



Cotulla ISD Parent & Student Handbook



2025-2026

www.cotullaisd.net



Important Notice Regarding Revisions

This printed handbook contains the majority of district policies and procedures applicable for the 2025–2026 school year. However, handbook content may be updated throughout the year to reflect changes in Cotulla ISD Board policy, Texas Education Code, or guidance from the Texas Education Agency. For the most current version of the Student/Parent Handbook, please visit the Cotulla ISD website at www.cotullaisd.net.

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Section I: Required Notices and Information for Parents

This section includes several notices that Cotulla ISD is legally required to provide to parents, as well as additional information that may assist families in understanding school operations, student rights, and parental involvement opportunities.

Accessing Student Records

Parents have the right to review their child's educational records, which may include attendance, test scores, grades, disciplinary and counseling records, applications for admission, health information, evaluations, and state assessments. [See *Student Records* section for details.]

Additional Information

Helpful resources for families of students with disabilities include:

- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
- Partners Resource Network
- Special Education Information Center
- Texas Project First

Aiding Students with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities

For students facing difficulties in the general classroom, schools must consider academic and behavioral support services through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Parents may request a referral for evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Contact for Special Education Referrals:

DeAnna Nava Director of Special Education and Student Support Services

Deanna.nava@cotullaisd.net,

Contact for Section 504 Referrals:

Heather Ramirez

(830) 879-3073 ext. 1030

Directory Information & FERPA

Directory information may be released without prior consent for school-sponsored purposes. Parents may request in writing that this information not be disclosed. Specific laws also govern the release of records to military recruiters and institutions of higher education.

Excusing a Student from Participation

Parents may submit written requests for the following:

- Excusing a child from the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags
- Excusing a child from reciting the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week (grades 3–12)

Requests must be based on religious or conscientious beliefs or diplomatic status2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

Parental consent is required unless the recording is:

- For safety or instructional use
- For school-sponsored media or events
- Required by law (e.g., certain special education classrooms)

Limiting the Display of a Student's Work

To opt out of public display of a student's artwork, projects, or photos (e.g., on the district website), parents must notify the principal in writing.

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Parental consent is required before a student participates in federally funded surveys that address sensitive topics. Parents also have the right to inspect instructional materials and opt out of:

- Marketing-based surveys
- Non-emergency invasive physical exams not required by law
[See policies EF and FFAA (LEGAL/LOCAL)]2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Other Important Information for Parents

Includes:

- Keeping contact information current
- Attending and scheduling conferences
- Participating in volunteer programs and school health advisory council
- Monitoring academic progress through the Parent Portal
- Understanding high school graduation requirements

Parental Involvement – Working Together

A strong partnership between home and school supports student success. Parents are encouraged to:

- Prioritize daily attendance and academic engagement
- Attend school functions and parent conferences
- Join campus and district committees or parent organizations
- Participate in board meetings and health advisory councils

Parental Rights

Includes the right to:

- Review teaching materials and assessments

- Request the professional qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals
- Request classroom changes after the first six weeks of school
- Submit concerns using the district's grievance procedures2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Removing a Student from the Classroom

Parents may temporarily remove their child from an activity that conflicts with moral or religious beliefs. Removal must not disrupt academic requirements or extend over a semester.

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

Parents may request same or separate classroom placements by the 14th day after enrollment2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A noncustodial parent may submit a written request to receive school notices regarding misconduct that could result in placement in a DAEP or expulsion.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

Parents may request qualifications of any teacher or paraprofessional providing services to their child. This includes certification status, degrees, and emergency permits.

Requesting Transfers

Parents may request a student transfer:

- Due to bullying
 - From a persistently dangerous campus
 - Following an incident of sexual assault
- Transportation is not provided in these cases unless otherwise specified by law or policy.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

Parents may review curriculum resources, textbooks, and exams used with their child.

Section 504 and Special Education Referrals

See *Aiding Students with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities* above.

Services for Title I Participants

The Parent Involvement Coordinator for Title I programs is Heather Ramirez, Coordinator of Federal Programs and Assessment.

Contact: (830) 879-3073 ext. 1030

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Cotulla ISD does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in any educational or vocational programs, per Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504.

