



The University of Texas at Tyler  
**UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMY**

# **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT 2025-2026**

**UT Tyler University Academy  
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT  
2025-2026**

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## APPLICATION OF THE CODE

The **board of trustees** of the **UT Tyler University Academy** has adopted this Student Code of Conduct (the “Code”) in accordance with Section 12.131 of the Texas Education Code, in order to clearly communicate standards for expected student conduct, the disciplinary consequences which may be applied to students who violate those standards, and the applicable procedures for the implementation of disciplinary consequences. All students must comply with the Code. Definitions of words and phrases used throughout this Code are provided at the end of the Code.

Parents and students are encouraged to contact campus administration with any questions or concerns regarding the requirements and provisions of the Code. Parents and students are expected to review and be familiar with the provisions of the Code. Lack of knowledge or awareness about any School rules, including this Code, will not excuse violations of the Code. Parents and students will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt and understanding of the Code. A copy of this Code is available **on the district’s Web site at [www.uttua.org](http://www.uttua.org)**.

The School has the authority to create and enforce rules related to student conduct and behavior while on school property, traveling to or in attendance at a school-sponsored or school-related event or activity, whether on or off campus. The School has the authority to issue disciplinary consequences for certain other student conduct that relates to, affects, or shares a nexus with the School, its students, or its employees regardless of when or where the conduct occurs. The School may also issue discipline based on a student’s use of electronic media, whether on or off campus.

Other School rules, codes or policies may apply to a student’s misconduct and may result in multiple disciplinary consequences issued for the same conduct.

The school will exclude from admission students with a documented history of a criminal offense(s), juvenile court adjudication(s), or disciplinary problems under subchapter A, Chapter 37 of the Education Code within the last three school years, as evidenced by records received from schools previously attended by the student, law enforcement, or any other relevant documentation, and may exclude the student from admission on this basis.

If a student who would otherwise be ineligible for admission to the School provides false information on an admissions application or other enrollment document and as a result of the false information is admitted to the School, the student shall be immediately withdrawn from enrollment from the School upon discovery of the falsification. Falsification of information for the purpose of gaining enrollment in a public school is a criminal offense under § 37.10 of the Texas Penal Code. The School may elect to report the falsification to law enforcement or take any other action permitted by law.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT

The mission of **UT Tyler University Academy** is to develop students who leave school **STEM College and Career Ready**. **STEM College Ready** indicates students are prepared to enroll in a **STEM Major** at a university. Typically, this means they are **calculus ready upon graduation or have completed calculus in high school**. To achieve that mission, the School must be an environment safe, secure and free from disruption. Students are expected to demonstrate behavior appropriate to the School's learning environment, to treat other students, School personnel, and visitors to the School with respect. As such, each student is expected to:

- Behave in a responsible and respectful manner, always exercising self-discipline;
- Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others, especially other students and School personnel;
- Attend classes and required School activities and events regularly and on time;
- Prepare for each class, take appropriate materials and assignments to class, and complete assignments on time;
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students and school personnel in person and online;
- Respect and care for School property and facilities;
- Turn off cell phones or other electronic media and keep secured out of sight while on campus and otherwise follow policies related to use of technology;
- Follow policies related to use of technology;
- Cooperate with School personnel in maintaining safety, order and discipline;
- Dress appropriately in accordance with the School's dress code;
- Review and comply with the Student Handbook and other School and campus rules;
- Obey classroom rules and classroom expectations for behavior;
- Refrain from verbal or written acts of bullying whether in person or online;
- Avoid violations of this Code.

Students are expected to comply with the school's technology and electronic media use policies and procedures. Students are also expected to demonstrate the same behavior online or while using electronic media as is expected in the classroom, on school property, or at school-related events. Sending, posting, or possessing electronic messages that are disrespectful, disruptive, abusive, obscene, illegal, threatening, harassing or damaging to another person disrupts the learning environment and will not be tolerated.

Parent cooperation is essential to achieving the School's mission and ensuring that students learn in a safe, secure and positive environment. Parental involvement and cooperation is vital in the discipline process. Parents should understand and be familiar with the Code, ensure that his or her child understands and seeks to comply with this Code, and assist the school in counseling students regarding appropriate behavior.

