

**Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School  
(DMLGG)**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2023 - 2024**



*Nuestra Juventad---Our Youth - Nuestro Futuro ---Our Future*

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Board Approved 7/17/2023

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## **PREFACE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**This handbook contains information and procedures that students and parents must know to ensure a successful school year. The Student Code of Conduct is required by state law and is intended to promote school safety and an environment for learning. This handbook is updated annually, while policy adoptions and revisions are ongoing throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect handbook provisions will be communicated to students and parents/guardians as they are approved by the Board of Trustees. This student handbook is not contractual in nature and shall not be deemed in any context to give contractual rights to any individual or entity. Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School board policies, as well as state and federal law, are the legal guidelines that bind the District, its employees, and students. Such policies and laws take precedence over the information in this student handbook, and any conflicts between such shall be interpreted and resolved in compliance with, and in favor of, board policy and/or applicable laws.**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**The Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School's staff, parents, and community are dedicated to the intellectual, personal, social, emotional and physical growth of students. Our highly qualified staff recognizes the value of professional development in order to rigorously challenge our students. Our teaching practices are both reflective and responsive to the needs of our students. Through diversified experiences, our students discover their potential; achieve readiness for fluid transition into any high school program, college/careers, and succeed in a safe and caring environment.**

The Gulf Coast of La Raza Inc. dba Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or disability in providing education or providing access to benefit of education services, activities and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; as amended, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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## **ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT**

### **How is a student admitted and enrolled?**

- Current students will be required to complete a "Return to School " form prior to May 14th of each year.
- New students will complete an application for admission beginning May 16<sup>th</sup>- August 22 of each school year.
- Applications received after the deadline will be accepted in the order that they were received until all openings are filled.
- If capacity of enrollment is met, students that apply during the application period will be placed on a waiting list according to grade level.
- Once capacity of enrollment is met, students will remain on waiting list until application process for following school year is open. All remaining students will be placed on a wait list.
- Contact the school Registrar if other admission and enrollment information is needed at (361) 881-9988.
- Student must present the following for admission:
  - The child's birth certificate
  - The child's social security card
  - Current **immunization** record or proof that the child is not required to be immunized, or proof that the child is entitled to provisional admission IMMUNIZATIONS (TEC § 38.001)  
All immunizations must be completed by the **first** day of attendance. The law requires students be vaccinated against specified diseases to be enrolled. If the student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a statement signed by the parent stating that immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member. *(This statement must be renewed every year.)* If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician that states the immunization would be harmful to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household. unless the physician specifies a life-long contraindication or something that makes a particular procedure or treatment inadvisable. *(This certificate must be renewed every year.)* **A parent or guardian has a thirty-day period to supply proof of inoculations.**
  - Child's records from the school the child most recently attended or if the child was previously enrolled in a school in this state or another state - Withdrawal Sheet, Home Language Survey, Last Report Card and any supporting documentation.
  - Proof of health insurance (if applicable)
  - TANF Number (if applicable) or Food Stamp Number

### **IMMUNIZATIONS FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN**

**New Immunization Requirements: Law requires children attending child care centers, enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start, or other early childhood programs to be vaccinated against invasive Pneumococcal and Hepatitis A diseases. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is requiring these two vaccines in addition to those already required.**

## **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES**

### **What are the attendance rules?**

- Law requires that a student between the ages of **6 and 19** years of age must attend school unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused.
- Attendance is mandatory through the school year in which the student's **19th** birthday occurs, unless the child has graduated, received a GED, is being home schooled, or is married and meets the legal requirements stated.
- The regular school day is 8:15 AM to 3:40 PM.
- A student absent without permission from school will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action and/or truancy court.
- To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the classes are offered.

### **What happens if attendance expectations are not met?**

When a student between ages 6 and 19 incur unexcused absences for (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student's parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's attendance and to require the student to attend school. The notice will also inform the parent that the District will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administration and the parents. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to in-school counseling services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the District will also be initiated such as After School or Saturday makeup days. Attendance requirements also apply to any District required tutorial sessions. Students who attend fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered cannot receive credit for the class unless the Attendance Committee finds that the absences are the result of extenuating circumstances. If you have any questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the counselor or campus administrator. A court of law may also impose penalties against a student's parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or part of days within a six-month period in the same school year. For more information, visit: Texas Justice Court Training Center at tjctc.org.

### **If a student is absent, what must be done?**

When returning to school following an absence, a student must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence or a note from a clinic and/or doctor. Notes signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will be considered a forgery and the student will be disciplined. This note must be submitted no later than **five (5)** school days after the student's absence to the student's teacher. (*Documentation plays a vital role in whether your child will be making up hours during Saturday School.*)

### **What is an excused absence?**

A student may be excused for an absence for the following reasons:

- For personal illness, dangerous travel, and/or a required court appearance.
- Observing religious holy days, including traveling for that purpose, if before the absence the parent submits a written request for the excused absence.
- Treatment by health care professionals if the student begins classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment or treatment.
- Any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal or superintendent.
- **The Texas Education Agency does not look at EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED absences, but only looks at total number of days that a student must be present at school.**

### **Can the student make up work when absent?**

- A student whose absence is **excused** shall be permitted a reasonable time to make up work missed.
- Students who are absent because of observations of religious holy days or for appointments with health care professionals shall be considered present for attendance purposes as long as they make up the missed work within a reasonable amount of time as determined by school officials.
- In all cases, the student must also earn a passing grade in order to receive credit.
- If the Attendance Committee finds that there are no extenuating circumstances for the absence or if the student does not meet the conditions set by the committee to earn or regain credit, the student will not receive credit for the class.
- A student absent for any reason is encouraged to make up specific assignments missed and/or to complete additional in-depth study assigned by the teacher to meet subject or course requirements.
- A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive an "incomplete" for the assignment until the work is made up.
- Students shall receive an "incomplete" for assignments and tests missed because of an unexcused absence.

### **What if the student is tardy?**

- A student is considered tardy if they arrive after **8:30 AM** then after the bell rings in all subsequent classes, except in cases of extenuating circumstances, such as a doctor's appointment.

- The regular school day is 8:15 AM to 3:40 PM.
- Repeated instances of tardiness will result in disciplinary action and a referral to Truancy Court at the principal's discretion.

