2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook

The Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts (RioGAFA) has created a Student Handbook that will be reviewed each year. Updated student handbooks will be distributed each year to families to ensure that all information is updated. Much of the following information is aligned with the Albuquerque Public Schools Student for Success Handbook.

I. Academics

A. Academic Achievement

1. Students are expected to achieve academically to the best of their ability. They are expected to:
    a) Actively strive to fulfill their academic potential
    b) Actively participate in the educational process
    c) Actively participate in community activities
2. Academic excellence takes commitment from the student as well as the family. Parents and guardians of students are encouraged to support their student's education and the school itself. When it comes to demonstrating a student's mastery and understanding of a specific learning target, honesty is key for students. Academic dishonesty in any form is prohibited and may result in disciplinary consequences for the student.

B. Academic Learning Environment

1. Every student is responsible for helping maintain a safe, orderly, and educationally focused learning environment. Students are expected to:
    a) Attend school every day and be on time for every class
    b) Respect themselves, fellow students, and staff
    c) Resolve differences with others in a positive, non-violent way
    d) Remain drug, alcohol, and tobacco free
    e) Dress appropriately for an educational environment
    f) Respect school property and the property of others
    g) Comply with the standards of behavior for their classrooms, their school, and their community
2. As previously stated, a successful education of a student requires a partnership and support from parents and guardians. Families of students are expected to:
    a) Make learning and education a priority in your home
    b) Make sure your students attend school, on time, every day
    c) Support your student in completing their homework and studying at home
    d) Understand and follow district rules and the rules of your student's school
    e) Support school staff in enforcing these rules
    f) Volunteer at your child's school, time permitting. Schools have many areas in which parents can assist. (Volunteers must have a verified background clearance.)

II. Attendance

A. Attendance for Success Requirements
    1. The State of New Mexico requires that students between the ages of five (5) and eighteen (18) attend a public or private school (including charter and alternative schools) or register with the New Mexico Public Education Department if a parent/legal guardian is providing home school or if the student is in a state institution. Student attendance in school is a critical component of the educational process. Students, families, and RioGAFA personnel must all work together to promote student success through regular attendance in school every school day as it is an important element of academic success. Attendance positively correlates to student success and academic achievement and should not be treated as a disciplinary issue, but rather lead to conversations with students and families about the means to improve attendance. Students are expected to attend remote instruction, as provided by their school, each day and/or class period. For days in which students participate in a remote learning program, schools are required to track student participation. Attendance during remote learning is based on the extent to which a student has engaged in remote learning (online with their teacher and/or assigned learning that the student does on their own without direct supervision of their teacher). Student engagement is not to be confused with how much the student understands the content, nor their grade in the class. Engagement is measured by the student showing their teacher that they are participating in the remote learning process and class activities.
B. Early Checkout
    1. Whenever a student needs to leave school early the parent/legal guardian must follow the procedures outlined by the school and provide the reason for early check-out. Students will only be released to their parent/legal guardian or to a person designated by the parent/legal guardian in the student's record. Parent/legal guardian or designee must provide a picture ID when picking up a student. Instructional time is important so appointments should be scheduled outside the school day, whenever possible. Parents/guardians should not check out students early to avoid after-school traffic.
C. Excused/Unexcused Absences or Tardies
    1. RioGAFA complies with statute when determining when absences are excused and unexcused. Below are examples of excused, unexcused, and tardies"
    2. Excused Absences:
        a) College visits
        b) Deployment of a military parent/legal guardian
        c) Family deaths
        d) Illness (including chronic illness documented in a health plan, IEP, or 504)

e) Limited extenuating circumstance as approved in advance by the school principal
f) Limited family emergencies
g) Medical, health or legal appointments
h) Religious commitments
i) Tribal obligations

3. Unexcused Absences Include (but are not limited to) :
    a) Non-school sponsored activities or trips
    b) Family vacations outside of the normally scheduled school breaks
    c) All absences not included in excused absences
4. Tardies
    a) Students who come to school after the scheduled start time are missing important learning opportunities. Students who come late to school will need to check in at the front office. Elementary aged children must be taken into the office by a parent/legal guardian. Students should not go to or be taken directly to the classroom.
        (1) Students who are often late will need to make up the lost instructional time. Check with your child's teacher to find out if and when your child needs to make up the lost instructional time.
        (2) RioGAFA may provide additional support to discourage tardiness and encourage on time attendance
        (3) Tardy means when a student arrives to any school day or class period after the bell rings indicating the start of class or school day

D. Interventions for Excessive Absences/Tardies
1. Families will be provided a call during the day notifying the parent/legal guardian of each student's absence for any part of the day so parents/legal guardians can accurately track their student's attendance
2. Families will receive district notification via text, phone call, and/or email when a student has reached any of the thresholds set for attendance interventions
3. Interventions for students with disabilities who have IEPs (other than students receiving "gifted" services only) will involve consultation with the IEP team and/or performance of a Functional Behavior Assessment
4. Parents/legal guardians are expected to schedule an appointment with their student's school to discuss the reasons for the absences and develop a plan, including setting goals, to improve attendance
5. School staff shall contact the family and schedule an appointment with the parent/legal guardian on strategies and support, especially when the student has not attended 5/10/20 percent of the required attendance days
6. **Note:** Any student that has missed 10 consecutive days of attendance will be disenrolled from RioGAFA.