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following conduct constitutes a violation of the Code. Any student found to have engaged in such conduct shall be subject to one or more disciplinary consequences as identified within the Code.

### General Student Behavior

1. Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the student handbook and/or by administrators;
2. Cursing, using offensive language, name calling, ethnic, racial or gender slurs, other derogatory statements, or yelling;
3. Disrespectful behavior towards adults;
4. Refuse to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher and/or administrators;
5. Failure to follow directives;
6. Disruption of instruction or other school activities or operations;
7. Unexcused or excessive tardiness;
8. False statements or false accusations;
9. Bullying, including cyberbullying;
10. Teasing, or targeting other students;
11. Inappropriate cell phone or electronic media use;

### Violation of School Rules and Policies

12. Failure to comply with the Student Handbook, or other School or campus rules;
13. Leaving the classroom, school building, mandatory school activities or events, or adult supervision without permission;
14. Skipping a class period or other mandatory activity, in whole or in part, without permission;
15. Violation of School or campus policies or rules related to the use of electronic media, including personal or School-owned electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets, game systems, computers, cameras), or the School's network or Internet connection;
16. Engaging in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities;
17. Truancy or other failure to attend school without excuse;
18. Defacing, destroying or otherwise modifying School property without authorization;
19. Taking photographs or making video or audio recordings of students, employees, or other persons without the consent of the other person;
20. Steal from students, staff, or the school;
21. Commit extortion or blackmail (obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person);
22. Soliciting or attempting to solicit another student to violate the Code, School policies and rules, or the law;
23. Taking steps toward violation of the Code even if the act is not completed, as determined by appropriate School administrator;
24. Failing to follow school directives and classroom rules and expectations;
25. Disobeying rules and expectations regarding school transportation;

26. Inappropriate or unauthorized use of School property, including posting or distributing literature or materials without School authorization;

#### **Violent, Illegal, and Other Serious Offenses**

27. Possession of prohibited items;
- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
  - A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
  - A “look-alike” weapon;
  - An air gun or BB gun;
  - Ammunition;
  - A stun gun; A pocket knife or any other small knife;
  - Mace or pepper spray;
  - Matches or a lighter;
  - A laser pointer for other than an approved use;
  - Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists;
28. Conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense, as determined by the School;
29. Physical, verbal or sexual harassment of others;
30. Inappropriate physical or sexual behavior, including jokes, comments, gestures or unwelcome physical conduct or contact;
31. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten district students, employees, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment;
32. False statements, false accusations, or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety;
33. Hazing or initiations;
34. Participation in a gang, soliciting or attempt to solicit participation in a gang;
35. Possessing, distributing, using or being under the influence of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances, including prescription drugs if the student has not been prescribed the drugs or is taking the drugs in excess of the dosage specified by the prescription;
36. Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by district policy;
37. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband;
38. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance;
39. Stealing, lying, cheating, or copying the work of another without authorization (plagiarism);
40. Commit or assist in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code;
41. Deliberately, and without School authorization, accessing, damaging, or altering School data and records, including but not limited to confidential records, electronic data, networks or systems;
42. Violence of any kind, including dating violence;
43. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage;
44. Fighting;
45. Gambling;

- 46. Setting or attempting to set a fire;
- 47. Discharging a fire extinguisher without valid cause;
- 48. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of body parts;
- 49. Retaliation of any form against other students or School personnel;
- 50. Conduct which requires the student's registration as a sex offender;
- 51. Possession or distribution of pictures, text messages, electronic messages or other material of a sexual or obscene, abusive, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal nature;
- 52. Endangering the health or safety of others;
- 53. Other conduct as identified within this Code.

The district may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

## DETERMINING APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE

Depending on the nature and severity of the offense, discipline may be issued by the student's classroom teacher, campus administrator, or administrator's designee, in accordance with this Code. In order to make a determination of misconduct or issue disciplinary consequences under this Code, the authorized School employee must have a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the suspected conduct. The employee's conclusion may be based on any relevant evidence including, but not limited to, observation, other personal knowledge, verbal or written witness statements, other forms of documentation, or information received from law enforcement.