Compliance Contacts:

- Title IX: Dr. Ramiro Nava – (830) 879-3073 ext. 1011
- Section 504: Heather Ramirez – ext. 1030
- General Discrimination: Dr. Ramiro Nava – ext. 1011

Section II: Information for Students and Parents

This section of the handbook provides essential information on academics, school activities, operations, and student requirements. Please take a moment with your child to become familiar with the topics addressed here. The content is arranged in alphabetical order to serve as a convenient quick-reference when you or your child have questions regarding school-related matters. If you are unable to locate information on a specific topic, please contact your child's teacher or campus principal.

Individualized campus-specific information from Cotulla High School, Newman Middle School, Encinal Elementary, and Ramirez/Burks Elementary has been integrated alphabetically throughout this handbook.



Absence Verification and Make-Up Work

Cotulla ISD values daily student attendance as essential to academic success. In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC §25.085) and Texas Administrative Code (TAC §129.21), students must attend school regularly and are responsible for making up all missed work. The following procedures apply to all students, PK–12, across the district.

Academic Integrity

Cotulla ISD believes that honesty and integrity are essential to meaningful learning. Students are expected to complete their own work and demonstrate responsible academic behavior in all settings. Violations of academic integrity may result in a grade penalty and/or disciplinary action. Parents or guardians will be notified.

Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Cheating includes:

- Copying another student's work or allowing others to copy yours
- Illegally possessing or altering academic records or test materials
- Sharing or receiving answers before, during, or after a test
- Using unauthorized materials during assessments

Plagiarism includes:

- Failing to credit sources (books, websites, etc.)
- Presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own
- Submitting AI-generated content without explicit teacher approval

Grading for Make-Up Work

- Final grades will reflect mastery of the content once submitted.
- Late submissions may receive a 5-point deduction per school day, up to 30 points total.
- Students are expected to complete all missed assignments, tests, and projects.
- Students with unexcused absences or tardiness follow the same late work policy.

Academic Program Support

Each campus provides school counseling services to support academic development, goal setting, and long-term planning.

- At Encinal Elementary and Ramirez/Burks Elementary (PK–5), counselors guide students in establishing early academic goals and habits that promote success.
- At Newman Middle School (Grades 6–8), counselors assist students with course selection, foundational skills, and career exploration.
- At Cotulla High School (Grades 9–12), counselors provide individualized support for college planning, career and technical education (CTE) pathways, and ACT/SAT preparation.

Make-Up Work and Grading After Absences

In accordance with TAC §129.21(l), all students—regardless of absence type—are provided the opportunity to complete make-up work.

Timeframe for Completion

- Students have one day per day absent, up to a maximum of five (5) school days, to complete missed assignments.
- Teachers may grant additional time for extended illness or extenuating circumstances.

Accessing Missed Work

- For extended absences, parents may coordinate with the campus front office or classroom teachers.
- For planned absences, students or parents should request work in advance when possible.
- Students are encouraged to request missed work upon returning or through parent communication.

Pre-Approval for Extended Absences

If a student will be absent for three (3) or more consecutive days, the absence must be pre-approved by the campus principal or designee. This allows teachers to provide assignments in advance and ensure instructional continuity.

Reporting and Verification of Absences

When a student is absent, the parent or guardian is encouraged to notify the campus attendance office on the same day.

- For Cotulla High School, call the attendance clerk at (830) 879-2374.
- Each campus will provide its designated attendance contact information.

To excuse an absence, the student must provide a written excuse note upon returning to school. The note must include:

- Date(s) of absence
- Parent/guardian signature and a daytime phone number for verification
- Reason for absence
- Student ID number
- Student's full name (printed)

Submission Deadlines and Requirements

- Elementary students are allowed a maximum of five (5) parent notes per semester. Additional absences require a doctor's note or administrative approval.
- Late notes may result in the absence being marked unexcused.
- Notes must be submitted within two (2) school days of the student's return.
- Secondary students must provide a doctor's note for three (3) or more consecutive absences or for recurring single-day absences.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Cotulla ISD supports the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance learning, critical thinking, and creativity. However, AI should not replace a student's original work. Misuse of AI will be treated as academic dishonesty.

Consequences of Misuse

Improper use of AI may result in:

- Academic penalties, such as a zero on the assignment
- Disciplinary action according to the Student Code of Conduct

Digital Citizenship

All AI use must comply with the district's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) (see policy CQ LOCAL/LEGAL).