E. Reporting
    1. RioGAFA will report absences along with chronic and excessive absences to the Public Education Department at the reporting date and at the end of the school year. Documentation of implemented strategies will be provided when requested

F. Makeup Work for Absences
    1. Students are entitled to make-up work for any absences, excused, or unexcused
    2. Upon return from an absence(s), students shall request make-up work and will have one day per one day of absence to complete the missed work unless the teacher and/or school administrator add additional time
    3. The teacher and/or school administrator may request a meeting with the parent/legal guardian to determine a timeframe/plan to complete the make-up work
    4. Teachers will provide make-up work but may need one full school day to gather the make-up work
    5. Grades shall not be reduced as a direct penalty for non-attendance, however grading plans may include participation grades as part of an overall grading method
    6. Check with the teacher regarding participation requirements for any class
    7. If families know ahead of time when an absence will occur, it is best practice to ask for make-up work before the absence occurs

III. Withdrawal

A. A parent/legal guardian may disenroll a student from school when necessary. The parent/legal guardian will need to have a photo ID at the time of withdrawal and provide information regarding the student's next educational setting. At the time of withdrawal, students must return all textbooks, library books, uniforms, or other school equipment and pay all fines owed to the school. Payment must be made for any items not returned. Schools may disenroll a student without parent/legal guardian permission for non-attendance following district policy and state law

IV. General Student Information

A. Classroom Celebrations
    1. Instructional time is important so parties will not be held during class time. Parents/legal guardians/students wishing to bring food or other items to school for celebrations may only do so with prior permission from the principal.

B. Closures/Delays
    1. The decision to close schools or delay the start of school will be made as early as possible, sometimes the evening before
    2. School start time may be delayed by two hours. Check the RioGAFA website for listed delay schedules.

3. Announcements about changes in school schedules will be delivered through schoolwide email, social media platforms, television and radio stations, and the RioGAFA website.
4. If no announcements are made, schools will be open as usual
5. If weather conditions worsen during the day after school is in session, the RioGAFA may deem it necessary to dismiss school early. If early dismissal is necessary, announcements about changes in school schedules will be delivered through schoolwide email, social media platforms, television and radio stations, and the RioGAFA website. . After school and evening activities will also be canceled.
6. In remote learning, there are no delays or closures

C. Dress Code
1. Student dress codes shall prioritize respect for all people and cultures and create a respectful and open school community that recognizes, affirms and honors the cultures and identities of students. New Mexico law prohibits race-based hair discrimination. Students' rights to wear hair and headdresses for religious or cultural purposes shall be protected at school.
2. Students are expected to pay attention to the clothes they wear to school, paying particular attention to personal grooming and appropriateness of attire. Student dress and grooming is to reflect high standards of personal conduct so that each student's attire promotes a positive, safe, and healthy atmosphere within the school. The dress code is not intended to regulate type of clothing (pants, skirts, dresses), hair length or style, make-up, or jewelry but clothing must not disparage others or promote violence, drug use, or other inappropriate activities. Students whose clothing or personal grooming distracts the attention of others from their schoolwork or disrupts the educational environment shall be required to adjust their attire.
3. Student attire must be appropriate for an educational setting with multiple different grade levels of students.
4. Students have the right to be treated equitably and dress code enforcement will not create disparities, reinforce or increase marginalization of any group, nor will it be more strictly enforced against students because of racial identity, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, gender nonconformity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity
5. Students and their parents/guardians have the responsibility to be aware of the dress code and plan accordingly for school attire
6. Students shall be able to style their hair for school in a manner that expresses their individuality, religious and cultural identity without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming
7. The responsibility to interpret and enforce the dress code rests with the RioGAFA Executive Directors.