In reaching a decision regarding a student discipline matter, the School may consider the specific facts and circumstances of the situation, including but not limited to:

- The student's intent;
- The student's age and grade level;
- The student's past disciplinary history;
- Whether the student's conduct may have been the manifestation of a disability;
- The extent of the student's cooperation during the investigation of the matter;
- The nature and severity of the alleged conduct;
- Whether the student has previously engaged in similar conduct;
- Whether self-defense was involved;
- The student's remorsefulness for the conduct;
- The severity of the effect or harm of the conduct on other persons or property;
- The frequency of the conduct.

The School may issue discipline based on a determination that a student has engaged in conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense. The School has the authority to make such a determination without regard for whether the student is arrested, charged, or otherwise processed by the criminal justice system for the criminal offense. The School may consider information received from law enforcement or other entities within the criminal justice system in issuing discipline under this Code.

Since the district's primary responsibility in transporting students in district vehicles is to do so as safely as possible, the operator of the vehicle must focus on driving and not have his or her attention distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the principal may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with the law.

Actions will not be based on a student's race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sex, religion, disability, or any other unlawful consideration.



## INVESTIGATION OF DISCIPLINE ISSUES

In order to determine whether a violation of the Code has occurred, campus administrators or other authorized individuals may conduct an investigation. Investigations of student misconduct may involve, but are not limited to, interviews of other students, employees and adults, review of school surveillance footage, review of relevant documents, review of information on School-owned computers, verification of tips received from other individuals, gathering of physical evidence, contact of or cooperation with law enforcement agencies and officials. Law enforcement may be contacted and informed of student conduct which may constitute a criminal offense.

Students should have no expectation of privacy with respect to School-owned property. Lockers, desks, and other items provided for student use remain School property, and students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in School property or in personal items placed inside School property. School administrators or other authorized personnel may monitor and search student desks and lockers for any reason. School officials may search any School property, including School property that is within a student's possession or otherwise being used by a student, at any time, with or without notice to the student and without consent. School officials may confiscate any items found during a search, including prohibited items, dangerous items or other items that violate School policy.

A student's person or property may be searched by authorized school officials if the official has a reasonable belief that the search will result in the discovery of evidence of a violation of the Code or of the law. Any personal property which is brought onto school property or to a school-sponsored or school-related activity or event, on or off school property, may be subject to search (*e.g.*, student cell phone, backpack, personal computer, purse, car, etc.).

If an offence is related to sexual misconduct, the charter follows UT Tyler policy as defined in their Handbook of Operating Procedures Section 2.4.3 (<https://www.uttyler.edu/hop/>).

## DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) are subject to discipline under those laws and in accordance with the provisions of this Code.

The School may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student with a disability under Section 504 who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that the School would take disciplinary action against nondisabled students. The due process procedures afforded under Section 504 do not apply to disciplinary action for the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol. However, a student who is eligible for special education under the IDEA should have a manifestation determination review conducted to address any use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol if such conduct could result in a change of placement.

Any disciplinary action that would constitute a “change in the placement” of a student receiving special education services requires a student’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee to conduct a manifestation determination review in order to determine whether the student’s conduct was a manifestation of his or her disability. A manifestation determination review (MDR) should be held as soon as possible, but not later than 10 school days after the decision is made to change the student’s placement.

A change in placement occurs if a student is:

1. Removed from the student’s current educational placement for more than ten consecutive school days; or
2. Subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
  - a. The series of removals total more than ten school days in a school year;
  - b. The student’s behavior is substantially similar to the student’s behavior in the previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and
  - c. Additional factors exist, such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

The School will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change in placement.

A student who has not been determined eligible for special education services and who has engaged in behavior that violates the Code is entitled to the protections under the IDEA regarding discipline of a student with special needs described above if the school has knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. If the school does not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary action, the student may be subject to the disciplinary actions applied to students without

disabilities. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary action, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner.

Refer to the **UT Tyler University Academy Student handbook** for more information regarding special education services.

## TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

Available disciplinary consequences include:

- Parent conference;
- Verbal correction, oral or written;
- Cooling-off time;
- Seating changes within the classroom or vehicles owned or operated by the district
- Counseling;
- Conference with teacher or administrator;
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy;
- Education/training;
- Improvement plan;
- Community service;
- School-related assigned tasks or duties;
- Loss or restriction of privileges (e.g., eligibility to hold special positions, exemption from exams, etc.);
- Consequences related to student participation in extracurricular activities, including removal, suspension, or restriction of participation;
- Removal from class to campus office;
- Restriction or revocation of district transportation privileges;
- Confiscation of items;
- Detention, including outside regular school hours;
- In-School Suspension;
- Other alternative placement;
- Out-of-School Suspension;
- Expulsion;
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

One or more of these disciplinary consequences may be issued to a student found to have violated the Code. If the Code does not specify the appropriate disciplinary consequence for a particular type of student conduct, the School may issue whatever disciplinary consequence is deemed reasonable and appropriate, with the exception of expulsion. A teacher may have additional rules and consequences for student conduct in the classroom which may result in discipline under this Code or may be enforced in addition to any discipline issued under this Code.

If a student withdraws from the School before completing assigned In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or Expulsion, the School shall send documentation of the discipline to the next school that enrolls the student. If a student withdraws from the School before the expulsion process is completed, the School may choose to complete the expulsion process and send documentation of the expulsion decision to the next school that enrolls the student. If the student returns to enroll in the School at a later date and has not been required to complete the disciplinary consequences previously required, the School may require the student to complete the discipline upon return.

The Code shall be applied and enforced consistently and equitably among students, with the understanding that every disciplinary situation will differ and decisions will be made based on the individual facts and circumstances of a given situation.

## **DETENTION / IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student may be assigned to one or more sessions of detention or placed in in-school suspension for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified by phone and/or in writing of the student's conduct and assignment to detention or in-school suspension. Detention will be held outside of the instructional day, either before or after school, during lunch period, or during recess. In-school suspension will require the student to report to the in-school suspension classroom for all or part of one or more school days. While in in-school suspension, the student will be provided the appropriate class assignments and will be expected to complete those assignments as if the student were in the regular classroom.

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student may be suspended for one or more school days for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified by phone and/or in writing of the student's conduct and the length of the period of suspension. A student may not be suspended for more than three consecutive school days. During a period of suspension, the suspended student may not enter onto school property or participate in or attend school-sponsored or school-related events or activities. The student's teachers will provide assignments that the student will be expected to complete during the period of suspension. Student assignments or other class work completed during a period of suspension will be accepted for grading if completed in a timely fashion.

## REASONS FOR EXPULSION

A student **may** be expelled from the School if he or she is found to have committed any of the acts listed below.

1. **Weapons.** The student used, exhibited, or possessed any of the following while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
  - a. A firearm;
    - i. A firearm (any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use), unless the use, exhibition, or possession of the firearm occurs at an off-campus approved target range facility while participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored shooting sports competition or a shooting sports educational activity that is sponsored or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department or a shooting sports sanctioning organization working with the department.
  - b. A location-restricted knife;
    - i. A location-restricted knife, such as a knife with a blade over 5.5 inches.
  - c. A club; or
    - i. A club such as an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.
  - d. prohibited weapon
    - i. Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
    - ii. The frame or receiver of any such weapon.
    - iii. Such as an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a short-barrel firearm, a firearm silencer, knuckles, armor-piercing ammunition, a chemical dispensing device, a zip gun, or a tire deflation device.
  - e. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.
2. **Violent Conduct.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location, date on which the student's conduct occurred, whether the student was enrolled in the district, or whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct:
  - a. Aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, capital murder, criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated robbery, manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, or continuous sexual abuse of a child or children;
  - b. Assault against another student, an employee, or a volunteer of the School;

