



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

TOPIC: Approval of revisions to the 2022-2023 Student Code of Conduct

SUBMITTED BY: Trautmann & Garcia **OF:** Attorneys

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: November 16, 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the UISD Board of Trustees approve the revisions to the 2022-2023 Student Code of Conduct

RATIONALE:

BUDGETARY INFORMATION:

POLICY REFERENCE & COMPLIANCE:

United ISD ensures that District employees will enforce all prohibitions against bullying, harassment, and making hit lists. Additionally, options for managing students in the classroom and on school grounds, disciplining students, and preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, including bullying, harassment, and making hit lists are included in the United ISD personnel handbook. Federal and state laws regarding the discipline of students who are enrolled in a special education program apply. See Glossary to view "Hit List" definition.

Students/Parents who believe they have been harassed by another student, or by a District employee are encouraged to report the incident to a teacher, counselor, Principal, administrator, and/or Director of Employee Relations/District Title IX Coordinator. The report may also be submitted on our District web page, www.uisd.net. Parents of the alleged victim will be notified, by the third business day, after an alleged incident of bullying is reported. School counselors may serve as an impartial resource for interpersonal conflicts and discord including accusations of bullying involving two or more students.

Social media is a general term used to reference sites and activity on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or any other virtual hub where users interact. Other popular social media sites include, but are not limited to: Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Flickr, WordPress, FourSquare, etc. Although most postings are benevolent in nature, there are times postings by individuals may misconstrue the facts of an activity, event, student or staff. For information about a posting or questions about the operations of UISD schools, activities, events, students or staff, please contact your child's school or visit the UISD webpage at uisd.net, UISD Facebook page or UISD Twitter for the latest news/notices/alerts. We request all social media users to be responsible in their posting of any contents relating to UISD, students or staff. Postings may result in disciplinary action as per the Student Code of Conduct and/or may result in a criminal offense(s) as per the Texas Penal Code, if such postings cause, or can cause, a substantial disruption or substantially interferes with the individual rights of others.

Positive Behavior Facilitators: The District has Positive Behavior Facilitators to work with students. They aim to build a school culture of socially acceptable behavior by focusing on a proactive approach to prevent inappropriate behavior by introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior. To request assistance from a Positive Behavior Facilitator, contact your child's campus principal or other administrator.

Harassment On the Basis of Race, Color, Religion, National Origin, or Disability: Students must not engage in harassing behaviors directed toward another student which are motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, gender or disability. Bullying incidents which are determined to also be harassment based on a protected class status will also be handled in accordance with District policies regarding discrimination. See Glossary to view "Harassment" definition.

A student who believes he or she has experienced bullying and/or harassment or believes that another student has experienced bullying and/or harassment by another student or by a District employee should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, Principal, administrator and/or the Director of Employee Relations/District Title IX Coordinator. The report may also be made by the student's parent. Allegations will be investigated and addressed pursuant to FFH(LOCAL) or FFI(LOCAL). To the greatest extent possible, complaints will be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The District will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student(s) who was found to have engaged in bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

A student or his/her parent may appeal the decision of the Principal or other administrator regarding the outcome of the investigation in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL), FFH (LOCAL), and FFI (LOCAL).

Sexual Harassment / Sexual Abuse: The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with a teacher, counselor, principal, administrator or the Director of Employee Relations/Title IX Coordinator in the Human Resources Department, Rita Garner (956) 473-6351 in matters relating to employee-on-student harassment and/or discrimination or ~~Director for Student Relations/Discipline Management~~ [Student Services Manager Title IX Coordinator Annette PerezMichelle Farias](#) at (956) 473-6108458 for matters relating to student-on-student harassment and/or discrimination. The District shall provide child abuse anti-victimization programs in elementary and secondary schools (Education Code 38.004(b)). The programs will address the likely warning signs of child sexual abuse; methods for preventing child sexual abuse; actions that a child who is a victim of child sexual abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention; and available counseling options for students affected by sexual abuse. For more information regarding the District's child abuse anti-victimization programs, or if a parent or student would like additional information, please contact the Director of Guidance and Counseling, or the school counselor at the student's home campus.

As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been, or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

STUDENT HANDBOOK

PREFACE:

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to the start of a new school year! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact: websiteassistance@uisd.net or (956) 473-6201.