D. Clothing Assistance
    1. RioGAFA is committed to providing assistance to families in need. A clothing bank will be facilitated by the school. Families needing assistance can submit a request directly to the Executive Directors or speak to the front office for resources.
E. Emergency Contact Information
    1. In the RioGAFA enrollment paperwork, we ask that emergency contacts not be already listed parent or guardians. In the event of an emergency, we will always attempt to contact the listed parents or guardians first.
F. Guest Speakers
    1. Students have the right to encounter diverse points of view. They will have opportunities to hear speakers and view presentations representing a wide range of views in classes, clubs, and assemblies under guidelines established by the district. As a public institution, schools have a commitment to objectivity and fairness in the presentation of all sides of an issue. If a student and/or parent/legal guardian objects as a matter of principle to participation in an activity assigned by school personnel, an alternative activity will be assigned without penalty or embarrassment to the student. The student and/or parent/legal guardian should contact the teacher, counselor, or administrator about their concerns.
G. Immunizations
    1. Immunizations protect children from serious illness and are required for attendance in RioGAFA. Studies show they are safe and effective in helping children stay healthy. The protection of vaccines far outweighs the small risk of serious complications. Most childhood vaccines are 90-99 percent effective in preventing disease. Each year the New Mexico Immunization Coalition determines immunization requirements for students attending school. These requirements may change from year to year and can be found on the New Mexico Department of Health website. New Mexico law allows for two types of exemptions for children seeking exemption from required immunizations to enter school. These two exemptions are medical or religious. Parents must submit proof of current immunization to register for school. Parents who wish to exempt their child must submit an approved Certificate of Exemption Form to register their child. The exemption forms are valid for one school year and must be renewed prior to the beginning of each school year. Certificate of Exemption Forms can be found on the New Mexico Department of Health website.
H. Medications At School
    1. Please refer to listed Governing Board approved documents on the RioGAFA website.
I. Medical Cannabis
    1. Please refer to listed Governing Board approved documents on the RioGAFA website.

J. Parent/Legal Guardian Teacher Conferences
    1. RioGAFA parent/legal teacher conferences are a vital part of our communication with parents. During conferences, we will review achievement scores of students as well as connect with families to see how RioGAFA can partner to ensure all students are successful. It is strongly encouraged for all families to attend all conferences.

K. Physical Restraint Law
    1. RioGAFA will abide by the following statute requirements when it comes to the use of restraint and seclusion:
        a) A school may permit the use of restraint or seclusion techniques on any student only if both of the following apply:
            (1) The student's behavior presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others
            (2) Less restrictive interventions appear insufficient to mitigate the imminent danger of serious physical harm
        b) If a restraint or seclusion technique is used on a student:
            (1) School employees shall maintain continuous visual observation and monitoring of the student while the restraint or seclusion technique is in use
            (2) The restraint or seclusion technique shall end when the student's behavior no longer presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others
            (3) The restraint or seclusion technique shall be used only by school employees who are trained in the safe and effective use of restraint or seclusion techniques unless an emergency situation does not allow sufficient time to summon those trained school employees
            (4) The restraint technique employed shall not impede the student's ability to breathe or speak; and
            (5) The restraint techniques shall not be out of proportion to the student's age or physical condition
    2. Anytime restraint or seclusion are used with a student, the family will receive written or oral notification the day to the incident. Within a reasonable amount, a written report will also be completed by the school and made available to the family if requested.

L. School Safety
    1. Below is not a comprehensive list of all safety procedures and protocols. RioGAFA is required to develop a safety plan specific to their location for a multitude of different scenarios:
        a) Schools are required to conduct safety drills periodically
        b) Schools are required to practice fire, shelter-in-place and evacuation drills that include preparation to respond to an active shooter during the school year

c) School safety plans are reviewed annually and include site and school-specific instructions relevant to each school, depending on the design and layout of the building(s)
d) Visitors to our schools are required to check in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge while on campus
e) RioGAFA may use a variety of security systems including systems that take a picture of the visitor and prints the visitor's picture in the badge for additional security.
f) Volunteers and providers at a school must have a current background check clearance
g) Visits to classrooms must be arranged 24 hours in advance, should be limited to 20 minutes (unless approved by the Executive Directors), and parents/legal guardians may only visit classrooms where their children are enrolled
h) Visitors/Guests/Volunteers visiting a classroom who disrupt the educational process will be asked to leave the school campus
i) Parents serving as chaperones on activity/field trips must have a background clearance
j) Students, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors are expected to be responsive and follow the directions of all RioGAFA personnel and public safety responders
k) The RioGAFA facility and busses have security cameras
l) Any time a student or staff member sees a suspicious person on campus or encounters a person who is being disruptive, they are asked to contact a police officer, safety officer or an administrator
m) Every threat or rumor of a threat to students, staff or schools is taken seriously. Immediate investigations are conducted, and disciplinary action is taken, if necessary
n) Anyone who hears of a possible threat to a school is encouraged to contact school administration.

