

# New Direction Learning Center

## Student Expectations

New Direction Learning Center (NDLC) is a unique accelerated alternative to the conventional high school for students, ages 16 to 21, who are at-risk, have dropped out of school, or who have needs that are not being met in a traditional school setting. Admission to the program is primarily for juniors and seniors through an application process, including a recommendation from the student's conventional school and interview process.

New Direction students are expected to work toward graduation. They must meet all requirements of the Keller Independent School District and the Texas Education Agency. New Direction students are also involved in several community service projects, both physically and financially, during the school year.

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Your success at New Direction Learning Center hinges on you being prompt and regular in your attendance. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experience and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for you. Your regular contact with others in the classroom and your participation in well-planned instructional activities under the direction of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose. There is also a direct relationship between poor attendance and lack of academic success. Students with good attendance records generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are more employable after leaving high school. Thus, you are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time to class in order to derive maximum benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility.

## NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES

When you are going to be absent, you must call the school office before you are absent. **Office Phone Number is 337-3575.** If you do not call, your absence will be considered unexcused. In order to have an excused absence the absence must be of the type that the Texas Education Code designates as an excused absence. If a student goes to the doctor or has a court appearance during a time that he must miss some school, **the student must notify the school office before the absences, and upon return to school must have a note from the doctor or the court clerk to have an excused absence.** If a student does not bring a note from either the doctor or the court clerk, the absence will be considered unclear and will be considered unexcused.

## **COURSE COMPLETIONS**

### **TIME FRAME FOR COMPLETING COURSES**

You are expected to earn no less than five (5) credits per thirty-six (36) weeks and no less than two and a half (2 1/2) credits in an 18-week period. If you are unable to maintain this monitored pace, your commitment will come under serious review. You will be enrolled in one class for three hours per day, and you will be expected to complete this class in approximately 3 1/2 - 4 1/2 weeks. You will also be enrolled in a second class for one hour each day, and you will be expected to complete this class in approximately eighteen weeks or 90 days. Your progress will be reviewed each week to determine if you are ahead, on schedule or behind schedule in the completion of your course.

You are expected to earn a grade of 85% or above to move forward and complete a class. You will be expected to maintain the pace of completing a class in a timely manner as was stated in the above paragraph. In all cases, individual evaluation by the teacher will determine your time frame for completing the course as well as your success in the course.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NEW DIRECTION STUDENTS**

The system of behavior management at the New Direction Learning Center is designed to accomplish specific outcomes of which the following are five major points:

- 1. GOOD ATTENDANCE**
- 2. PUNCTUALITY**
- 3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR REMAINING AT SCHOOL**
- 4. LEARNING AND EARNING CREDITS**
- 5. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

### **POINT SYSTEM**

Once you are admitted to NDLC, you will earn a grade in behavior performance the same as you earn an academic grade. The difference in the performance grade is that you begin at zero (0) and earn positive points and negative points. As you follow the behavior management system, you will earn these points. If you should fall to a negative thirty (-30) points your commitment will be in question and you may not be able to remain a student at New Direction. If the administration decides to give you another opportunity, you will have your points reduced to a negative twenty (-20) and will be given a chance to redeem your standing. If you fall to a negative thirty (-30) again, your ability to remain at New Direction will be in serious question.

## NEW DIRECTION POINT SYSTEM

Your points will be calculated at the end of each week or as soon as possible thereafter. Your adviser will calculate the points and the principal will verify your standing. Your points will be reported to you when you receive your tracking card for the following week. Your points will be written in the upper left hand portion of your tracking card.

### POSITIVE POINTS:

- +10 For each 1/2 credit earned during the week \*
- +5 For being chosen achiever of the week \*
- +5 Showing Progress/Responsibility for the week \*
- +5 Recording 20 hours for the week \*
- +5 For being present every day of a school week \*
- +5 For making up time to record 20 hours for last week \*
- +2 For being on time every day of a school week\* and not leaving early \*
- +1 For each extra 1/2 hour of work in excess of the required 20 hours during the week \*
- +2, +3 or +4 Depending on # of 2's. (no 0's). For doing exceptional work in class.
- +1 For dressing for success

\*A week is defined by the school calendar whether it is three, four or five days.

- 0 For calling before being absent for doctor's appointment or required court appearance. Doctor's note or court clerk's note must be presented to your advisor within three days of the absence

### NEGATIVE POINTS:

- 10 For losing tracking card
- 10 For being absent (unexcused absence, school not notified)
- 5 For being absent but calling the school (unexcused absence)
- 3 For being absent, having an excused absence, but failing to call the school beforehand
- 5 For not recording a minimum of 20 hours for the week
- 5 For being in the parking lot without permission
- 3 For being more than fifteen (15) minutes tardy
- 3 For leaving school more than 15 minutes early without an excuse
- 2 For being tardy any school day or period
- 1 for 2 (0's), -2 for 3 (0's), -3 for 4 (0's): For lack of progress

## **PERFORMANCE SCORE**

A performance score is assessed by each advisory and for each subject in which you are enrolled. It is expected that each week you will maintain a score of 100% or above per week. However, a performance score of 75% per week is the minimum accepted. A positive score is earned when you get to class on time, do acceptable academic work and do not create a disruption. If your behavior is not acceptable in any one of the three requirements mentioned above, a '0' performance score will be recorded for that subject. If your performance falls below 75% for two weeks in a row you will be placed on contract and if your performance score does not improve you will not be allowed to remain at New Direction.