- Misuse may result in loss of technology access or additional disciplinary consequences.
- Students are expected to use AI tools responsibly, ethically, and with respect for others' work.

Permitted Uses

AI may be used in limited ways, but only with prior teacher approval. Acceptable uses include:

- Brainstorming ideas
- Conducting research or generating summaries
- Exploring topics with guidance

When allowed, students must:

- Follow teacher expectations
- Cite AI-generated contributions appropriately
- Disclose how AI was used in their work

Prohibited Uses

AI tools may not be used to:

- Complete or submit full assignments (e.g., essays, lab reports) without permission
- Represent AI-generated writing or solutions as original student work

Submitting such work is considered plagiarism and will be treated accordingly.

Teacher-Directed AI Use Levels

Teachers may set specific expectations for AI use per assignment or course. These include:

- Recommended – AI use is encouraged to enhance learning, with proper citation
- Permitted – AI is allowed if used correctly and disclosed
- Prohibited – Students must complete work entirely on their own

If a teacher does not explicitly assign an AI level, students should assume AI use is not allowed and must seek approval before using any tool.

Elementary and Secondary Integrity Guidelines

Cotulla ISD believes in fostering academic integrity and developmentally appropriate expectations at each grade level.

Elementary (Grades PK–5)

Students are introduced to the value of honest academic work. Teachers provide support and coaching to help students understand expectations and take responsibility for their efforts.

- If a student violates academic integrity expectations, the incident will be treated as a learning opportunity.
- Teachers will involve parents or guardians in addressing the behavior and reinforcing positive academic habits.

Secondary (Grades 6–12)

Students are expected to uphold standards of academic honesty in all coursework and assessments. Violations of academic integrity may result in the following consequences:

- The student may receive a zero on the affected assignment.
- The student may face disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
- The student may be removed from academic honors, recognition programs, or extracurricular eligibility.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Cotulla ISD prioritizes student safety and orderly campus transitions. Each campus has specific arrival and dismissal procedures to ensure efficient movement and appropriate student supervision.

Encinal Elementary

Morning Arrival:

- Doors open at 7:25 AM.
- Breakfast is served in the classroom.
- First bell rings at 7:45 AM; the tardy bell rings at 7:50 AM.

Afternoon Dismissal:

- Students are released at 3:30 PM.

Walkers and Bicyclists:

- Students are released after the pick-up line has cleared.

- Students must use sidewalks, and bicycles must be parked in designated areas.
- Students below 4th grade require administrative approval to walk home.
- All walkers must have a signed release form on file.

Safety Reminders:

- Students may not be released to underage or unlicensed drivers.
- Siblings picking up walkers must be listed on file.
- Parents must hold their child's hand when crossing driveways.

Ramirez/Burks Elementary

Morning Arrival:

- Doors open at 7:25 AM.
- First bell rings at 7:45 AM; the tardy bell rings at 7:50 AM.
- Students arriving after 7:50 AM must be signed in at the office.

Afternoon Dismissal:

- Dismissal begins at 3:30 PM.
- Bus riders load at the front; private vehicles are not permitted in bus lanes.
- Dismissal changes must be submitted in writing by noon or called in before 2:30 PM.

Safety Notes:

- Only use designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up.
- Parent parking in staff areas is prohibited.
- Do not exit vehicles in the drive-through lane.
- Motorcycles and bicycles may not be used to pick up students.
- Early departures must go through the office sign-out process.

Newman Middle School

- Students may not enter classrooms before 7:55 AM unless approved by a teacher.
- The campus opens at 7:30 AM; students arriving earlier will not be supervised.
- Students must remain in the designated area until class begins.

Cotulla High School

- Campus arrival and dismissal procedures are established by CHS administration.
- Students must follow assigned parking and building entry protocols.
- For specific procedures, contact the CHS main office.

Asbestos Management Notification

In compliance with federal law, Cotulla ISD maintains an Asbestos Management Plan for all facilities.

- All campuses have up-to-date inspection reports available for review.
- To access your child's campus report or ask questions, contact the school office.
- See Section II: "Other Health-Related Matters" for full details.

Assemblies

Assemblies promote student engagement, learning, and school culture. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times.

- Elementary (Encinal & Ramirez/Burks):
Assemblies are scheduled throughout the year. Classroom behavior expectations apply.
- Newman Middle School:
Assemblies serve educational and motivational purposes. Disruption or tardiness may result in disciplinary consequences.
- Cotulla High School:
Participation in assemblies is part of CHS culture. Respectful conduct is mandatory.