M. Special Education Services
1. RioGAFA follows state regulations pursuant to 20 U.S.C Section 1412 and is committed to the following:
a) Serving students according to individualized need(s)
b) Ensuring quality of access to educational services regardless of where the student lives in the city
c) Using evidence-based practices for all students
d) Meeting our students' needs in their own communities

N. Student Drop Off/Pick Up
1. RioGAFA will be offering a longer school that will provide space for students to be dropped up as early as 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the school day. Students must be picked up within 15 minutes of the school day ending, unless they enrolled in an after school program.

2. Parents are expected to follow the RioGAFA pick up and drop off procedures that will be communicated at the beginning of year orientation.
3. Parents that repeatedly leave students for longer than fifteen minutes of the school day will be contacted by the school to attempt to resolve the issue.
4. RioGAFA is required to contact law enforcement if a child is left on school grounds during unsupervised times and the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached.
5. RioGAFA will do its best to accommodate parenting plans provided to the school, but it is not responsible for enforcing specific pick-up days.

O. Student Records
1. RioGAFA follows guidelines set in place from the New Mexico Public Education Department and the Family Educational Records and Privacy Act (FERPA) as it pertains to student records. RioGAFA maintains records related to student:
    a) Academic records
    b) Attendance records
    c) Disciplinary records
    d) Health records
    e) Person information records
    f) Progress/grade reports
    g) Standardized testing records.
2. All RioGAFA records are reviewed at the end of each school year and non-essential material is deleted.
3. Access to education records is limited to the following:
    a) Parents of students under the age of 18
    b) Parents of students over the age of 18 if such student is a dependent as defined in the Internal Revenue Code
    c) Students
    d) Officials of the school district who have a legitimate educational interest
    e) State and local officials to whom information is required to be reported
    f) Certain testing organizations
    g) Accrediting organizations
    h) Appropriate persons in connection with an emergency
    i) Pursuant to a subpoena or court order
    j) A school in which a student enrolls or seeks to enroll
    k) Any person with verifiable written consent of the parent/legal guardian of students under the age of 18 or the student 18 years of age or older

P. Technology

1. RioGAFA expects all users of its technology to use such technology in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action.
    a) Personal electronic devices include but are not limited to cell phones, small watches, laptops, and tablets
    b) Students who possess a personal electronic device are solely responsible for its care. RioGAFA is not responsible for damage, loss, or theft
    c) Student possession of personal electronic devices on school campuses, busses, or school activities is permitted
    d) Students may use devices before and after school as determined by the RioGAFA Executive Directors.
    e) Students may have devices on in the following circumstances with the permission of school administration
        (1) Special medical circumstances for student or family member
        (2) Using the device for an educational or instructional purpose
    f) Student electronic devices that are not used for educational or instructional purposes shall be kept powered off and out of sight during the school day.
    g) Student use off personal electronic devices that disrupt the instructional day will result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the personal device. When a personal device is confiscated, it shall only be released and/or returned to the student's parent/legal guardian. It is the parent's/legal guardian's responsibility to retrieve the device according to school procedures. Each school will have specific procedures when a device is confiscated
    h) Students using personal electronic devices at appropriate times should follow common courtesies such as not taking photographs of others without their permission or posting photographs of others on social media without their permission and putting phones away when speaking to others

Q. Textbook, Instructional Materials, School Issued Devices and Art Supplies
1. RioGAFA is committed to providing materials needed to have an arts-integrated experience. Students and families are expected to help maintain these materials by following these guidelines:
    a) Students are expected to return textbooks and other instructional materials in good condition.
        (1) Fees/Fines will be charged for textbooks and other instructional materials, including electronic devices not returned, lost, and/or damaged.

(2) Fees/fines will be tracked throughout a student's academic career.

R. Transportation
    1. RioGAFA is committed to providing transportation to as many students as possible. Guidelines for transportation include but are not limited to:
        a) Students will be picked up and dropped off only at their assigned stops. RioGAFA bus drivers will not accept notes or messages authorizing them to drop off students at a point other than the student's regular stop.
        b) Parents of students grades K-3 must be present when students are dropped off unless written approval is given to the school documenting parent permission for students to go home with an older sibling or be left unattended.
        c) Assigned seating will be implemented for all RioGAFA buses
        d) Students are expected to adhere to all RioGAFA rules while on the bus. Students that are repeatedly reported for misbehavior on the bus may be suspended from the bus.