## **RADIOS AND TAPE PLAYERS**

You are permitted to bring to school radios, tape recorders, tape players, etc. equipped with headphones if you feel you need these to be comfortable; however, their use will be at the discretion of the teachers. Your courtesy is expected if your device is disruptive to others. Your teachers in their individual classrooms will have to determine if your device is being disruptive to other students. Your cooperation is expected if the teacher should ask you to lower the volume on your playing device or if you are asked to turn your player off.

## **DRESS CODE**

New Direction Learning Center is under the supervision of the KISD Board of Directors and therefore our responsibility to follow the policies set forth by the Board. The Board believes that proper etiquette, social customs and good grooming are a valuable part of the educational process. To this end, you should wear to school clothing that is neat, clean and appropriate, and meets the standards of the district's educational environment. Any extreme in clothing, hair, cosmetics, jewelry or appearance that may disrupt the normal operations of the school will not be acceptable.

1. Your hair should be clean, neat and well groomed. The styles you choose should not, in the opinion of the administration, cause a health or safety hazard or cause a disruption of the educational process.
2. You should wear clothing and undergarments in keeping with your gender:
  - No half-length or bare-midriff shirts/blouses should be worn
  - No see-through garments, cutouts or holes in jeans, slacks, dresses, skirts, tank tops, etc. will be permitted
  - The length of any garment worn should not fall shorter than the base of the fingers (knuckles)

- Cut-off shorts or cut-off shirts should not be worn
  - Biking shorts or tights should not be worn
  - Students should wear shoes
3. You should not wear T-shirts or other items of clothing with either pictures, logos, phrases, letters or words printed on them that are obscene, pornographic or disruptive in the judgment of the school administration. This would include, but is not limited to:
- clothing considered to represent gangs or gang paraphernalia, including bandanas, “colors”, oversized saggy pants (pants should be worn at the waist)
  - nude/semi-nude figures
  - clothing or jewelry or other symbols that contain satanic, witchcraft-related, or other occult working or images.
  - Pictures or logos of alcoholic beverages or tobacco, obscene gestures or words, or pictures that depict prohibited substances
  - Figures in sexually suggestive postures
4. You may wear earrings. However, you should not wear rings, studs, and etc. on other body areas.

**\*\* Appearance and clothing must also be in compliance with the district dress code.**

## **ADVISORY**

The most essential goal of our advisement program is to provide you with an adult advocate who gets to know you personally and will help you examine options and make responsible choices. In order to accommodate this goal, a time is set aside three days a week for you to meet with your advisor and advisory group. You will be assigned to an advisory group upon your acceptance into the NDLC. The advisory session is an important part of the positive and caring atmosphere provided at NDLC. Each advisor, in his/her own unique way, develops a group atmosphere where you will feel you belong. You can freely express your concerns, feelings and needs in a constructive way. Advisory periods support and encourage a comfortable way to express your thoughts and receive answers to many questions. Here you will feel the care of others and you will develop a caring attitude for yourself and others.

### **THE ADVISOR WILL:**

- Be an advocate for you.
- Give you general announcements and information.
- Monitor your progress in courses and encourage you to keep on track and complete your course work on time.
- Prepare and handle your tracking cards.
- Turn in your attendance, behavior, performance, and academic progress to the office.
- Refer you for counseling and other assistance as needed.
- Get to know you so well that those important events, successes and disappointments can be shared.
- Conduct group discussion on various topics of interest such as chemical abuse awareness, study skills, test taking skills, self-concept enhancement, decision-making skills, student need and interest, announcements and any other topic thought to be helpful to your success.

## **GRADES AND GRADE REPORTING**

You do not receive report cards as you do in the traditional school setting. Instead, you can be aware of your progress by checking your tracking card. A tri-weekly progress report, showing behind schedule, on schedule or ahead of schedule, will be sent to your parent/guardian at the address you have given us.

A grade of 85% or above must be attained in order to receive credit for a course. You will be allowed to take Credit By Exam for any course that you have already taken but were unable to complete successfully if approved by the counselor. You must attain a grade of 70% or above on your Credit By Exam to receive your credit. If you wish to take a Credit By Exam for a course you have not taken, you must make a minimum score of 90% to obtain credit.

## **TRACKING CARDS**

A 'tracking card' system is used to document how your time is spent. This system allows freedom of choice yet helps you organize your time in an effective, efficient manner.