Refer to Section II for districtwide behavioral expectations during assemblies.

Assessments

State and District Assessments

Cotulla ISD students participate in a variety of assessments throughout the school year, including STAAR, TELPAS, and other state-mandated tests. These assessments help measure academic progress and ensure students are meeting grade-level standards.

Key Testing Windows for 2025–2026:

- December: STAAR EOC (English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, U.S. History)
- February–March: TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate (English Learners), STAAR Field Tests
- March–April: STAAR Alternate 2
- April–May: STAAR Grades 3–8, EOC exams, Science, and Social Studies
- June: STAAR EOC Retests

Students and families will receive testing schedules and preparation guidance from their campus. For detailed testing dates, visit the district website or contact your school’s testing coordinator.

TE★AS ASSESSMENT

2025–2026 STUDENT ASSESSMENT TESTING CALENDAR

2025 Assessments

Testing Window	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®)	Reporting Timeframes†
Dec 2–Dec 12*	Algebra I English I English II Biology U.S. History	Make-up sessions for assessments scheduled for Dec 2–12, 2025, must be completed by the end of Friday, Dec 12, 2025. Early Results: 4 weeks Preliminary Results: 5–6 weeks Final Results: 15 weeks

2026 Assessments

Testing Window	National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
Late Jan–Early Mar	Mathematics, Grades 4 and 8 (selected sample) Reading, Grades 4 and 8 (selected sample) Civics, Grade 8 (selected sample) U.S. History, Grade 8 (selected sample)

Testing Window	STAAR Stand-Alone Field Test
Feb 2–6	Grades 3–8 Reading Language Arts English I English II

Testing Window	Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)	Reporting Timeframes†
Feb 16–Mar 27	Grades K–1 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Grades 2–12 Listening and Speaking Grades 2–12 Reading and Writing	Early Results: 8 weeks Preliminary Results: 10–11 weeks Final Results: 17–18 weeks

Testing Window	TELPAS Alternate	Reporting Timeframes†
Feb 16–Mar 27	Grades 2–12 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	Early Results: 2 weeks Preliminary Results: 4–5 weeks Final Results: 7–8 weeks

Testing Window	STAAR Alternate 2	Reporting Timeframes†
Mar 16–Apr 17	Grades 3–8 and EOC Assessments	Early Results: 8 weeks Preliminary Results: 9–10 weeks Final Results: 13–14 weeks

NOTE: Test administrators may preview (not administer) STAAR Alternate 2 assessments during the two weeks before the assessment window opens, from Mar 2–16. Assessments may also be previewed anytime during the assessment window.

Testing Window	STAAR	Reporting Timeframes†
Apr 7–Apr 17*	Grades 3–8 Reading Language Arts English I English II	Make-up sessions for assessments scheduled for Apr 7–17, 2026, must be completed by the end of Friday, Apr 17, 2026. Grades 3–8 Assessments: Early Results: 4–5 weeks Preliminary Results: 6–7 weeks Final Results: 12 weeks
Apr 14–Apr 24*	Grade 5 Science Grade 8 Science Grade 8 Social Studies Biology U.S. History	Make-up sessions for assessments scheduled for Apr 14–24, 2026, must be completed by the end of Friday, Apr 24, 2026. EOC Assessments: Early Results: 2–3 weeks Preliminary Results: 4–5 weeks Final Results: 9–10 weeks
Apr 21–May 1*	Grades 3–8 Mathematics Algebra I	Make-up sessions for assessments scheduled for Apr 21–May 1, 2026, must be completed by the end of Friday, May 1, 2026.

Testing Window	STAAR	Reporting Timeframes†
Jun 16–Jun 26*	Algebra I English I English II Biology U.S. History	Make-up sessions for assessments scheduled for Jun 16–26, 2026, must be completed by the end of Friday, Jun 26, 2026. Early Results: 4 weeks Preliminary Results: 5 weeks Final Results: 9–10 weeks

NOTE: If a district is no longer in session (i.e., providing instruction to students) during the June testing window, the district may adjust its schedule to test on Monday, June 15, 2026.

*Districts may choose to administer assessments on Monday of the second testing week without submitting a request to TEA.