The UISD Student Handbook ("Student Handbook") is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS —with notices that the District must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS —organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term "the student's parent" is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the United Independent School District Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the UISD Board of Trustees ("Board") and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning.

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

In case of a conflict between Board Policy, the Student Code of Conduct, and any provisions of student handbooks, the provisions of Board Policy or the Student Code of Conduct that were most recently adopted by the Board are to be followed. A copy of the UISD Board Policy Manual is available online at <http://www.uisd.net>.

Your child's school will request that you provide contact information, such as your current phone number and e-mail address, in order for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child's school, or the District. To receive such information through a landline or wireless phone, please ensure that you notify the school's administration office immediately upon a change in or disconnection of your phone number. The District or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or e-mail communication, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial to maintain timely communication with you. Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the District contacts you, please contact your child's principal.

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

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the United Independent School District Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

Nondiscrimination: In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. In accordance with Title IX, the District does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinators (see below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both. Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act and Title II.

The District has designated and authorized the following employees as the Title IX Coordinators to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment:

Title IX in matters relating to **employee-on-student harassment and/or discrimination** you may contact: Rita Garner, Director of Employee Relations/District Title IX Coordinator, 201 Lindenwood Dr., Laredo, Texas 78045 (956) 473-6351, rgarner@uisd.net

Title IX in matters relating to **student-on-student harassment and/or discrimination** you may contact: ~~Michelle Farias~~ ~~Annette Perez~~, ~~Director of Student Relations/Discipline Management/District Student Services Manager~~—Title IX Coordinator, 201 Lindenwood Dr., Laredo, Texas 78045 (956) 473-6108458, ~~mlfarias@uisd.net~~ ~~aperez@uisd.net~~

Second, be patient. Reunification is a process that protects both the safety of the student and provides for an accountable change of custody from the school to a recognized custodial parent or guardian. For students, the school asks that students be orderly and quiet while waiting. Students may be asked to text a message to their parents or guardians. Students are also asked not to send other text messages either in or out of the school or reunification area. Keeping the cellular network usage at a minimum may be important during a reunification. For more information visit <https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/srm-toolkit/> or www.uid.net/keepuidsafe

Scholarships and Grants: For information, see the counselor.

School Health Advisory Council: During the preceding school year, the District's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 4 (four) meetings. The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, and recess recommendation. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for human sexuality instruction; however, UISD students do not receive instruction related to human sexuality. You may also choose to becoming more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse: The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with a teacher, counselor, principal or designee, Rita Garner, Director of Employee Relations who serves as the District's Title IX coordinator in matters relating to employee-on-student harassment and/or discrimination or Annette PerezMichelle Farias, Director for Student Relations/Discipline Management Student Services Manager/Title IX Coordinator in matters relating to student-on-student harassment and/or discrimination.

To make a report of child sexual abuse, contact the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. To obtain more information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, such as recognizing signs of sexual abuse, please visit their website at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>.

The District shall provide child abuse anti-victimization programs in elementary and secondary schools in accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.004. The programs will address the likely warning signs of child sexual abuse; methods for preventing child sexual abuse; actions that a child who is a victim of child sexual abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention; and available counseling options for students affected by sexual abuse. For more information regarding the District's child abuse anti-victimization programs or if a parent or student would like additional information, please contact Melissa Chapa Ramirez, Director of Guidance and Counseling, or the school counselor at the student's home campus.

Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law under Family Code § 261.101(a). Any school official or professional who has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected shall make a report as required by law. The report must be made within 48 hours after the school official or professional first suspects abuse or neglect. A school official or professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. A "professional" is a person who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

A person commits a Class A Misdemeanor if he or she has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect and knowingly fails to report it as provided by law under Family Code § 261.109. Please view the District's Board Policy regarding child abuse and neglect contained in Board Policies FFG (Legal) and (Exhibit).

As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas and claims of stomachaches or headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping disorders, eating disorders and problems at school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, the campus counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The following Web sites might help you become more aware of child sexual abuse:

- http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp
- <http://www.taasa.org/resources-2/>
- http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml
- http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml
- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf>
- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>

Reports may be made to: The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>.