S. Visitors, Volunteers and Guests on Campus
    1. RioGAFA encourages parents and community members to participate in school activities and volunteer in classrooms.
        a) Parents/legal guardians on campus during the school day need to check in at the main office and wear a visitor or volunteer nametag throughout their time on campus
        b) Visits to classrooms should be arranged 24 hours prior to the visit, should be limited to twenty (20) minutes unless approved by the Executive Directors, and parents/legal guardians may only visit classrooms where their child is enrolled
        c) Visitors/Guests/Volunteers visiting a classroom who disrupt the educational process will be asked to leave the school campus
        d) Parents serving as chaperones on activity/field trips must have a background clearance
        e) Public health orders may require limiting or denial of visitors to campuses

V. Student Code of Conduct

A. RioGAFA stands by school being a place to learn and foster community. If a student is behaving in a way that hinders the learning of other students, interventions to correct this behavior are necessary. Whether the student is receiving general or special education services, documentation and possible interventions may be used to allow for others to learn. Acts of misconduct are subject to disciplinary action by appropriate school personnel. Unacceptable conduct is defined as whether or not it disrupts or has the potential to disrupt the educational process. Consequences will result for cases such as bullying, fighting, harassment, inappropriate use of electronic devices, use or possession

of controlled substances, or other forms of disrupting the educational process or violations of laws, rules, or regulations.

B. The RioGAFA Student Code of Conduct applies but is not limited to all times that a student is on campus, on a RioGAFA bus, or at a school sponsored event.

C. Controversial Issues
    1. RioGAFA students have the right to hear speakers, view presentations, and engage in civil discourse representing a wide range of views in classes and clubs with the guidelines established by the RioGAFA Executive Directors.

D. Disciplinary Procedures
    1. RioGAFA uses progressive discipline practices for student misbehavior. Progressive discipline means disciplinary action other than suspension or expulsion from school that is designed to correct and address the basic causes of a student's misbehavior while retaining the student in class or school, or restorative school practices to repair the harm done to others as a result of the student's misbehavior. Progressive discipline may include parent/legal guardian conferences, reflective activities, counseling, social-emotional cognitive skills building, resolution circles, restorative conferencing, mediation, community service, lunch detention, in-school detention or suspension, after-school detention, or Saturday detention. Disciplinary consequences will be appropriate for a student's age, ability level, and severity of behavior. Out-of school suspension will be used in cases of significant behavior violations
    2. Student Contracts
        a) A possible intervention for RioGAFA student behavior is placing students on a written contract with parent/guardian signature. There following are a list of guidelines:
            (1) Student commits to more positive behavior in the form of a written contract
            (2) Terms of the contract will be determined by the principal or designee
            (3) Student may be assigned school or community service
            (4) Not honoring the conditions of the contract will result in continuing progressive discipline up to and including long-term suspension
    3. Removal from Class
        a) Students may be removed from class or activity but remain at school pending a conference with appropriate school personnel. Parents/guardians must be informed.
        b) Students may be placed in an alternative educational setting until satisfactory resolution is reached. Parents/guardians will be informed.
        c) Reasonable periods of detention may be imposed with the procedures for temporary suspension.

4. Disciplinary Investigations
    a) RioGAFA students that are suspected to be involved in an activity that disrupts the educational process or is a suspected criminal act, students will be given the opportunity to speak with an administrator. Administrators will contact parents within the same day of the investigation to review any allegations and results of the investigations.
5. Search of Person, Vehicle, or Locker
    a) Vehicle Searches – Search of a student's mom vehicle while parked on school property may be conducted only if a certified school employee has reasonable suspicion that a crime or breach of the disciplinary code is being committed by the student
    b) Physical Searches – Search of a student's person or property may be conducted only when there is reasonable suspicion that the student being searched has committed a crime or breach of the disciplinary code
        (1) Searches such as emptying of pockets, searches of student backpacks and purses, removal of hats, socks, and shoes will be conducted by school administration.
        (2) More intrusive searches such as pat downs may only be conducted by a school administrator of the same gender as the student being searched and in the presence of another person of the same gender
            (a) Transgender students may request which gender they prefer to conduct an intrusive search or in checking luggage or personal items for activity/field trips. The school administrator/sponsor must make every effort to comply with this request.
        (3) The most intrusive searches include removal of clothing, such as lowering clothing or inspecting inside clothing to determine if items are being concealed within undergarments or clothing. A school administrator shall determine if the search is necessary; these searches should only be conducted in situations that pose a danger to the student or the school population, including but not limited to situations where there is reasonable suspicion a student is in possession of drugs (over-the-counter, prescription, illicit, look-alikes) or weapons.
        (4) In cases of an intrusive search reasonable efforts must be made by the school administrator to contact the student's parent/legal guardian to notify them about the situation, safety concern and that an intrusive search shall be conducted