†Timeframes are after testing window closes. Early results are for student-level decisions; preliminary and final results are for accountability.

Students participate in local and state-mandated assessments to monitor academic progress and inform instruction.

- The district's assessment calendar is published annually and available through campus and district websites.
- Contact your campus test coordinator for specific testing dates and preparation resources.

Athletics Participation and Lettering

Participation in Cotulla ISD athletics promotes leadership, teamwork, discipline, and physical development. Athletics is a privilege and requires students to meet academic and behavioral standards.

General Guidelines

- Students may earn a maximum of two Physical Education (P.E.) credits through athletics toward graduation (TEC §28.002); additional athletics courses will count as local electives.
- The Athletic Director determines student placement in athletic programs and classes.
- Students must maintain academic eligibility, attend practices, and comply with all team expectations and district policies.

Removal from Participation

- Students who are removed from an athletic team will remain enrolled in the athletics class for the remainder of the semester and will be graded on participation and any assigned coursework.
- Reinstatement to the team is at the discretion of the coach and the Athletic Director.

Middle School Athletics

- Students must maintain academic eligibility and demonstrate appropriate conduct in both academic and extracurricular settings.
- Participation prepares students for high school athletics and helps build foundational skills.
- Transportation for athletic events may be coordinated through the campus. See the Transportation section for information on late bus availability.

High School Athletics

- Students must meet all UIL eligibility requirements and adhere to district academic and behavioral expectations.
- Athletes must remain in good standing throughout the season.
- Eligibility for lettering or end-of-season awards is based on participation, academic standing, and coach recommendation.

Athletic Letter Awards – CHS

To be eligible for a varsity letter, students must meet the following criteria:

- Make a meaningful contribution during the season.
- Demonstrate good conduct at the conclusion of the season.
- Be academically eligible at the time awards are ordered.
- Receive a coach recommendation and Athletic Director approval.

Eligible Sports

- *Boys:* Football, Basketball, Baseball, Track, Cross Country, Powerlifting
- *Girls:* Volleyball, Basketball, Softball, Track, Cross Country, Powerlifting
- *Team Managers* may also be eligible to letter with coach recommendation and Athletic Director approval.

Band Letter Awards – CHS

- Instrumental students are eligible after two years of participation.
- Auxiliary unit members (e.g., flags, dance) are eligible after three years of participation.

- Students must be academically eligible at the time awards are ordered and distributed.

Cheerleader Letter Awards – CHS

- Must complete a full year as a varsity cheerleader.
- Must be academically eligible when awards are ordered and distributed.

UIL Academic Letter Awards – CHS

- Students who participate in two UIL academic seasons at the district level or advance to regionals are eligible.
- Students must be academically eligible at the time of award receipt.

Attendance and Related Procedures

Regular and punctual attendance is required by law (TEC §25.085) and is essential to student success.

Compulsory Attendance Law

- All students ages 6–18 are required to attend school unless legally exempt.
- Once enrolled, students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten are subject to the same attendance requirements.
- Students with excessive unexcused absences may face truancy intervention measures.

Attendance Thresholds for Credit

- 90% or more: Student is in good standing.
- 75–89%: Credit may be earned by completing an approved attendance recovery plan.
- Below 75% or noncompliant: Student will be referred to the Attendance Committee for review.

Official Attendance Time (ADA)

Each campus sets its official Average Daily Attendance (ADA) time in accordance with TEA's Student Attendance Accounting Handbook.

- Students not present at the ADA snapshot time will be marked absent unless a valid excuse (e.g., doctor's note) is submitted within the required timeline.

Documenting Absences

To excuse an absence, a written note must be submitted to the front office within five (5) school days of the student's return. The note must include:

- Student's full name
- Student ID number (if known)
- Date(s) and reason for the absence
- Parent/guardian signature and a daytime phone number

If no documentation is submitted, the absence will be marked unexcused.

Limits on Parent Notes

- Elementary: A maximum of five (5) parent notes will be accepted per semester.
- Secondary: A doctor's note is required for three or more consecutive absences or for recurring single-day absences.

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure all absence documentation is submitted on time.

When Is a Note Required?