- c. Deadly conduct;
  - d. A Title V felony under the Penal Code.
3. **Disruptions.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location:
- a. False alarm or report or terroristic threat involving a public school;
  - b. An offense related to an abusable volatile chemical;
  - c. Breach of computer security if the conduct involves accessing a computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a public school and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school district property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system;
  - d. Criminal mischief if the conduct is punishable as a felony;
  - e. Public lewdness or indecent exposure.
4. **Drugs and Alcohol.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code:
- a. On school property, at school-sponsored or school-related event, or within 300 feet of school property:
    - i. Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of any amount of marijuana, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage.
  - b. Regardless of location:
    - i. Sells, gives, delivers to another person or possesses or uses or is under the influence of marijuana or a dangerous drug, as defined by the Health and Safety Code, if the conduct is punishable as a felony.
    - ii. Sells, gives, delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage, as defined by the Alcoholic Beverage Code, commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, and the conduct is punishable as a felony.
5. **Bullying.** The student, regardless of location:
- a. Engages in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide;

- b. Incites violence against a student through group bullying; or
  - c. Releases or threatens to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
6. **Other.** The student, while on campus or at a school-sponsored or school-related event, on or off campus:
- a. Engages in conduct that constitutes a felony;
  - b. Commits an assault;
  - c. Commits frequent violations of this Code that cause significant disruption to the School environment or substantial interference with the instructional process.
7. **Property of Another District.** A student **may** be expelled for committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.



## EXPULSION PROCESS

If the school administrator or administrator's designee determines that the student's conduct warrants expulsion, the administrator shall provide written notice to the parent, guardian, or adult student of the proposed expulsion of the student. The written notice shall also include the reason(s) for the proposed expulsion and the date, time, location and procedure for the expulsion hearing. The student is entitled to a hearing with the campus administrator during which the student and/or the student's representative (*e.g.*, parent, guardian, attorney, other) will have the opportunity to review and present evidence and information. The campus administrator may place reasonable restrictions on the conduct of the hearing, including the length of the presentations. At the end of the hearing, the campus administrator may issue a decision immediately or may wait until a later date to communicate a decision. The administrator shall send written communication of the decision to the parent, guardian or adult student. If the administrator determines that expulsion is appropriate, the written decision ("Expulsion Order") shall include the length of the term of expulsion.

The parent, guardian or adult student may choose to only voluntarily waive their right to attend the expulsion hearing, not the student's right to a hearing by signing a hearing waiver form provided with the notice of proposed expulsion. If the hearing is waived, the administrator will review the relevant evidence and issue a written decision to the parent as described above.

The school will notify the independent school district in which the student resides of the student's expulsion within three business days of the Expulsion Order.

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## **TERMS OF EXPULSION**

The period of expulsion may be determined by many factors, including the severity of the conduct and the existence of a continuing risk of harm to other students and employees if the student were allowed to return. An expulsion may be temporary or permanent. A temporary expulsion may range in length from 4 school days to one calendar year. A permanent expulsion allows the School to deny future admission to the student based on consideration of the student's past disciplinary history. In each instance, the Expulsion Order must explain the circumstances which justify the length of the expulsion.

A student expelled from the School for any length of time is not eligible for readmission to the school at any time.

During a period of expulsion, the student is prohibited from entering onto any school property and attending any school-sponsored or school-related events. Failure to comply with this prohibition will result in the filing of criminal trespass charges against the student. Except as otherwise required by law, students will not receive educational services or receive course credits during a period of expulsion.

## **DISCIPLINE APPEAL PROCESS**

With the exception of expulsions, student discipline decisions at the campus level are final and not appealable. A parent, legal guardian, or adult student may appeal an expulsion decision by filing a written appeal with the Superintendent within 5 business days of the date of the Expulsion Order. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the record of the expulsion proceedings at the campus level, along with any other relevant information, and will issue a written decision to the appealing party within 10 business days of receiving the request for review.

If the appealing party is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, he or she may appeal that decision to the school board by filing a request for review with the Superintendent's office within 5 business days of the date of the decision. The Superintendent shall notify the School Board President and arrange for the school board to hear the complaints of the appealing party at the next available board meeting. The Superintendent shall notify the appealing party of the location, date and time of the hearing in front of the school board. The decision of the governing body is final and not appealable. An expulsion action will not be delayed during the appeal process.