E. Disciplinary Consideration for Students with Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA)
    1. Students with disabilities receiving special education services are subject to the same expectations as students receiving general education services and are expected to follow the district's disciplinary process. While IDEA provides federal guidelines covering the discipline procedures to be followed for student with disabilities receiving special education services, consequences for behavior violations, including school removal of more than ten (10) days, may still occur. Discipline safeguards, as covered under IDEA, do not apply to students identified under the eligibility of "gifted" unless such students also have a disability eligibility. Since the exclusion for a student with a disability from their education program for more than a total of ten (10) days cumulative during a school year may constitute a change in placement, the following considerations must be addressed:
        a) When considering long-term suspension or expulsion, an individualized Education Plan (IEP) team must first determine whether the behavior of concern is a manifestation of the student's disability
        b) To determine if the conduct in question is or is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP team must conduct a Manifestation Determination Review Meeting and address:
            (1) Whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability; or
            (2) Whether the conduct in question was a direct result of the Local Educational Agency's (LEA) failure to implement the IEP
        c) If the IEP team determines that the behavior was related to the student's disability or a result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP, no discipline shall occur other than removals for special circumstances under IDEA (refer to IAES below). Recommendations: review IEP, add services and supports, develop/update a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), and/or change services, if appropriate.
        d) If the IEP team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability or was not a result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP, disciplinary actions may be taken in accordance with the procedures in this handbook
        e) Should the disciplinary procedures include long-term suspension or expulsion, the district must continue to provide educational services, including access to the general education curriculum and related services, as determined by the IEP

f) Any suspension that excludes a student from their IEP services must be counted when calculating the total number of suspension days (up to ten (10) cumulative days or beyond the ten (10) days may constitute a change of placement)
g) The decision to change a student from their IEP placement to an Alternative Education Setting (AES) or Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) due to imposition of discipline must be made by the IEP team who must consider the student's individual needs.

F. Disciplinary Consideration for Students under Section 504
1. Students with 504 accommodations are required to follow the RioGAFA disciplinary process. Students with a 504 that are being considered for long term suspension or expulsion will receive a Manifestation Determination to determine if the disciplinary recommendations are appropriate.

G. Suspensions
1. A suspension is the removal of a student from a class or classes and all school activities for any period of time. Suspension may include in-school suspension alternatives to long-term removals from school for one year or longer. Administrators may impose consequences to maintain the safety and security of the school population, but suspension may not be used as a consequence for excessive absences or tardies.
a) The school administration must provide notification of any form of suspension to the parent/legal guardian and teachers for any student being suspended. The notification must be documented in writing and should occur on the same day, or as soon as possible if the parents cannot be contacted. Written notification should follow upon parent request if the notification is made by phone or in person.
b) The school administration must keep on file a copy of the notification for any suspension occurring during a school year
c) The principal of the school is responsible for notification, compliance, and documentation at their school
d) Copies of suspension notifications may be discarded at the beginning of each academic year for prior year actions, except for long-term suspension or expulsions still in effect
2. In-School Suspension
a) Suspension of a student from one or more classes while requiring the student to spend time in a designated area at the school or elsewhere as determined by each school. In-school suspension shall include instruction and/or restorative practices.
3. Out-Of-School Suspension
a) Suspension of a student from one or more classes for no more than five (5) days and requiring the student to spend time outside

of school. Out-of-school suspension includes all school related activities and counts toward a student's chronic absenteeism totals, which may require targeted student interventions to improve attendance.

4. Short-term Suspension
    a) Suspension of a student from one or more classes in school or out of school.
        (1) Short-term suspension (STS) will be limited to no more than five (5) school days
        (2) Each school will have its own method for developing alternative educational settings for students who have been STS
5. Long-term Suspension
    a) The removal of a student from instruction and all school-related activities for more than ten (10) days and up to the balance of the semester, or longer as determined by the hearing officer in cases which are near the end of a given semester.
        (1) A student must be given the opportunity for a due process hearing prior to long-term suspension (LTS)
        (2) At the principal's discretion, students may be suspended pending a due process hearing
        (3) The student may, at their own expense, choose to be represented by an attorney at the hearing
        (4) A student receiving a long-term suspension may lose credit for the semester unless placed in an alternative school setting
        (5) Transfer students will have their transfer revoked (except students placed in accordance with their IEP) for the transfer school they are attending at the time of their long-term suspension. The transfer revocation date for students receiving special education services assigned to an Alternative Educational Setting (AES), through a LTS hearing, will be determined at the end of the suspension period by the IEP team in consultation with school and district administration. Upon completion of a LTS, a student may return to their assigned school, request a transfer for the next school year, or explore alternative options.
6. Expulsion
    a) Expulsion is the suspension of a student from all regular schools in APS for a period exceeding one (1) semester. In some cases, expulsion may be a permanent removal from this school system. When appropriate, a student who is expelled may be placed in an alternative program.