- Full-day absences
- Late arrivals or early check-outs
- Sent home by the school nurse
- Leaving and returning on the same day

Truancy and Legal Intervention (TEC §25.0915)

A student is considered truant if they accumulate:

- 3 unexcused absences within a four-week period, or
- 10 unexcused absences within a six-month period

Consequences may include:

- Home visits from campus staff or law enforcement
- Truancy intervention meetings
- Referral to the Attendance Review Committee
- Court filings for parental failure to require school attendance

Parents must sign the Annual Attendance Warning Letter at registration or no later than September 1.

Perfect Attendance Awards

To be eligible, students must:

- Arrive by 8:00 AM and remain on campus until 3:15 PM
- Not be released early or arrive late (unless covered by a valid medical note)
- Awards may be granted each six weeks, by semester, and annually

Pre-Kindergarten Attendance

Pre-K students are expected to attend school daily once enrolled.

- Excessive absences may result in removal from the program.
- Potty training is required for general education Pre-K students.
- Diapers or pull-ups are permitted only for students receiving special education services.

Participation in School Events

To participate in school-sponsored events, students must be present for at least half the school day unless excused by the principal for:

- Verified medical appointments
- Emergencies
- Extenuating circumstances

Automatic Withdrawal (TEC §25.0951)

Students with 10 consecutive unexcused absences and no parent contact may be withdrawn unless:

- Valid documentation is submitted, or
- Updated parent/guardian contact is provided to the school

Awards and Recognition

Cotulla ISD celebrates student success through academic, extracurricular, and behavioral awards.

Elementary (Encinal & Ramirez/Burks)

- Perfect Attendance

- Honor Roll (All A's / A/B)
- Most Improved
- Citizenship / Character Recognition
- Reading or Math Achievement
- Principal's Award
- Outstanding Effort
- "Leader of the Pack" / Campus Values Awards

Award frequency will be communicated by each campus.

Newman Middle School

- A & A/B Honor Roll
- Perfect Attendance
- Core Subject Achievement
- Citizenship
- Leadership & Service
- UIL, Athletics, and Fine Arts Participation
- Student of the Month

Cotulla High School

- A & A/B Honor Roll
- Class Rank (Valedictorian, Salutatorian)
- Subject-Specific Honors
- UIL & Extracurricular Awards
- Athletic, Band, Cheer, Principal's Awards
- College and Career Readiness Recognitions
- Scholarship & Honor Society Inductions

B

Band

Cotulla ISD offers Band as a fine arts course that promotes performance skills, discipline, collaboration, and musical literacy.

Middle School Band (Newman Middle School)

All students enrolled in Band must actively play a musical instrument. Students earn fine arts credit through instructional participation and performance-based assessments. Mastery of course content is expected through regular rehearsal, practice, and engagement. Passive participation is not permitted; students must remain actively involved.

High School Band (Cotulla High School)

To receive fine arts credit, students must be enrolled in Band and play an instrument.

Instruction follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for fine arts and includes mastery-based assessments.

Color Guard / Auxiliary Members

Color guard members do not receive fine arts credit unless structured instruction is provided by a certified teacher during the school day.

If color guard responsibilities conclude after marching season, students must be transferred to an appropriate course for the spring semester (e.g., P.E. substitute).

Color guard members may be eligible to earn 0.5 elective credit, which may fulfill the Physical Education requirement.

Bicycles

Elementary students who ride bicycles to school must follow all campus safety guidelines. Bicycles must be parked and secured in the designated bike area upon arrival. Students should use sidewalks and crosswalks when traveling to and from school.

For safety, bike riders are dismissed only after the vehicle pick-up lines have cleared. Cotulla ISD is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged bicycles. Helmet use is encouraged in accordance with local safety recommendations.

Board Meetings

The Cotulla ISD Board of Trustees meets regularly to make decisions affecting district operations and student success.

- Meeting Schedule: Regular meetings are typically held on the third Monday of each month at 6:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom, 310 N. Main Street.
- Community Access: Two meetings per year are hosted at Encinal Elementary School to increase accessibility for families in surrounding areas.

All meetings are open to the public. Parents and community members are encouraged to attend. Agendas and meeting minutes are posted on the district website.

Bullying

Cotulla ISD is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. In compliance with Texas Education Code §37.0832, bullying of any kind is strictly prohibited on school property, at school-related events, or in any school-related context, including through electronic means.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined 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 (real or perceived) between the students;
- Has the effect or intent to physically harm, damage property, or place a student in reasonable fear of harm;

- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts school operations; or
- Occurs through written, verbal, physical, or electronic means, including cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes conduct through text messages, social media, apps, email, or other electronic communication, whether on or off school property, if it substantially disrupts the school environment.