### **May a student leave school before the end of the school day?**

- If a student must leave school during the day, they must bring a note that can be verified from his or her parents that day.
- A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the principal or designee. The principal or designee will decide whether the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parents.
- This school is a Closed Campus. Students may not leave campus once they arrive unless they are picked up by a parent or legal guardian.  
When students are transported to the school on public bus transportation or by any family member, they are to remain on the grounds for the school day. When students receive permission to leave the campus because of illness, they must report to the office, where their parents will be notified and receive a dismissal permit.
- A student will not be released from school at times other than regular dismissal hours without parental consent. If a student is leaving school early before dismissal time, the teacher must determine that permission has been granted before allowing the student to leave and the student must be accompanied by his parent or guardian who must present an ID and must be listed on emergency card.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

### **Does the school have a cafeteria/food services facility? YES**

- Breakfast and lunch will be available for students that are in attendance. All students eat free.
- A la carte food items are available at a nominal cost; usually ranging from \$ 1.00 to \$5.00.
- The cost of an adult meal is \$5.00.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

### **What is the dress and grooming code?**

Our District believes in the importance of encouraging high standards in dress and personal grooming that will foster dignity and self-worth while enhancing a positive learning environment. Good grooming habits are expected to be part of each student's responsibility. All students are encouraged to come to school dressed in neat, clean, and appropriate attire. The dress code applies to both male and female students.

### **Students May Wear The Following:**

- Students will wear clothing appropriate for their size.
- Blue jeans or khaki pants and must be fitted at the waist and cannot sag.
- No tops revealing the midriff section are permitted.
- Dress tops, blouses or shirts **shall not** have a low-cut front neckline.
- The back of shirts/blouses shall be no lower than the armpits.
- The armhole size shall be appropriate and not so large that the undergarments show.
- Tank tops, muscle shirts, string straps or shirts worn with torn out sleeves are not permitted.
- Leggings, biking shorts, wind shorts and workout shorts are not permitted.
- Shorts of any nature are not permitted, unless participating in P.E. and/or extracurricular activities for students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>
- Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade may wear shorts during warm weather, but they must be an appropriate length. No short shorts are allowed.
- Jeans that are excessively torn with holes are not permitted. (*Jeans that are slightly torn may be worn only if leggings are worn underneath so that a person's skin is not visible.*) Torn clothing which shows skin or undergarments are not permitted.
- Pants must be hemmed and not frayed or fringed.
- See through material is not acceptable in any clothing.

- Appropriate undergarments must be worn.
- Clothing that depicts, advertises, or glorifies Satan or satanic rites or that indicates preoccupation with death, sadism or evil is strictly prohibited.
- Suggestive writings, pictures, emblems, or symbols or depictions of sex, violence, blood, or gore is not permitted.
- Advertising (logos and emblems) of alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs and tobacco products will not be permitted on school campus during school hours or at school sponsored functions.
- Shoes must be worn - no shower shoes, house shoes, flip flops, taps, sandals, or crocs.
- No headgear (caps, hats, etc.) will be allowed on campus during school hours.
- Dark glasses are not permitted unless required by a doctor.
- Hair must be well groomed, not cover the eyes and not be colored in such a manner as to be disruptive to the educational environment.
- Hair rollers are not permitted.

**NOTE:** Exceptions may be left to the discretion of the teacher and/or principal in unusual situations and/or during extracurricular activities, school sponsored functions on and off school property, or on school campus during school hours. If an item is gang apparel/paraphernalia, or is disruptive to the educational environment, it will be banned from the campus at the discretion of the teacher and/or principal. This rule also applies to clothing, items, or behavior that may present itself to be:

- A danger to the student’s health and safety
- Disruption to an orderly school environment and instruction

**Are backpacks allowed? YES**

Backpacks are allowed, but they must be clear or mess unless the backpack is issued by the school, **NO** exceptions.

**Are students assigned homework? YES**

At the discretion of the teacher, homework may be assigned. The homework may consist of completing work not finished at school, studying for tests, or reading and practicing skills which have already been taught at school.

**GRADING POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

**What is the grading policy?**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the instructional staff follows the school district grading policies to arrive at six-week and semester grades for students. The guidelines shall ensure that a sufficient number of grades are taken to support the average grade assigned. Guidelines for grading shall be clearly communicated to students and parents. Grades shall not be reduced for disciplinary reasons except in case of late assignments, academic dishonesty, or as otherwise permitted by the Student Code of Conduct.

The grading system for the District consists of a numerical scale from 70 to 100. Grades, which are temporarily incomplete, will be indicated by the mark “I”. The following numerical values are assigned to each respectively:

A	100 – 90	Excellent
B	89 – 80	Good
C	79 – 70	Average
F	69 – below	Failing
I		Incomplete

Students shall receive an “Incomplete” for assignments and tests missed because of an excused or unexcused absence until the work is made up.

**Do students receive report cards/progress reports? YES**

Written reports of grades or performance in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every six weeks. At the end of the first half of each grading period (3 Weeks), parents are notified if the student’s grade average is near or below 70 or below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade of less than 70 in any class or subject during a grading period, the parent may request to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

*\*Progress reports are issued to students every three weeks whether they are passing or failing courses.*

## **May students be promoted, retained and/or placed in specific grade levels?**

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT (TEC § 28.021)**

A student may be promoted only based on academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level. If a student's grade average in any subject or course is "borderline" or below 70 at the end of the first three weeks of any grading period, the student's parents will be notified. Failure to pass the STAAR Exams will mandate remedial classes, homework, tutorials, and Saturday School.

## **Academic Honesty/Dishonesty**

Copying another person's work, such as homework, classwork, or a test is a form of cheating. Plagiarism, which is the use of another person's original ideas or writing as one's own without giving credit to the true author, will also be considered cheating and the student will be subject to academic disciplinary action that may include loss of credit for the work in question. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or other academic dishonesty will assess the academic penalty to be imposed. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary penalties as well, according to the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Distance Learning/Remote Instruction**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television. The district may offer remote instruction as per TEA guidelines. All district policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and other expectations of student behavior will be enforced as applicable in a remote or virtual learning environment.

## **Awards and Honors**

Awards/Honors Assemblies are an integral part of student success in providing recognition for student achievement. At all levels, students may be recognized for all "A" honor roll, all "A" and "B" honor roll each six-week period, perfect attendance, and other special rewards as scheduled by the principal. *(COVID will determine how Awards Assemblies are conducted.)*

## **Tutorial Services**

Tutorials are offered before and after school and on some Saturdays. Please contact your child's teacher or counselor for tutorial dates and times.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT (TEC § 37.001)**

All students are entitled to enjoy the basic rights of citizenship recognized and protected by law for persons of their age and maturity. The school will foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Students are expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and District staff. The District's rules for conduct and discipline are established to achieve and maintain order in the school. Students who violate the rights of others or who violate District or school rules will be subject to disciplinary measures desired to correct the misconduct and to promote adherence by all students to their responsibilities as citizens in the school community.

The Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School's responsibility for maintaining discipline in the school is crucial. While it does not appear as a subject, discipline underlies the whole educational structure and is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people.

## **What is expected student behavior?**

- When an adult speaks, students will listen.
- Students will always keep their hands and feet to themselves.
- Students must respect each other at all times.
- Make arrangements for transportation to and from school.
- Come to class appropriately dressed and groomed.