(1) A student must be given the opportunity for a due process hearing prior to expulsion
(2) At the principal's discretion, a student may be suspended pending a due process hearing
(3) The student may, at their own expense, choose to be represented by an attorney at the hearing
(4) A student receiving an expulsion may lose credit for the semester unless engaged in an alternative school setting
(5) Transfer students will have their transfer revoked (except students placed in accordance with their IEP) for the transfer school they are attending at the time of their expulsion. The transfer revocation date for students receiving special education services assigned to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES), through an expulsion hearing, will be determined at the end of the suspension period by the IEP team in consultation with school and district administration. Upon completion of an expulsion, a student may return to their assigned school, request a transfer for the next school year, or explore alternative options.

7. Due Process Hearing for Proposed Long-Term Suspensions or Expulsions
    a) If a hearing is needed for a student to determine if a long-term or expulsion is necessary.
    b) Parents will be contacted by the 5th day of suspension either in person or by certified mail.
    c) The hearing shall be scheduled no later than 10 days from the receipt of notice. The date may be extended if requested by the parent.
    d) Families may waive their right to due process hearing and accept the recommended disciplinary action.
    e) All due process hearings will be recorded and kept for one year, with expulsion hearings being kept for two years.
    f) Parents may appeal the decision made by the hearing officer by providing written notice within 10 days after the decision is made.
    g) The RioGAFA Board President or Vice President will review the hearing and decision within 15 working days and provide a response within 10 working days after the review.

VI. **Student Offenses**

A. Below are definitions of unacceptable student behavior.
B. Arson
    1. Maliciously, willfully and/or neglectfully starting, by any means, a fire or causing an explosion on school property or at any school-related activity.
C. Assault

1. A verbal threat or physical attempt of bodily harm

D. Battery/Fighting
    1. Unlawful, intentional touching or application of force to another person, when done in a rude, disrespectful, or angry manner

E. Bullying
    1. Bullying is a way of using power aggressively in which a person is subjected to intentional, unwanted, and unprovoked hurtful verbal and/or physical actions. An act of bullying results in the targeted student feeling oppressed, fearful, distressed, injured, or uncomfortable. The aggression is repeated on more than one occasion and can include physical, verbal, emotional, racial, sexual, written, electronic, damage to property, social exclusion, and intimidation. Bullying may be motivated by actual or perceived characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or identity, mental, physical, or academic disability. Bullying often takes place in a social context. Cyber bullying means any bullying that takes place through electronic communication. RioGAFA has a zero tolerance policy for bullying and takes all forms of bullying seriously.

F. Bus Disruption
    1. Appropriate behavior is expected whenever a student is on the bus. Suspension from the bus does not mean suspension from school. Instead, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school. Driver, bus assistant or administrator may select a different consequence in handling an incident. This depends on the seriousness of the infraction. Bus disruption occurs anytime a student deliberately or inadvertently interferes with the safe operation of a school bus, which is stopped, or moving; behaves in a manner adversely affecting an individual or property on or near the bus itself, at bus stops or at pick-up areas.

G. Controlled Substance
    1. A controlled substance is defined as any substance capable of producing a change in behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling. Controlled substances include but are not limited to alcohol, marijuana, “look-alikes”, narcotics, hallucinogens, prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, and synthetic drugs. Possession and/or use of a controlled substance, including alcohol presents a health concern for students and is a potential disruption to the educational process.
    2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.

H. Controlled Substance, Paraphernalia Possession
    1. Possessing any paraphernalia, such as but not limited to rolling paper, pipes, bongs or vape pens

2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.

I. Controlled Substance, Possession
    1. Possessing any substance capable of producing a change in behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling; having a “look-alike”, a substance that looks like a controlled substance
    2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.
J. Controlled Substance, Sale or Distribution
    1. Selling or distributing a substance capable of producing a change of behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling; including a “look-alike”**, or an item sold as a controlled substance
    2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.
K. Controlled Substance, Use
    1. Absorbing a substance capable of producing a change of behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling, including a “look-alike”, or an item sold as a controlled substance
    2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.
L. Dress Code Violation
    1. Non-compliance with specific school dress codes
M. Extortion
    1. Using intimidation or the threat of violence to obtain money, information, or anything else of value from another person
N. False Accusations
    1. Falsely reporting crimes or purposely giving false information to a school administrator or other investigator during the process of an investigation, in accordance with the NM Criminal Code Statute
O. False Alarm/Fire Alarm
    1. Interfering with the proper functioning of a fire alarm system or pulling the fire alarm intentionally when no fire or other danger exists
P. Firearm, Possession/Use
    1. Possession or use of any weapon, which will propel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
Q. Gang-Related Activity