Types of Bullying

- Verbal: taunting, name-calling, or threats
- Physical: hitting, pushing, or damaging property
- Social: exclusion, rumor-spreading, or hazing
- Cyber: texting, social media harassment, or online threats

Reporting Bullying

Students or parents should report incidents of bullying immediately to a teacher, counselor, principal, or any school staff member.

- Anonymous reports may be submitted through the BRIM system via campus websites.
- All reports are investigated promptly and thoroughly.

District Response

- All reported incidents are documented and investigated according to policy.
- Disciplinary action may occur even if the behavior does not fully meet the legal definition of bullying.
- Parents/guardians of all involved students will be notified.
- Counseling support will be offered to the victim, the offender, and any witnesses.
- Retaliation is strictly prohibited against any person who reports bullying or cooperates in an investigation.

Student Transfers

In confirmed cases of bullying, the district may:

- Transfer the student engaging in bullying to another classroom or campus.
- Honor a parent's request for the victim to be transferred to another campus in the district, as allowed by law.

For full details, see Board Policy FFI (LOCAL) or contact your campus principal or the superintendent's office.

Bus Conduct and Transportation

Cotulla ISD provides school bus transportation as a privilege to eligible students. Safe and respectful conduct is required to maintain this service. Failure to follow expectations may result in disciplinary action or loss of bus privileges.

General Bus Expectations for All Students

- Follow instructions from the bus driver and staff at all times.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.

- Do not walk in front of, behind, or between buses on campus.
- Ride only the bus assigned to you by the district.
- Bus routes and stop locations may be adjusted for safety or efficiency.

Campus-Specific Procedures

Newman Middle School (NMS)

- Buses depart five (5) minutes after the dismissal bell.
- Students must report directly to the bus area via the cafeteria.
- Walking between or in front of buses is prohibited.
- A late bus to Encinal is available only for:
 - Athletics participants
 - Students approved in advance
- The late bus travels directly to Encinal. All other students must leave at regular dismissal.

Cotulla High School (CHS)

- Buses depart at 3:50 PM daily.
- Students must walk behind the last bus to enter or exit the loading zone.
- A late bus to Encinal is available only to:
 - Students attending tutorials
 - Athletics participants
 - Students with prior approval from the Principal or designee
- A tutorial pass or coach's permission is required to board the late bus.
- Misuse of the late bus may result in temporary or permanent suspension of late bus privileges.

Late bus transportation is a courtesy service and may be modified or discontinued at the district's discretion.

Temporary Bus Stop Locations (CHS/NMS)

Due to construction or route changes, Cotulla ISD may temporarily designate the following as secondary bus stop locations:

- Cotulla High School
- The Learning Center (near Newman Middle School)

Any changes will be communicated by the campus or the transportation department.



Celebrations, Parties, and Pep Rallies

Cotulla ISD supports school events that build community and school spirit, while respecting instructional time and student safety. The campus principal has final authority over scheduling and participation in all celebrations or events.

General Guidelines for All Campuses

- All events (e.g., birthdays, holidays, pep rallies) must be pre-approved by the campus principal.
- Events must not interfere with instruction unless designated by administration.
- Students must follow dress code and behavior expectations.
- Invitations to private parties may not be distributed at school.

Elementary Campuses

- Classroom celebrations are permitted with advance approval and teacher coordination at least one week prior.
- Only store-bought, individually packaged items may be distributed.
- Celebrations must occur at scheduled times to avoid disrupting learning.
- Participation is optional and should include all students.

Secondary Campuses

- School dances or parties must be:
 - Scheduled in advance and outside of instructional time
 - Supervised by staff, who are responsible for setup, cleanup, security, and financial arrangements
 - Approved by administration (including contracts with outside vendors)
 - Open only to CHS/NMS students and approved guests
 - Governed by the Student Code of Conduct
- Students may not leave the event early without permission.

Pep Rallies

- Must be approved and scheduled by the principal.
- Attendance is required and counts toward school attendance.
- Student conduct expectations remain in place.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Cell phone and personal device use is governed by campus policy and must align with the Student Code of Conduct. Misuse may result in disciplinary consequences, including confiscation.