- Come to the class prepared and on time plus bring required school supplies.
- Be ready for class assignments.
- Must sit in the assigned seat correctly.
- Speak only when appropriate and raise your hand to ask questions.
- Respond appropriately when the teacher asks questions.
- Excel on all state required examinations.
- Stay out of and/or away from classmates' personal property.

## **Responsibilities**

The student is responsible for the following:

- Conduct himself/herself in a safe and responsible way.
- Seek help from school personnel when having school or personal problems.
- Demonstrate an attitude of respect toward individuals and property.
- Use appropriate language when speaking to others.
- Be familiar with and obey school rules and regulations.
- Attend school, be punctual, and be prepared for class.
- Follow the teacher's directions and stay on task during instruction.
- Be familiar with the curriculum requirements.
- Cooperate with school staff in all matters.
- Maintain an appearance and grooming conducive to learning.
- Understand all safety protocol in the building in case of an emergency.
- Inform staff immediately of any dangerous situations.

## **Unacceptable Classroom Behavior**

- It is against the law for students to possess or use tobacco products; no smoking or chewing tobacco.
- No jewelry with drug paraphernalia or gang affiliation will be permitted on campus or at any school function.
- Interruptions during instructional time will not be permitted.
- Getting up from your seat without permission will not be permitted.
- Talking back to the teacher will not be tolerated.
- Students must not borrow notebooks, pencils, or anything else from other students.
- Name calling, bullying is not tolerated or allowed at any time.
- Stealing, lying or cheating is not tolerated or allowed at any time.
- Profanity is not tolerated or allowed at any time.
- Noises or any other distractions during class time will not be allowed.
- Touching the teacher's and/or other student's property.
- Slamming doors.
- Fighting with others is not tolerated or allowed at any time.
- Passing notes in class.
- Throwing paper or pencils is not tolerated or allowed at any time. If someone is injured due this type of behavior the student and parent will personally be held responsible.
- Toys are not allowed to be brought to school.
- Leaving the classroom without permission.
- Using cell phones in the classroom will not be allowed unless the teacher gives permission to use as an instructional tool. If a student displays a cell phone, the phone will be collected for the day. Subsequent violations will result in the phone being held until a parent meets with the teacher or principal to discuss the problem.
- No lighters, cigarettes, electronic smoking devices, pipes, drugs/drug paraphernalia, matches etc.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is defined in state law as 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:

- 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;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

**Bullying is prohibited and will not be tolerated at any time.** Bullying may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, and ostracism. Please submit any bullying incidents to the campus principal or for anonymous reporting go to the school district's website at [gcclr.com](http://gcclr.com) and complete the Bullying Report Form.

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, computer, camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, social media application, internet website and any other internet-based communication tool. If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. **Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website. A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by going to the [gcclr.com](http://gcclr.com) website under the Parent Tab, complete the Bullying Report Form, and click the Submit button.** The administration will investigate all allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parents of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to the affected individuals, including any student who witnessed the bullying. Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited. Upon recommendation of the administration, the District may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus.

## **Hazing**

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the law; and
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

The District will **not** tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

## **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking. Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such

material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement and to Child Protective Services (CPS). A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral, or emotional warning signs, including:

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior; or
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. Warning Signs of Child Trafficking of any sort is prohibited by law. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services. Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently makes contact with victims online. Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude;
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- Tattoos or branding;
- Refillable gift cards;
- Frequent runaway episodes;
- Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone;
- Unexplained injuries;
- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends

## **Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement and to Child Protective Services (CPS). A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, it is important to be calm and comforting if your child or another child confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you. If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County. Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS at 1-800- 252-5400 or on the web at <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. The following resources and websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet – <https://www.childwelfare.gov>
- KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse – <https://kidshealth.org>
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team – <https://gov.texas.gov>
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children – <https://tea.texas.gov>
- Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide – <https://www.nsvrc.org>
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking – <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

## **Sexual Harassment (TEC § 37.083)**

Students must not engage in unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or a District employee. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including request for sexual favors. All students are expected to treat other students and

District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop.

A substantiated complaint against a student will result in appropriate disciplinary action according to the nature of the offense. See the Student Code of Conduct for information regarding disciplinary sanctions.

The District will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when allegations occur and will notify parents of all incidents of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee. The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual abuse in the public school. Complaints will be treated in a confidential manner.

Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectation in this area with the teacher, the principal, or designee. A complaint alleging sexual harassment by another student or sexual harassment or sexual abuse by a staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal, teacher, or designee. A person who is the same gender as the student will ordinarily hold the first conference with the student. The conference will be scheduled and held as soon as possible within five days of the request. The principal or designee will coordinate and conduct an appropriate investigation which ordinarily will be completed within 10 days. The student or parent will be informed if extenuating circumstances delay completion of the investigation.

The student will not be required to present a complaint to the person who is the subject of the complaint. If the resolution of the complaint is not satisfactory to the student or parent, the student or parent within ten days may request a conference with the Superintendent. If the resolution by the Superintendent is not satisfactory, the student or parent may present the complaint to the Board as provided by policy.

### **Student Behavior When in Transit To and From School (Local Policy)**

Community residents have a right to privacy, private property, and freedom from abusive behavior. On the way to and from school, students should not loiter, litter, trespass, abuse or create nuisance conditions for residents of the community. While the school does not assume responsibility for the acts of students to and from school, it may take disciplinary action if circumstances warrant. The Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School has the responsibility to cooperate with law enforcement agencies to which law violations affecting community members are reported, including driving safely and responsibly to and from school and driving on campus. *(Parents involved with any type of hostile behavior towards any student will be turned in to law enforcement authorities.)*

### **Cell Phones (Local Policy)**

Cell phones are not allowed to be used during classroom hours (this includes in the classrooms, halls, restrooms), but may be used in the cafeteria/ dining area. Students must not be playing, listening or viewing inappropriate games, websites, music, etc. Strict adherence to this policy will be enforced. Students may use a cell phone if **THE TEACHER ASSIGNS INSTRUCTION THAT REQUIRES THE USE OF A CELL PHONE.**

The following procedures will be implemented regarding student's non-compliance with the cell phone policy:

- **First Offense:** Teacher warning and the phone will be picked up.
- **Second Offense:** Principal warning and the phone will be picked up and released to a parent.
- **Third Offense:** Principal will require that the phone not be returned until a fee of **\$30.00** is paid in conjunction with a parent conference. The principal may elect to require that the student withdraw from the campus due to non-compliance of school regulations.