1. Gang-related activity can be intimidating to students, parents and staff and is disruptive to the educational process. Although this list is not all inclusive, examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors are such things as gang graffiti on school property, intimidation of others, gang fights and/or initiation rituals, wearing gang attire or “colors”. A “gang” can be any group of students and/or non-students whose group behavior is threatening, delinquent, or criminal. Since gang behavior, markers, and colors are variable and subject to rapid change, school administrators and staff must exercise judgment and their individual discretion based upon current circumstances in their neighborhood schools when evaluating gang-related activity. Gang-related indicators that will be considered should include:
    a) The student associating with admitted or known gang members
    b) The student wearing attire consistent with gang dress
    c) The student displaying gang logos, graffiti and/or symbols on personal possessions
    d) The student displaying gang hand signs or signals to others
    e) The student talking about gang activities with others
    f) Hostile contact with others in which two or more students have contributed to a situation causing bodily harm to another

R. General Disruptive Conduct and/or Defiance
    1. Any behavior or conduct that disrupts or interferes with the operation of the public schools, including individual classes. This can also be behavior that leads a school authority to reasonably forecast that such an interruption or interference is likely to occur unless preventive action is taken. Refusing to comply with any reasonable demand or request by any school official or sponsor or lying to or intentionally misleading any school official at places and times where school personnel have jurisdiction is included in this definition.
        a) For example: use of cell phone during instructional time; misuse of cell phones and other forms of technology; failure to provide school identification upon request; dress code violation; inappropriate display of affection; making false accusations regarding staff or students; and so forth
        b) Note: It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian of the student to retrieve confiscated cell phones or other electronic devices according to the individual school’s procedures. The school may keep items for extended periods of time for repeat offenses.

S. Harassment
    1. Any gesture or written, verbal, or physical act that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability; which has the effect of harming another individual/group,

damaging their property, placing the individual/group in reasonable fear; or has the effect of causing a disruption to the educational process. Inciting or encouraging others to commit such acts is also considered harassment.

a) Disability: Conduct including but not limited to the following: mocking, taunting, intimidating, criticizing, or punishing a student/group with a disability because of their disability.
b) Sexual: Gender discrimination as defined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Examples include but are not limited to the following: sexual assault, unwanted touching, inappropriate comments or conversation, certain non-verbal behaviors, and gestures, which threaten or belittle others on the basis of gender.
c) Racial: Conduct including but not limited to the following: racial slurs, racial jokes, offensive or derogatory remarks, display of racially offensive material or symbols, or exclusion from normal school activities

T. Hate Incident
    1. Conduct that reflects hatred or bigotry based on real or perceived race, nationality, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected class
U. Language, Profane and/or Abusive
    1. Using language that is crude, offensive, insulting, or irreverent; use of coarse words to show contempt or disrespect; swearing
V. Materials, Obscene
    1. Displaying material that is indecent and has the potential of being disruptive
W. Robbery
    1. Taking of property through means of force or fear
X. Theft
    1. Unauthorized possession and/or sale of property of another without consent of owner
Y. Threats of Violence Against the School
    1. Threats of violence against the school in any form, verbal, written, or via social media
Z. Tobacco Possession, Use, and/or Distribution
    1. Possession, use, and/or distribution of tobacco, including all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and nicotine liquid containers anywhere on a school campus or at a school related event is prohibited. In addition, students found in possession, distributing, or using tobacco are subject to the provisions of the Substance Abuse and Tobacco Policy.
    2. RioGAFA has a zero-tolerance policy for controlled substances and tobacco on campus. Any student found in possession of controlled

substance or tobacco may face consequences including a disciplinary hearing for expulsion.

AA. Trespassing/Unauthorized Presence
1. Entering or being on school grounds or in a school building without authorization

BB. Vandalism
1. Deliberately or maliciously destroying, damaging, and/or defacing school property or the property of another individual.

CC. Weapon Possession
1. Possessing a weapon such as but not limited to a firearm, any type of gun, knife, club, firecracker, explosive, spoked wristband, chains, or other item that may cause or is intended to cause injury or death. This specifically includes “look-alike” guns and knives, such as toys.

VII. Student Consequences

A. The RioGAFA Administration will take each disciplinary incident on a case by case basis. The goal of the RioGAFA administration is to create an environment that caters to restorative justice rather than reactionary discipline. The below list includes but is not limited to examples of disciplinary consequences for the above stated behaviors:
1. Staff/Student Contract
2. Administrative/Parent Contract
3. Student Mediation
4. Parent Meeting
5. Detention (Lunch or Saturday)
6. Community Service
7. School Restoration
8. Suspension
9. Expulsion
10. Restitution