## TRUANCY

State compulsory attendance law requires that every child at least ages 6 and younger than 19 years of age attend school. The School enforces the compulsory attendance laws by ensuring the regular attendance of currently enrolled students through the application of truancy prevention measures and, if necessary, referral of students to truancy court.

A student's absence is excused if the absence is specifically authorized by School policy or rule, or is otherwise approved by the campus administrator. Any absence that is not excused shall be considered an "unexcused" absence.

The School will provide written notice to parents if their student has incurred three unexcused absences (including partial day absences) in a four week period, and will begin the implementation of truancy prevention measures, which shall include one of the following:

1. The creation of a behavior improvement plan that includes a specific description of required or prohibited behavior, the period of the plan's effectiveness (not to exceed 45 days), and penalties for additional absences;
2. School-based community service; or
3. Referral to counseling, mentoring, teen court, community-based services, or other services to address the student's truancy.

A student will be considered "truant" if the student fails to attend school, without excuse, on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. A student, who is at least 12 years of age and younger than 19 years of age, may be referred to truancy court within 10 days of the student's 10<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence. In rare occasions, parents may also be subject to prosecution for criminal negligence if the parent fails to secure the student's attendance as further detailed below.

Before the School makes a referral to truancy court, the School's Truancy Prevention Facilitator will create and oversee the implementation of truancy prevention measures for the student. The School will not refer a student to truancy court if the student's truancy is the result of pregnancy, foster care, homelessness, or because the student is the principal income earner for their family and instead may offer additional counseling for the student.

If a student is 19 or older and has more than 3 unexcused absences in one semester, the School will issue a warning letter to the student that states enrollment can be revoked after 5 unexcused absences. As an alternative to revoking enrollment, the School may require the student to comply with a behavior improvement plan to address the student's lack of attendance. If the student fails to comply with the behavior improvement plan, the School may revoke the student's enrollment.

## BULLYING

Bullying is strictly prohibited and **UT Tyler University Academy** may implement a variety of different techniques – both educational and disciplinary in nature – in order to eliminate bullying between students.

Students may face disciplinary consequences for bullying conduct that:

1. occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; or
3. is considered cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, *if* the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Students who engage in certain bullying behavior may be expelled from UT Tyler University Academy, as further discussed on pages 13-14. Any student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying and used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying will not be subject to disciplinary action on the basis of the student's reasonable use of self-defense.

Students are encouraged to report an alleged incident of bullying immediately to the campus director or to any teacher, counselor, or other campus employee. Reports may be made orally or in writing, and reports may be made anonymously. Refer to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan or a UT Tyler University Academy Administrator for additional information. No student or other person shall retaliate against any other student or other person who reports bullying. The school will promptly launch an investigation into the reported incident pursuant to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The school will notify the parent(s) of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported and the parent(s) of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident pursuant to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Pursuant to the Bullying and Prevention Intervention Plan and the UT Tyler University Academy Student Handbook students who are victims of bullying, witnesses of bullying, or who engage in bullying have access to a school counselor or designee.

The principal or a designated staff member may report acts of bullying that constitute assault or harassment to the local law enforcement office.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to further detail and define the terms of this Code. The school board shall have final authority to interpret or amend any terms or provisions within this Code.

**Abusable volatile chemicals:** Those substances as defined in Texas Health and Safety Code § 485.001.

**Alcoholic Beverage:** Those substances as defined in Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code § 1.04.

**Assault:** Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

**Bullying:** A single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullying:** Bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including a cell phone or other phone, a computer, a camera, e-mail, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Cyberbullying includes conduct that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if it (1) interferes with a student's educational opportunities, or (2) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Club:** An instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

**Controlled substance:** Substances as defined in Chapter 481 of the Texas Health & Safety Code or 21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.

**Deadly conduct:** Recklessly engaging in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Electronic media:** Refers to all forms, kinds and types of electronic devices, communication systems, networks, software, websites, and any other technology resources including, but not limited to, social media, text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing or file sharing Web sites, cellular telephones, portable electronic devices, computers.