### **Computer Access (Acceptable Use and Code of Conduct)**

#### **CIPA Requirement in Accordance with ESSA**

The internet is a worldwide telecommunications network. There are thousands of resources on the Internet: libraries, governmental agencies, universities, discussion groups and 40 million people. Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School teachers, staff, and students will receive an account to access the internet. School training (in electronic communications) is required before an account will be activated. Should a user happen to find inappropriate materials, he or she should refrain from downloading that material. Internet access is a privilege, not a

right. Only students who have been authorized by the District and who are under direct supervision of designated District employees are permitted to use a District computer or to access any local network or outside telecommunications resource.

The parent must complete, sign, and return a Student Asset Checkout Form acknowledging their responsibilities and the consequences of violation before devices will be distributed to the student. Students are expected to observe network etiquette by being polite and using appropriate language. Students are prohibited from pretending to be someone else; transmitting or receiving obscene messages or pictures; revealing personal addresses or telephone numbers of either their own or another person's; or using the network in a way that would disrupt use by others. The District is responsible for securing the network, email, and internet service against unauthorized access and/or abuse, while maintaining accessibility for authorized and legitimate users. This responsibility includes informing users of expected standards of conduct and the consequences for not adhering to them. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this policy could result in actions to curtail future access regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. Permanent revocations can result from actions taken to investigate DMLGG Charter School system abuses. The users of the network are responsible for respecting and adhering to local, state, federal and international laws. Any attempt to break those laws by the network may result in litigation against the offender. If such an event should occur, the school will fully comply with the authorities to provide any information necessary for the litigation.

**Disclaimer of Liability:** The District shall not be liable for user's inappropriate use of electronic communication resources or violations of copying restrictions, user mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The District shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on the Internet.

**Monitored Use:** Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use of educational or administrative purposes.

## **Distribution of Materials (Local Policy)**

### **School Materials**

School publications distributed to students include school newspapers, class assigned collections of student produced writings, and yearbooks. All school publications are under the supervision of the teacher, sponsor, and principal.

### **Non-School Materials**

Written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes or other visual or auditory materials may not be sold, circulated, or distributed on campus by a student or a non-student without the approval of the principal and in accordance with campus regulations.

### **Approval Required**

All material intended for distribution to students that is not under the District's editorial control must be submitted to the principal for review and approval. If the material is not approved within 24 hours of the time it was submitted, it is considered **non-approved**. Non approvals of forms, etc. may be appealed by submitting the non-approved material to the Superintendent. Material not approved by the Superintendent within three days is considered non approved and may not be distributed unless the non-approved material is submitted and appealed to the Board of Trustees at its next regular meeting so that the student may have a reasonable period of time to present his or her viewpoint.

### **Posters (Local Policy)**

The principal must first approve signs and posters that a student wishes to display. All posters displayed without authorization will be removed. Any student who posts printed material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with teachers, principal, or counselor to learn about the curriculum, course offerings, graduation requirements, and differences between graduation programs. All students in grades 6-

8<sup>th</sup> and their parents will be provided information about the recommended courses for students preparing to enter into a high school setting.

### **Personal Counseling**

A counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional, or academic needs. Information about community and special programs is offered by district resources to address personal concerns. Students who wish to meet with the counselor should make a request to the teacher or principal if it is during class time. However, before and after class students have an “open door” to the counselor to schedule an appointment.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (TEC § 33.081)**

A student will be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities subject to the following restrictions:

- A student who receives at the end of any grade evaluation period an average grade below 70 in any academic class or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three weeks. The student regains eligibility when the principal and teachers determine that he or she has earned a passing grade (70 or above) in all academic classes and completed three weeks of suspension.
- Any disciplinary behavior-related restrictions on participation are set out in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Grade Evaluation Period is the first six-week grade reporting period or the first six weeks of a semester and each grade reporting period thereafter. A student who misses class because of participation in an activity sponsored by a non-approved organization will receive an unexcused absence.

### **Clubs and Organizations**

Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the district-developed Student Code of Conduct and may affect condition upon membership or participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time on or off school property. No provision of an extracurricular behavioral standard shall have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex, race, religion or ethnicity.

The administrator and the superintendent shall approve such behavior standards before they are communicated to students. Students shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of interscholastic athletics, at the time the students report for workouts or practice that occur prior to the actual beginning of classes. Students and their parents shall sign and return the athletic/ extracurricular statement to the sponsor or coaches that state that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity.

Organizational standards of conduct of an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of conduct that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in independent disciplinary actions. A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities for violation of organizational standards of conduct of an extracurricular activity or for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **TRAVEL (SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIP)**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. However, the principal may make an exception to this requirement under the following circumstances: (1) the parent personally requests that the student be permitted to ride with the parent; or (2) no later than the day before the scheduled trip, the parent presents a written request that the student be permitted to ride with an adult designated by the parent. The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip. The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student’s medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip. The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission,

and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor. The District will sponsor various educational field trips and activities during the school year. Students must meet the following qualifications to attend field trips or participate in school sponsored events:

- Consideration of school discipline record.
- All registration ID documentation must be accounted for before participating.
- Students must be in attendance 90% of the days that classes are offered.
- Tardies and early pick-ups will be taken into consideration when determining a student's eligibility for participation.
- *A student's previous discipline record will be considered in determining eligibility for attendance on school sponsored field trips plus a student must not miss more than 10 days of school.*
- Students must be on their best behavior and will be held accountable for their behavior while participating on field trips.

## **PARTIES AND SOCIAL EVENTS (Local Policy)**

The rules of good conduct and grooming will be observed at school social events held outside the regular school day. Guests are expected to observe the same rules as students attending the event and the person inviting the guest will share responsibility for the conduct of the guest. A student attending a party or social event may be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the party and anyone leaving before the official end of the party will not be readmitted.

## **FEES (TEC § 12.108)**

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

- Any program in which the resultant product is in excess of minimum requirements and at the student's option becomes the personal property of the student; fees may not exceed the cost of materials.
- Membership dues in student organizations or clubs and admission fees or charges for attending extracurricular activities when membership or attendance is voluntary.
- Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Fees specifically permitted by any other statute.
- Items of personal apparel which become the property of the student, and which are used in extracurricular activities.
- Fees for loss of damaged books and school-owned equipment; fees will be assessed to cover the replacement value of lost books.

## **FUNDRAISING (Local Policy)**

Fundraising activities by student groups for school-sponsored projects shall be allowed, with prior administration approval and under the supervision of the project sponsor, for students in all grades. All fundraising projects shall be subject to the approval of the principal.

The collection of monies that takes the time of the students or teachers during school hours is strictly forbidden, unless the monies collected represent payment for school lunches, benefit the school or its students or other authorized fees.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICIES**

### **Complaints by students/parents (Local Grievance Policy)**

The following information about how to bring a complaint to the school is intended to provide parents and students an opportunity to resolve questions and problems that may arise. Complaints about instructional materials, loss of credit on the basis of attendance, expulsion or prior review of non-school materials intended for distribution to students are handled through procedures specific to those particular areas. The complaint process begins by

submitting a written complaint to the principal. To review relevant policies or obtain further information regarding a complaint process, see the school principal.

