be offensive.

**Sexual harassment** of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited. Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

**Dating violence** occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive 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.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE (Refer to Advantage Academy Student Code of Conduct)**

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various governmental agencies.

- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled. Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.
- The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned campus. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.
- Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.
- A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records.
- A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the schools district office. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy
- A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy.
- The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

## RECORD VIEWING

It is your right as a parent to review your child's student records when needed.

You may review:

- Attendance records
- Test scores including state assessment instruments that have been administered to your child
- Grades
- Disciplinary records
- Applications for admission
- Health and immunization information
- Other medical records
- Teacher and Counselor evaluations
- Reports of behavioral patterns

## **TARDIES (Refer to Tardy Policy)**

### **TECHNOLOGY**

#### **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

Advantage Academy believes that the Internet information resources and opportunities for collaboration are of great benefit, and its skillful use is necessary for student success. Students of Advantage Academy may use authorized hardware and software tools in order to become information literate. However, the Internet is, by its nature, an unregulated medium, which requires appropriate self-discipline by users. To establish appropriate limits, Advantage Academy requires that all Internet use by students be for an educationally approved activity. To retain this right, students need to behave responsibly, ethically, and legally, consistent with the mission and philosophy of the school. Users behaving irresponsibly will face disciplinary action deemed appropriate in keeping with the policies of the school which may include but not be limited to, denying access and making financial restitution for unauthorized expenses incurred or damages caused.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:**

- Following acceptable use, state and federal copyright laws
- Following the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook
- Downloading, sending, storing, printing or displaying materials appropriate to an educational setting
- Properly using authorized hardware and software with staff designated supervision
- Using e-mail, chat modes, list serves or newsgroups only in an authorized educational setting
- Forfeiting the use of equipment to students with specific course assignments
- Keeping all food and drink away from computers, laptops, hardware and software

#### **SAFE USE INCLUDES:**

- Never give out personal information such as full name, phone number, address or age
- Never arrange an in-person meeting without adult approval or supervision
- Never share a password, even with friends
- Never give out a credit card number online without a parent/guardian present
- Read before you click (only open sites or e-mail that you recognize)
- End an uncomfortable online experience by pressing the back key and tell the Lab monitor and/or a trusted adult
- Be aware that people online are not always who they say they are
- Understand that online information is not always accurate

#### **MISUSE SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO:**

- Loading software directly on computers or downloading files, including internet games, without network administrator approval
- Modifying or damaging any computer; including hardware, software or network
- Moving hardware or software from its designated location without administrator approval
- Using another's password with or without permission
- Trespassing in others files or folders
- Plagiarizing others work or ideas
- Wasting consumable resources
- Using obscene language
- Disrupting, harassing, insulting, attacking or discriminating against others

- Infiltrating unauthorized computer systems
- Using computers, software or on-line services for financial or commercial gain
- Revealing personal information about yourself or another person without staff permission

## **TEXAS ACHIEVE/CARRER CLUSTERS**

Students will be required to become involved in a ninth period TAC, Texas Achievement Career Cluster. TAC Clusters are a part of the students' daily district curriculum requirement and are subject to the guidelines set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.

TAC clusters are considered local credit and are part of district graduation requirements.

## **TEXTBOOKS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTION MATERIALS**

Textbooks and instructional materials must be used for several years; therefore it is imperative that students take good care of them. All textbooks and materials assigned to a student must be kept in their original form and maintained in good condition including all inventory barcodes. Teachers will assign textbooks and other instructional materials to each student as needed. Students are required to keep all textbooks properly covered at all times. A lost textbook or any other instructional materials including technology instructional materials must be paid for prior to receiving replacements.

Any materials that are damaged, destroyed, or misused by a student are the financial responsibility of the student or the student's legal parent/guardian and must be reimbursed in full by the student or the student's parent/guardian before student transcripts or report cards will be released, depending upon the student's age and grade level.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

Official transcripts of all Advantage Academy student academic work are kept on file with the school district. Students requesting an official transcript must make the request in writing, using the Advantage Academy "Release of Student Records" request form available in the School Office. Transcript requests not made in writing on the district's approved transcript request form will not be honored.