**False alarm or report:** Knowingly initiating, communicating, or circulating a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that is known to be false or baseless and that would ordinarily: (1) cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Firearm (federal):** (1) any weapon, including a starter gun that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (3) any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or (4) any destructive device, such as an explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

**Firearm (state):** Any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use.

**Gang:** An organization, combination, or association of persons composed wholly or in part of students that: (1) seeks to perpetuate itself by taking in additional members on the basis of the decision of the membership rather than on the free choice of the individual, or (2) that engages in illegal and/or violent activities. In identifying gangs and associated gang attire, signs, or symbols, the School will consult with law enforcement authorities.

**Harassment:** Threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another, subjecting another to physical confinement or restraint, maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another's physical or emotional health or safety, alone or in combination with other conduct prohibited by School policy, rules or the Code.

**Hazing:** Any act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization or group. Consent to or acquiescence in the hazing activity does not excuse the student of responsibility for the misconduct.

**Intimate visual material:** visual material that depicts a person: (1) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (2) engaged in sexual conduct.

**Location-restricted knife:** A knife with a blade over 5 and one-half inches.

**Paraphernalia:** Any article or device used or intended for use to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug into the human body, including but not limited to roach clips, rolling papers, needles, baggies with residue, razor blades, bongs and pipes.

**Possession:** Regardless of the student's knowledge or intent to possess the item, to have in or on: (1) a student's person or in the student's personal property, such as the student's clothing, purse, or backpack; (2) in any vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from school or school-related

activities, such as an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or (3) any other school property used by the student, such as a locker or desk.

**Prohibited item:** Includes but is not limited to (1) alcoholic beverages, marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs; (2) paraphernalia; (3) prohibited weapons; (4) any other item prohibited by this Code.

**Prohibited weapons:** Includes the following items: armor-piercing ammunition, chemical dispensing device, explosive weapon, firearm silencer, knuckles, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, switchblade knife, or zip gun, taser gun.

**Retaliation:** Harming or threatening to harm another: (1) on account of their service as a School employee or volunteer, (2) to prevent or delay another's service to the School, or (3) because the person intends to report a crime or violation of this Code.

**Self-defense:** When the person who is not the aggressor in an encounter uses the minimum force required to remove himself or herself from immediate danger of harm. Actions that escalate or continue the encounter will not be considered self-defense.

**Sexual harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

**Soliciting:** Requesting, commanding, or attempting to induce another student to engage in specific conduct that would constitute a violation of the Code, and with the intent that a violation of the Code be committed.

**Short-barrel firearm:** A rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun if, as altered, it has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**Switchblade knife:** Any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or other device located on the handle or opens or releases a blade from the handle or sheath by the force of gravity or centrifugal force.

**Terroristic threat:** Threats to commit an offense involving violence to any person or property with intent to: (1) cause a reaction by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, place to which the public has access, place of employment or occupation, aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance, or other public place; (4) cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service; (5) place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or (6) influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the School).

**Title 5 felony offenses:** Offenses against the person that, depending on the circumstances, may include the following offenses under the Penal Code: murder; capital murder; transport; assault; aggravated assault; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; improper relationship between educator and student; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; improper photography or visual recording; coercing, soliciting, or inducing gang membership; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment by a person in a correctional facility; continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children; and tampering with a consumer product.

**Under the influence:** When in an employee's professional judgment, the student does not have the normal use of mental or physical faculties likely attributable to the student's use of marijuana, a controlled substance, dangerous drug or alcoholic beverage. Such impairment may be evidenced by the symptoms typically associated with drug or alcohol use or other abnormal or erratic behavior. The student need not be legally intoxicated.

**Use:** With respect to substances, voluntarily injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing a prohibited substance into the body. With respect to objects or devices, putting into action or service or carrying out an action or purpose with the object or device.