A student and/or parent with a complaint regarding possible discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or gender in any school program should contact the school principal. A complaint or concern regarding the placement of a student with disabilities or a complaint about the District's programs and services available to the student should be brought to the attention of the Special Education Director.

For all other matters, a student or parent should first discuss the problem with the appropriate teacher. If the teacher's decision is not satisfactory, the complainant may request a conference with the principal within ten calendar days of learning about the event or problem. If the principal's decision is not satisfactory, the complainant may request a conference with the Superintendent within ten calendar days. If the Superintendent's decision is not satisfactory, the student and/or parent may appear before the Board of Trustees, in accordance with Board policy.

## **HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

### **Are health care services available?**

TEA does not require charter schools to staff a nurse - please visit the following website link for more information <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/schnursnursingpractice.shtm#Q2>.

In case of injuries and/or illnesses during the school day, the student should request from their teacher to notify the principal or designee. The judgment of the principal or designee, sometimes with the help of the parent/guardian, will determine whether a student should stay in school or be sent home.

All students are issued the Emergency Health Information Card to complete during registration and a copy will be on file. Parents must note any special health concerns of the student on the Emergency Health Information Card and should notify the school immediately of any change in home and/or telephone numbers of the adults listed as emergency contacts. Reasonable attempts will be made by school officials to contact parent/guardian when an emergency arises.

*The school shall not be responsible for costs of treating injuries or illness nor does it assume liability for any costs associated with an injury or illness.*

### **Medicine at School (TEC § 38.015)**

DMLGG Charter School does not have a nurse on staff. All medications must be administered by the parent. For special circumstances, contact the principal.

### **Communicable Diseases**

The school requests the parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease to call the school and inform the school nurse/principal about the illness so that other students who have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. A student who has certain diseases is not allowed to come to school while the disease is contagious. If a child is running a temperature, the parent will be called to pick up the child. The child must remain at home until the fever has been controlled. Contagious diseases include: Covid, chicken pox, impetigo, lice, measles, mumps, pink eye, ringworm, scabies, mononucleosis, streptococcal infections, infectious hepatitis and tuberculosis. Students with communicable diseases may return to school with the principal's approval.

### **Health Advisory (TEC § 38.0025)**

**(Bacterial Meningitis)** Senate Bill 31 requires public schools to provide students and their families with information about bacterial meningitis, its symptoms, and what to do if a student is diagnosed with the disease. The Texas Department of State Health Services stresses that bacterial meningitis is not a widespread problem in public schools. The population most at risk for contracting bacterial meningitis is college freshmen living in dormitories.

**Information about bacterial meningitis is printed in this handbook. (Please see Attachment A)**

### **COVID 19 Protocol and Information**

While all available evidence seems to show children are less likely to become sick or die from having contracted the COVID-19 virus, they still have the potential to be asymptomatic carriers of the disease and could cause harm and



real danger to others who are more at-risk. Some of our teachers and other employees could have underlying medical conditions such as asthma, high blood pressure, and diabetes that make them particularly vulnerable to serious health complications should any of them become infected.

It is therefore particularly important that DMLGG Charter School takes every reasonable precaution to minimize the risk of spread and to ensure a safe environment for all members and students of the DMLGG Charter School family.

**Information about COVID is printed in this handbook. (Please see Attachment B)**

### **Mandatory Temperature Screening Upon Entry:**

- A. Every student shall be screened prior to entering the DMLGG Charter School  
Temperature checks will be conducted on every student every day. Any student who has a temperature of greater than 100° shall not be allowed to enter the main campus and parents will be notified.
- B. Any student who exhibits any of the following health conditions shall not be allowed to enter the main campus or administrative office:
  - Fever in excess of 100°
  - Cough
  - Chills
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Tests positive for COVID-19
  - Known close contact with a person who has been lab confirmed to have COVID-19
- C. Parents may provide a face mask or face covering for their child in case they need it.
- D. Based on COVID cases on campus, stricter guidelines may be imposed by the school district.
- E. All students will be coached and instructed in good hand washing techniques.
- F. Hand sanitizer shall be provided in every classroom and students will be given frequent opportunities to use the sanitizer stations and to wash hands frequently throughout the day.
- G. Any student or parent who reports testing positive for COVID-19 will be sent home immediately.
- H. DMLGG Charter School will NOT screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19 and will not perform diagnostic testing for the Corona virus and COVID-19 or serologic testing for the presence of Corona Virus and COVID-19 anti-bodies. Any parent who wishes to have their child tested will need to contact their primary care physician or other health care provider.
- I. DMLGG Charter School shall implement multiple social distancing strategies when appropriate.
- J. COVID cases will determine the use of the school cafeteria.

### **STUDENT RECORDS (FERPA–Federal Educational Records Protection Act)**

A student's school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the District until the student withdraws. By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated by a court order will be denied access to the records when the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights. The principal and/or counselor are the custodians of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned level. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. Parents of a minor or a student who is dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interest are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. School officials with legitimate educational interests include any employees, agents, or facilities with which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as, their attorneys and consultants, who are:

- Working with the student
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA, or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504
- Compiling statistical data

- Investigating or evaluating programs

The parent's or student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline, do not have to be made available to the parents or students.

Certain officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. The District forwards a student's records on request and without prior parental consent to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to the release of records.

Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the District is not in compliance with the law regarding student records.

Copies of student transcripts are available per request in writing. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records if:

- The student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes.
- The student is attending an institution of post-secondary education.
- The District is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights.

Certain information about District students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within 10 school days after the issuance of this handbook. Student directory information that may be shared includes student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

## **STUDENT RIGHT TO PRAY (TEC §25.901)**

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

## **ABIDING BY THE LAW (LOCAL POLICY)**

Every student and every employee of the school is expected to abide by the laws of the State of Texas and the United States. A violation of any of the laws shall constitute a violation of the policies and rules of the school and appropriate action will follow.

The school recognizes that it cannot and should not attempt to list every action that could result in disciplinary procedures. The enumeration of certain specific rules is not intended to exclude other rules which are also laws as well as those rules of generally accepted conduct of this community.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS (JURISDICTION) (TEC, SECTION 37.0006 AND 37.007)**

The District has jurisdiction over the students during the school day. The District's jurisdiction includes any activity during the school day on school grounds and attendance at any school-related activity regardless of time or location.

The District also has jurisdiction and disciplinary authority over a student who violates the law and the Student Code of Conduct even if it occurs off school grounds and not at any school-related activity when the student:

- Retaliates against an employee either on or off school property.
- Receives deferred prosecution for conduct defined as a felony offense.
- A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct defined as a felony offense.
- The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee has a reasonable belief that the student has engaged in conduct defined as a felony offense or

- The Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee has a reasonable belief that the student has engaged in a conduct defined as a felony offense other than those defined.