Students, 18 years of age or older, may submit a "Release of Student Records" request form on their own behalf. Before the school office can accept any request for a release of school records, the student or the student's parent or guardian must provide the school office with a valid state driver's license or identification card. All record requests will be processed within ten business days following receipt of the request.

## **TRANSFERS WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

When reviewing petitions for student transfers, Advantage Academy will consider each request on an individual basis.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The bus and bus stop area are considered school property, therefore any violation of school bus conduct while on a bus or at a bus stop will result in disciplinary action being taken. In order to provide safe and effective transportation to and from school, including field trips and athletic events, Advantage Academy needs the help and cooperation of all students and parents;

**Students Shall:**

- Recognize that the bus driver has the authority on the bus and at the bus stop
- Listen and obey the bus driver at all times
- Refrain from any activity that places students and/or the bus driver in danger
- Stay seated at all times while the bus is moving. **(Girls on one side, boys on the other).**

**Students Shall Not:**

- Harass or distract the bus driver
- Touch, handle, or re-position any knobs, levers, or safety equipment
- De-face, disfigure, or destroy any part of the bus or bus stop
- Extend any body part, or object out of the bus window
- Throw any article out of the bus window
- Fight on the bus or while at the bus stop
- Yell or scream on the bus
- Eat, drink, or litter on the bus.

If any Bus/Bus stop offense includes property damages, riding privileges will not be reinstated until payment is made and disciplinary action is served.

Students who participate in school-sponsored events are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event.

**VANDALISM AND DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students shall not vandalize or otherwise damage or deface any school property, including furniture, and other equipment belonging to Advantage Academy. Parents or guardians of students guilty of damaging school property shall be liable in accordance with the law and in subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students shall not damage or vandalize property owned by other students or district employees. If the student or student's parent refuses to pay for student damages, the student may be withdrawn from Advantage Academy.

**Student will remain in ISS until all financial responsibility is addressed.**

**VIDEO CAMERA'S/ MONITORING**

For safety purposes, video equipment may be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the ***Student Code of Conduct***.

**VISITORS**

The public is always welcome at any of our campuses and we encourage citizens to watch education in action; however, in order to ensure safety for all, we do require all visitors – including parents, and volunteers – to check in at the school office with a valid State ID and complete the ***Visitors Sign-in Sheet*** to obtain a visitors pass. All visitors are required to wear the visitor's pass at all times while visiting on school property and then return to the School Office at the end of the visit to sign- out. In case of family emergencies student will be called to the office. Trespassing on school premises is strictly prohibited in accordance with Section 37.107 of the Texas Education Code. Any person found on the school grounds without a Visitors Pass is trespassing and is subject to police arrest.

For the safety and security of each child, all parents, and other visitors are requested to enter the building through the front door and proceed directly to the front office.

Parents or guardians must make arrangements 24 hours in advance with their child's principal and teacher to observe in the classroom. The parent must have a student enrolled in the school and the class being observed. Since students are engaged in learning activities throughout the school day, ***out-of-town friends or relatives may only visit students at the school during the lunch period.***

## **VOLUNTEERS/CHAPERONES**

Volunteers are always welcomed at Advantage Academy to assist teachers or other school personnel in a variety of ways throughout the school day.

Any adult interested in becoming a volunteer at any campus needs to contact the school office for more information regarding the volunteer program. Before being able to volunteer all applicants are required to complete a volunteer application and sign permission to have a background check performed. Background checks must be completed and on file before any volunteer work will be approved. A new background checks must be completed each school year. Volunteers are not allowed to bring small children with them.

## **WEB SITE**

The Advantage Academy website is: [www.advantageisd.com](http://www.advantageisd.com).