**Zip gun:** A device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT DUTIES OF PEACE OFFICERS, SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS, AND SECURITY PERSONNEL**

Commented [AD2]: Added

As school-based police officers, our effectiveness stems from the strong relational partnerships we build with students, teachers, administrators, and community members. This collaborative approach fosters safe environments and cultivates a positive school culture. However, recent legislative changes necessitate heightened awareness regarding the duties and expectations of our UT Tyler School Resource Officers. Therefore, we have outlined several situational expectations:

1. Officers should maintain high visibility in the hallways at key times such as the beginning of the school day, class changes, and student lunches, unless otherwise assigned.
2. During class time, officers should conduct hourly walks to deter crimes, identify safety concerns, and address community issues such as loitering, speeding, or loud car radios, when permitted. Officers are required to conduct hourly exterior door inspections (Intruder Audits) notated on the appropriate daily activity form subject to weekly inspections by chain of command.
  - Exterior Door Sweeps- Conduct hourly exterior door sweeps to ensure doors are locked and inaccessible from the outside, unless authorized. Check for worn-out, misadjusted, or broken latches and ensure door strikes are unblocked. Work orders shall be done immediately for any issues needing repaired and followed-up on.



- Weekly Exterior Door Sweeps (Intruder Audit) - Officially conduct a weekly intruder audit, documenting findings on the Exterior Door Sweep document for weekly reporting and maintenance through the Weekly Exterior Door Sweep Excel document subject to TEA inspections.
- Weekly Window Audits - Work orders shall be done immediately for any issues needing repaired and followed-up on.

3. Officers are to work closely with administrators on investigations being careful not to use the administrator as their agent. Officers should enforce the laws and conduct investigations for crimes that occur on and around the school campus. An officer shall abide by applicable law and university policy concerning interviews should it be necessary to conduct formal law enforcement interviews with students or staff on the property or at school functions under the jurisdiction the University Academy and guidance of the Chief of Police or designee.

4. Officers are to refrain from functioning as a school disciplinarian and are not to be used as an administrator. UT Tyler police officers are not to be involved in the enforcement of disciplinary infractions that do not constitute violations of the law. For example, dress code violation, a student for cheating on a test, or any code of conduct violation. This edict aligns with the guidelines set forth and established under Texas SB 1707. Officers can be utilized to monitor any possible criminal activity or breach of the peace and be available to assist administrators who are doing other duties.

5. Officers are not to hold students in their office for disciplinary purposes. This obligates the officer to watch this student and prohibits them from their other assigned duties. Students may be held by officers in the course of their duties, but not strictly for school discipline.

6. Officers are not to remove a student from a classroom unless effecting an arrest or in exigent circumstances. Whenever possible an administrator or school employee should remove a student from a classroom. Administrators have much more authority in dealing with student behavioral issues than officers. This does not prohibit an officer from accompanying an administrator due to safety concerns.

7. Officers are to personally contact the parent/guardian of a student(s) who has been taken into custody for any law enforcement action. This function shall not be delegated to a campus administrator and should take place whether charges are filed or not. Another officer or supervisor may assist in this process if needed. The officer will advise the parent/guardian to meet them at the station or where the student will be transported to and document the notification in their offense report. It is permissible to contact the parent/guardian in conjunction with the campus administrator provided the officer speaks to the parent/guardian at that time.

8. Officers are required to complete a case report every time someone is restrained, including all arrests.

9. Officers are to assist other officers in matters regarding their duties whenever necessary. In addition to this, officers should be mindful of their ethical duty to safely intervene in any situation where the use of prohibited, inappropriate, and/or excessive force appears to have occurred. NOTE: We must

hold one another accountable to the standards outlined in our oath of office. People watch us daily so we must continue to be the standard and not the exception.

10. Officers are encouraged to facilitate individual and small group discussions about law enforcement related matters with students, faculty, and parents.

11. School Resource Officers are issued a patrol rifle requiring them to have at their duty station anytime they report for regular duty (not having this equipment requires supervisory approval).

12. Every employee will check their respective work email throughout the day including start and end of shift. This will ensure that emails sent after hours of your previously worked shift are timely read and responded to if necessary. Emails sent from a supervisor will be responded to in a timely manner to ensure communication was received.

13. Always utilize your department issued body camera for contacts with students and parents if you feel the video will be associated with a CAD entry or report or in any way in an official capacity.

14. Consult with the supervisor if you have a question about whether the call from the administrator is necessary for law enforcement action. We do not enforce school rules or handbook violations – enforcement action is for criminal issues and safety matters.