State law requires that the District discipline students for certain acts of misconduct regardless of whether they take place on school property or at school related activities. These acts are listed in this Code of Conduct and the District will impose the required discipline. Students shall observe the rules of good citizenship going to and from school. They shall not loiter, litter, trespass, abuse or create nuisance conditions for the residents of the community. The school cannot assume responsibility for the act of students going to and from school except as provided by T.E.C., Section 37.0006 and 37.007; however, it may take disciplinary action if the circumstances warrant. The District will cooperate with law enforcement agencies investigating citizens’ reports of violations.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY PROVISIONS FOR STUDENTS**

### **Drills (Fire, Tornado, Safety and Other Emergency Drills)**

DMLGG has an effective emergency procedures plan called the Emergency Management Plan and it is based on the National and State requirements for schools. It can be implemented on short notice and it ensures optimum safety for students and school personnel. Parents are advised to remind students that all reasonable orders requested by DMLGG staff during an emergency are to be immediately followed to ensure the maximum safety of students, staff, and parents in the building in the event of an emergency.

*The Superintendent shall have the authority to dismiss school for a part of a day or for longer periods of time, if necessary, in case of unusual weather conditions or emergency situations.*

The Principal shall, by TEA and State law, conduct fire, tornado, safety and other emergency drills designed to assure the orderly movement of students and personnel to the designated safe areas available within or outside the campus building.

### **Drug Free Schools (TEC §38.007 & §38.008) (Title IV, Part A)**

DMLGG Charter School believes that the student use of alcohol and illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, the District has established a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits the use, sale, possession and distribution of alcohol and illicit drugs by students on school premises or as part of any school activity, regardless of its location. Compliance with this code of conduct is mandatory and students shall be disciplined if they are found to have violated this code of conduct. The District’s policies and its Student Code of Conduct provide the disciplinary sanctions for alcohol and drug-related offenses. In addition, a student may be referred to appropriate law enforcement officials for criminal prosecution. Depending on the nature and severity of a drug or alcohol related offense, a student may be required to complete an appropriate rehabilitation program in addition to other school discipline measures. The principal or counselor of the school can provide you with information about rehabilitation and re-entry.

## **GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Questioning of Students by Law Enforcement**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school:

- The principal or designee will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student.
- The principal will ordinarily **make a reasonable effort** to notify parents unless the interviewer or the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents.

### **Students Taken Into Custody:**

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest by law enforcement officials.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.

- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in Family Code relating to the student’s physical health or safety.

The administrator will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Since the administrator does not have the authority to block a custody action, notifications will most likely be after the fact. The District is also required by state law to notify all instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been arrested or taken into custody by a law enforcement agency.

### **Interrogation and Search**

School officials may search a student or student’s property on school property if they have “reasonable suspicion” to believe that the student has violated a school rule or possesses contraband or if the student gives his or her free and voluntary consent.

Teachers and administrators have the right to question students regarding their conduct and the conduct of others. Police may question a student in the school if the officer states to the principal the necessity of questioning the student while in school and provides his name and title for the school records. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the student’s parents or other person having lawful control of the student.

### **Physical Restraint (TEC § 37.0021)**

A district employee with training and certification may, within the scope of the employee’s duties, use and apply restraint to a student that the employee reasonably believes is necessary to:

- Protect a person from physical injury.
- Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
- Remove from a specific location on school property a student refusing a lawful command of a school.
- To restore order or impose disciplinary measures.
- Restrain an irrational student, combatant student that may cause injury to his/herself, another student or a staff member.

### **SMOKING (TEC §38.006) (Local Policy)**

Students shall not possess, smoke or use any kind of tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, chewing tobacco or e-cigarettes on school premises or at school-related functions. See the Student Code of Conduct for information regarding disciplinary sanctions.

### **DISCIPLINARY SYSTEMS (Local Policy)**

Students violating the District’s rules and regulations shall suffer disciplinary consequences commensurate with their misbehavior. In general, discipline shall be progressively administered so that penalties increase due to the severity or persistence of the misbehavior, the student’s age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student’s attitude, the potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and the statutory requirements. The length or severity of punishment will depend on the offense. One or more disciplinary options may be pursued for a single offense if deemed appropriate. The teacher or administrator responsible for the discipline of a student in a given situation may use discretion in determining the disciplinary action most appropriate to the setting and the violation. As a consequence of persistent or serious violations, students may be referred to the counselor or other staff members with special skills for assistance in modifying the behavior. School officials shall notify a local law enforcement authority if they suspect that criminal acts have occurred on school or District property. ***The District may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Student Code of Conduct.*** These rules may be listed in the student handbook or posted in classrooms and may or may not constitute violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

A student who violates campus or classroom rules that are not Student Code of Conduct violations may be disciplined. For these violations, the teacher is not required to make a Student Code of Conduct violation report and the principal is not required to notify parents. Parental questions or complaints regarding disciplinary measures taken should be addressed to the teacher or campus administrator as appropriate and in accordance with policy.

### **Removal by Teacher (tec § 37.002)**

- (1.) A teacher may send a student to the principal's office to maintain effective discipline in the classroom. The principal shall respond by utilizing appropriate discipline management techniques consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.
- (2.) A teacher may remove a student from class:
  - Who has been documented by the teacher repeatedly and interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn; or
  - Whose behavior the teacher determines is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the behavior seriously interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn.
- (3.) If a teacher removes a student from class under Subsection 2, the principal may place the student in another appropriate classroom. The principal may not return the student to that teacher's class without the teacher's consent. The terms of the removal may prohibit the student from attending or participating in school sponsored or school related activities.
- (4.) If the behavior causing the removal is a Student Code of Conduct violation, the teacher must file a one page report with the principal or appropriate administrator. The principal or appropriate administrator must send a copy of the report to the student's parent or guardian within 24 hours of receiving the teacher's report. A teacher or administrator may also remove a student from class for an offense for which a student may be suspended. If the violation results in removal from class, the principal or other appropriate administrator will schedule a conference. After the conference, the principal will notify the student of the consequences of the Student Code of Conduct violation.
- (5.) When a student is removed from the regular classroom and a hearing is pending, the principal may place a student in:
  - Another appropriate classroom
  - A disciplinary program in which the student must be separated from other students for the entire school program day and will be provided instruction in the core subjects. Counseling will also be provided to the student.
  - Suspension

When a student has been formally removed from class, the principal may not return the student to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent. Parental questions or complaints regarding disciplinary measures taken should be addressed to the teacher or campus administration as appropriate and in accordance with policy.