A tracking card and a time clock are used to allow the staff to monitor class attendance and progress on a daily basis. New cards are issued at the beginning of each school week. Each day you must pick up your tracking card from your advisor and 'punch' in your arrival time. When you go to class you must present your card to the teacher on entering and leaving the class. The teacher will record your performance score, plus coded comments on your use of time in that particular class. At the end of the day you 'punch out' and turn your card back to your advisor. Your advisor will review your card and have it ready for your return the following day.

# **CURRICULUM**

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

The entire instructional program varies from the traditional school setting. New Direction is developed around an accelerated, independent learning concept with open entry/open exit. This means that you may enter at any time of the year and complete your course of study at any time of the year.

## **ACCELERATED, INDEPENDENT LEARNING CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is monitored-paced so that you work toward mastery and completion of each course as fast as you can. However, you should remember that because of the fewer courses scheduled and the additional time per course, you could complete a 1/2 credit in a very short time. As soon as you complete a course, a new course is begun. Your progress is totally independent of other students.

## **FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING**

The program at NDLC is an accelerated program and you are expected to complete courses in less time than in a traditional school. Courses should be completed in 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 weeks in your three-hour class. As you earn credits and complete classes, you are enrolled in additional courses.

The flexible schedule allows you the opportunity to attend classes as long as you meet the weekly requirements established and remain productive in your academic pursuits. If you are not productive in class or if you avoid going to class, your commitment will be questioned and your opportunity to continue to attend NDLC may be lost.

You are expected to attend classes each day for a minimum of four hours per day. If you do not attend classes for a minimum of four hours you will receive negative points on your 'behavioral management' score, and you will be required to make up the time missed.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is not assigned at NDLC; therefore, all work can be completed while in attendance at the center. You will be issued no books. If you are maintaining a 75% plus performance score, are present in class and are being productive in your work, you are allowed to request work to be taken home (will be allowed at the discretion of your teacher). The ability to be able to take work home is a privilege that can only be earned by you.



## **MULTIPLE OCCUPATIONS COOPERATIVE TRAINING**

Diversified Career Preparation (DCP) is a program for gainful employment for which you earn school credit at the maximum rate of 3.0 credits per 18 weeks of enrollment. In order to establish and maintain a responsible, high-quality training program for NDLC, it is essential that basic governing principles exist. The following are operational guidelines, which have been established for the program at NDLC.

1. You must work in an approved training station and you must receive a paycheck for your employment. You must have a supervisor on the job who can be contacted by school personnel and who is willing to help evaluate your progress and learning on the job. This evaluation will be used as part of your grade in class.
2. You must be gainfully employed for a minimum of 540 hours for each three credits earned. For you to accumulate 540 hours in 18 weeks, you would have to average at least 30 hours per weeks. You do not have to average 30 hours per week, but you will not receive your credit until all 540 hours have been worked and you have completed all academic requirements.
3. You will not be placed in the Diversified Career Preparation program until after the DCP coordinator has approved your training station.
4. When you have completed your assigned academic work and your 540 approved work hours, you will receive your 3.0 credits.
5. You must turn in a weekly wage and hour report to document work hours. Wage and hour reports must be turned in by the following Wednesday of each work week. Hours will not be counted if reports are not presented as required by the coordinator.
6. You must keep the coordinator informed of circumstances that may affect performance on the job or at school.
7. Falsification of records or serious violation of program or school guidelines could result in your being dismissed from DCP and receiving no credit. This action may jeopardize your opportunity to attend NDLC.
8. It is understood that when an employer hires you, he may expect you to work evenings, weekends and holidays at his discretion. You should not expect to take off from work when school is not in session.

## **Expectations of Parents/Caregivers**

New Direction is an alternative school and maintains a small enrollment; therefore, it is important that parents sustain an active role in the educational process. Since the expectations of students are elevated academically and behaviorally, it is necessary that expectations for parents also be elevated.

Parents/Caregivers are expected to play a major part in the success of their child's education during the time the child is enrolled at New Direction Learning Center. Parents are to be aware of the point system and performance score that their child earns each week. If the parent is unable to get the weekly scores from the student, they should call the office on Monday and get the scores. These scores are indicators of the student's progress academically and behaviorally and thus give insight to attitude, attendance and achievement.

Parents are encouraged and expected to attend quarterly meetings to share their ideas and network with other parents in an effort to make things better for both parents and students. Parent's ideas are noted and are discussed later by the campus improvement committee. The quarterly meeting also is a time for parents to be updated on what is going on around the school and of any changes that may have occurred that would affect their child. After the meetings the teachers are available to conference with parents and show them samples of their child's work so that evidence of progress can be seen. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the campus improvement committee so that they can play a more active role in determining the goals and objectives and the way they are implemented.

Parents are expected to come to the school at least once every three or four weeks to show that they appreciate their child being in school and working hard to be successful. By coming to visit (if only for thirty seconds) it shows the child that the parent really supports their efforts. It also shows the student that their parent is doing more than just giving "lip service" when talking about support. On their visits, parents are encouraged to visit with their child, other students and teachers.