### **Review of Student Removals (TEC 37.009)**

No later than the third-class day after the day on which the teacher removes a student from class, the school principal or other appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference with the parent or guardian of the student, the teacher removing the student from class and the student. At the conference, the student is entitled to written or oral notice of the reasons for the removal, an explanation of the basis for the removal, and an opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the conference.

### **Suspension**

A student may be removed from school on suspension for a period not to exceed three (3) consecutive school days. There is no limit to the times per semester or school year that a student may be suspended if each term of suspension does not exceed three (3) consecutive school days. A student may be suspended for any offense designated as a serious offense in the Student Code of Conduct. A student will be afforded an informal hearing on the suspension, where the principal or designee will inform the student of the reasons for the suspension and grant the student an opportunity to give his/her version of the incident. The principal or other appropriate administrator will determine the duration of a student's suspension which cannot exceed three school days. The principal or other appropriate

administrator will determine any restrictions on participation in school sponsored or school related extracurricular and non-curricular activities.

## **Expulsion**

A student shall be expelled by written order setting the term of the expulsion. Before the expulsion, the campus administration shall provide the student a conference at which the student is afforded due process that shall include the following:

- (1.) Prior written notice of the charges and the proposed sanctions so to be given a reasonable opportunity for preparation;
- (2.) Right to a full and fair hearing;
- (3.) Right to an adult representative or legal counsel. The District administration should be notified if legal counsel is going to attend with the parent/student prior to the meeting taking place.
- (4.) Opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in his or her defense; and
- (5.) Opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration and to question the administration's witness.

The notice shall include the date and time of the hearing, the names of the witnesses against the student, and the nature of the evidence. In an expulsion hearing, the District may rely on the hearsay evidence of school administrators who investigate disciplinary infractions. The decision shall be based exclusively on the evidence presented at the hearing and shall be communicated promptly to the student and parent. At the expulsion hearing, the student is entitled to be represented by a parent, guardian, or other adult who is not an employee of the District who can provide guidance to the student. After making a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place of the hearing, the District may have the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent or guardian, or another adult representing the student attends.

Pending the expulsion hearing, the principal may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom
- Suspension

## **Term of Expulsions**

The term for the expulsion is on a case-by-case basis. The expulsion may not extend beyond a year.

## **Appeals of Expulsions**

A decision to expel a student may be appealed to the Board. A student with a disability shall not be excluded from his current placement pending appeal to the Board for more than ten days without an ARD committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim. Pending appeal to a special education hearing officer, unless the District and parents agree otherwise, a student with a disability shall remain in the present educational setting.

## **Sanctions**

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-related extracurricular activities during the period of expulsion, except by special permission. No District academic credit will be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion (unless the student is enrolled in a Juvenile Justice Program). If a court orders a student who has been expelled to attend school as a condition of probation, the District shall readmit the student, but with the condition that the student is not immune from suspension or expulsion during the term of probation.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER "IDEA" (TEC § 37.004)**

A student with a disability may be expelled for engaging in conduct that would warrant such action for a student without a disability only if the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee determines the misconduct is not related to the disability or inappropriate placement.

In determining whether a student's disruptive behavior is related to a student's disability, the ARD committee shall base its decision on currently effective evaluation and assessment data and on review of the current IEP documentation rather than on established eligibility or previous committee decisions. The committee shall consider whether the student's behavior indicates the need for new assessment or evaluation data. Unless the parents agree

otherwise, the student must be returned to his/her current placement after ten days while additional assessments are being conducted.

The ARD committee shall determine the instructional and related services to be provided during the time of expulsion. The student's IEP shall include goals and objectives designed to assist in returning the student to school and preventing significant regression. If the ARD committee determines that the student's disruptive behavior is related to the disability or inappropriate placement, the student shall not be expelled. If the disruptive behavior on the part of the student indicates an inappropriate placement, the ARD committee shall review the placement and recommend alternatives. If the ARD committee determines that the behavior was related to the disability, it shall either rewrite the IEP to address the student's behavioral and educational needs or, when appropriate, consider the extension of an emergency removal.

### **TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS (LOCAL POLICY)**

All textbooks/Library books are and shall remain the property of the State of Texas and the Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School. State approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report it to the teacher.

Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent or guardian. However, a student will be provided textbooks for use in class during the school day.

Library books may be checked out from the Dr. ML Garza Gonzalez Charter School Library according to school policy. Books must be returned undamaged and on a timely basis. Failure to return books when due will result in fines/fees and loss of books or materials from the library will result in replacement costs for the materials.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES (Local Policy)**

Parents and teachers are encouraged to establish and maintain frequent communication about student progress. A student or parent who wants information or wants to raise a question or concern is encouraged to talk with the appropriate teacher, counselor, or principal. A parent who wants to meet with a teacher may call the office for an appointment during the teacher's conference period or may request that the teacher call the parent during their conference period or at another mutually convenient time.

Teachers may request a parent conference if the student is not maintaining passing grades or achieving the expected level of performance, presents any other problem to the teacher, or in any other case the teacher considers necessary.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES (Local Policy)**

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school; a partnership that thrives on communication. Parents are partners with teachers, administrators, and the Board are encouraged to:

- Encourage your child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Become familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs offered in the District. Monitor your child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed.
- Grant or deny any written request from the District to make a videotape or voice recording of the child unless the videotape or voice recording is to be used for school safety; relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or relates to media coverage of the school as permitted by law.
- Make every effort to participate and attend parent meetings, school functions, join a committee, and any other school related activities to ensure the maximum amount of parental involvement that you can reasonably accommodate. Parental Involvement is paramount to student success, and we provide parents with opportunities to become involved in their child's educational process. All parents interested in volunteering in all school related activities including after school and off campus must complete a Parent Volunteer Packet prior to participation. Volunteers must be able to provide a copy of their current Driver's License/ID and pass a Criminal Background Check.

- Remain updated on all information and activities by joining our Parent Information Group through the Band App and/or visit our website at [gcclr.com](http://gcclr.com). Please contact Sonia Rodriguez, Parent Involvement Coordinator, at (361) 881-9988 ext. 1204 or email her at [sonia.rodriguez@gcclr.org](mailto:sonia.rodriguez@gcclr.org) for more information.

**VISITORS (TEC §38.022) (LOCAL POLICY)**

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit the school. All visitors must first report to the main office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with the principal's approval and such visits are not permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.



(The following student/parent form is provided in your registration packet.)

## **Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School**

### **District's Student Code of Conduct**

I understand and consent to the responsibilities outlined in the District's Student Code of Conduct. I also understand and agree that my child, \_\_\_\_\_ **will** be held accountable for the behavior and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct at school and at school-sponsored and school-related activities, including school-sponsored travel, and for any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. I understand that any student who violates the Student Code of Conduct is subject to disciplinary action up to and including referral for criminal prosecution for violations of law.

Student's Name  
(Printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name  
(Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name  
(Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Certain information about District students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes: a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school and the most recent previous school attended.

***CHECK HERE IF YOU DO NOT WANT DIRECTORY INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR STUDENT RELEASED.***

(The following student/parent form is provided in your registration packet.)

**Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School**

**Photography, Audio/Videotaping for  
School Publicity/Educational Purposes**

In a typical school year, there are numerous positive activities in the schools that merit news coverage. Often the news media will want to include student pictures in their coverage. In addition, during the school year teachers and other school personnel may audio/videotape and/or photograph students involved in learning activities. Educators may use these audio/videotapes and/or photographs to demonstrate teaching and learning techniques and environments. If for some reason you as a parent or guardian **do not** want your child photographed or audio/videotaped for school publicity/educational purposes, please complete the form on this page. If this form is not signed and returned to the principal within 10 days after the issuance of this notice, it is assumed that Dr. M. L. Garza Charter School has your permission to photograph or audio/videotape your child for school publicity/education purposes.

During the 2022-2023 school year,

I \_\_\_\_\_,  
Print Parent or Guardian Name

of (student name) \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ **do not** want the above named child

\_\_\_\_\_ **give my approval** for the above named child

to appear for school publicity/educational purposes in a photograph or audio/videotape, web page photo/video, where the child can be easily recognized or identified and may be used for campus promotional and informational purposes as related to the school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

A specific request will be sent home by the school should a corporation or non-school entity ask to audio/videotape students for use in a film produced by that corporation or entity.

(The following student/parent form is provided in your registration packet.)

**Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School**

**Release of Directory Information to  
Outside Individuals and Groups**

Directory information about students in Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School may be released to any individual or organization, (such as insurance company that file a written request). Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School does not endorse any product or service offered by individuals or organizations that have obtained such list.

Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date, place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and the most recent or previous school attended by a student.

If you object to the release of any or all directory information, you must notify the principal in writing within ten days of enrollment. Your objection will remain in effect unless you rescind it in writing. *If you have no objection, do not return this form.*

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Do not release any directory information about my child to non-school individuals or organizations, but information other than address and phone number can be included in Dr. M. L. Garza-Gonzalez Charter School press releases and publications.

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment A

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

Texas State Department of Health Services

**WHAT IS MENINGITIS?** Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Meningitis caused by bacteria is the most likely form of the disease to cause serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death. Bacterial meningitis can be caused by multiple organisms. Two common types are *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, with over 80 serogroups that can cause illness, and *Neisseria meningitidis*, with five serogroups that most commonly cause meningitis. **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?** Someone with bacterial meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms. Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results. **HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?** If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, most people make a complete recovery. If left untreated or treatment is delayed, bacterial meningitis can be fatal, or a person may be left with permanent disability. **HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS SPREAD?** Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes) or when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose. The bacteria do not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the bacteria for days, weeks or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness. **HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?** Vaccination Bacterial meningitis caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* may be prevented through vaccination. The vaccine which protects against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* BACTERIAL MENINGITIS Stock # 11-15233 Revised 08-2019 is called pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV. This vaccine is recommended by the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for children in the first year of life. *Neisseria meningitidis* is prevented through two types of vaccines. The first is a meningococcal conjugate vaccine which protects against four serogroups A, C, W, and Y and is referred to as MCV4. The second is a vaccine against *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B and is referred to as MenB. The ACIP recommends MCV4 for children at age 11-12 years, with a booster dose at 16-18 years. In Texas, one dose of MCV4 given at or after age 11 years is required for children in 7th-12th grades. One dose of MCV4 received in the previous five years is required in Texas for those under the age of 22 years and enrolling in college. Teens and young adults (16-23 years of age) may be vaccinated with MenB. This vaccine is not required for school or college enrollment in Texas.

Vaccines to protect against bacterial meningitis are safe and effective. Common side effects include redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops about 1-2 weeks after the vaccines are given and lasts for five years to life depending on vaccine. Healthy Habits do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Wash your hands. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not having close contact with people who are sick, also helps. **WHO IS AT RISK FOR BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?** Certain groups are at increased risk for bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. These risk factors include HIV infection, travel to places where meningococcal disease is common (such as certain countries in Africa and in Saudi Arabia), and college students living in a dormitory. Other risk factors include having a previous viral infection, living in a crowded household, or having an underlying chronic illness. Children ages 11-15 years have the second highest rate of death from bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. Also, children ages 16-23 years have the second highest rates of disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND MIGHT HAVE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?** Seek prompt medical attention.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all infectious diseases. You may also call your family doctor or local health department office to ask about meningococcal vaccine.

***Additional Resources:***

Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Texas Department of Health Services  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/>

Texas Department of Health Services (Meningitis)  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/idcu/disease/meningitis/>

Texas Department of Health Immunization Unit  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/immtrac/default.shtm>  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/default.shtm>  
<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/partners/coalitions.shtm>

## Attachment B



### *DMLGG Administrative School District Disease Mitigation Procedures*

Masks are optional for any student in the building. The following protocol is in place in order to mitigate any transmission of a contagious disease:

- a. *We expect parents to do a self-assessment of each child every day before they come to school. If your child is sick and running a fever, please contact our office and keep them home.*
- b. The district has installed state of the art Air Purifiers throughout the campus. These units remove viruses in the air and all of the surface areas in each of the classrooms, cafeteria and library creating our own atmosphere in our building.
- c. Campus staff will be disinfecting classrooms and other parts of our facility before, during and after the school day.
- d. Hand sanitizer is available for our students.
- e. Wall mounted Infrared Thermometers are installed throughout the building including the central office area to take temperatures on a daily basis.
- f. Students are NOT allowed to share food, school supplies, during the instructional day.
- g. Students must have their own water bottle(s).
- h. Contactless hand washing faucets have been installed in each of the restrooms.
- i. The district has a secured entrance and exit plus all doors will be kept locked at all times. Only visitors with legitimate business will be given access to the building. Once inside specific isolated areas will be in place to conduct school business.
- j. We encourage our parents and guardians to communicate with instructors via email, phone or ZOOM/Skype, etc.
- k. **Other:** The district will adhere to TEA guidelines and CDC guidelines at all times.

# COVID Student Protocol

## Positive Cases-Actively Sick Students

5 Days of Isolation After Symptoms Appear  
If Tested Positive, Isolation 5 Days After Testing Positive

### Return To School

No Fever within 24 hours of returning to School  
Plus  
No Symptoms and No Fever Reducing Medicine

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## Students Without Symptoms But Tested Positive

If Tested Positive, Isolation 5 Days After Testing Positive

### Return To School

No Fever within 24 hours of returning to School  
Plus  
No Symptoms and No Fever Reducing Medicine

*\*Updates To This Protocol May Change The Current Procedures. Updates are based on the guidance of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) & CDC.*