Pending Cell Phone Policy Update

Note to Families: Cotulla ISD is currently revising its cell phone and personal electronic device policy in response to recent changes in state law. House Bill 18, passed by the 88th Texas Legislature, requires school districts to adopt policies that restrict student use of cell phones during instructional time and limit student access to social media on district devices.

House Bill 18 (2023) – Section 11.252(a)(11):

District improvement plans must include “measurable goals that limit student use of a cellular telephone during instructional time.”

A revised version of this policy will be adopted and published during the 2025–2026 school year. Families should refer to the most current version of the handbook available online at www.cotullaisd.net for updates.

Class Dismissal

The bell signals the end of class time, not student dismissal. Teachers release students when instruction concludes.

Class Interruptions

Announcements are limited to once per day unless an emergency occurs. Non-urgent messages will not be delivered to students during class.

Closed Campus

All Cotulla ISD campuses are closed during the school day.

- Students must check out through the office before leaving campus.
- Lunch must be brought from home or eaten in the cafeteria.
- Food sharing between students is not allowed.

College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)

Cotulla High School prepares students for success after graduation by offering structured academic and career pathways aligned with the **Texas Education Code §§39.053 and 39.0545**. These pathways contribute to the state’s **A–F accountability system** and reflect postsecondary readiness in one or more of the following areas:

College Readiness Indicators

A student is considered college ready if they meet one or more of the following benchmarks:

- Achieve TSI benchmarks in Reading and Mathematics
- Earn qualifying scores on the SAT or ACT
- Complete dual credit coursework:
 - 3 college hours in English or Math, or
 - 9 college hours in any subject
- Score 3 or higher on an AP exam or 4 or higher on an IB exam

Career Readiness Indicators

Students are classified as career ready by meeting one or more of the following:

- Earn a TEA-recognized industry-based certification (IBC)
- Complete a Level I or Level II certificate at an accredited college or technical program
- Finish a coherent sequence of CTE courses culminating in a credential or certification

Military Readiness Indicator

Students are considered military ready when:

- They provide TEA-approved documentation of verified enlistment in a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces

Additional CCMR Indicators

- Complete an **OnRamps college-level course**
- Earn an **associate degree** while enrolled in high school

Dual Credit Courses

Cotulla High School partners with Southwest Texas College (SWTC) to offer dual credit courses allowing students to earn both high school and college credit.

Enrollment Requirements:

Apply to SWTC through [ApplyTexas.org](https://www.applytexas.org)

Obtain a SWTC student ID

Complete the TSIA2 Pre-Assessment

Schedule and take the TSIA2 with the CHS counselor

Submit completed admissions forms at least two weeks before the semester begins

Qualifying Scores:

Eligibility is based on scores from TSIA2, SAT, ACT, PSAT, or PLAN. Score charts are available through the CHS Counseling Office.

Instruction & Costs:

- Most courses are delivered online.
- Some are taught by CHS instructors who serve as SWTC adjunct faculty.
- Tuition and books for approved dual credit courses are covered by CHS.
- Students who earn below a "C" must reimburse the district.
- Outstanding balances may delay transcripts, diplomas, or participation in senior activities.

SWTC Certification Programs at CHS

Students may complete dual credit Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at CHS through SWTC, including:

- Nursing Science – Patient Care Technician (2-year program)
- Welding – Certified Welder (3-year program)

Successful completion of these programs meets Career Readiness criteria for CCMR.

CCMR Pathways at Cotulla High School

Students may pursue one or more CTE pathways that include dual credit, industry-based certifications, or work-based learning. Current offerings include:

Animal Science

Ag Tech & Mechanical Systems

Construction Management

Engineering Foundations

Exercise Science & Wellness

Graphic Design & Interactive Media

Law Enforcement

Nursing Science

Plant Science

A detailed course sequence chart is available upon request or from the CHS Counseling Office.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

Cotulla ISD offers a wide range of CTE programs, including:

- Agricultural Mechanics
- Agricultural Science
- Education and Early Learning
- Office Systems Technology

Admission is based on each student's Personal Graduation Plan, developed collaboratively by students, parents, and school staff.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

Cotulla ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in its CTE programs or activities, in accordance with:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Lack of English proficiency will not be a barrier to admission or participation.

For assistance or to file a grievance, contact:

- Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Ramiro Nava | 310 North Main St., Cotulla, TX 78014 | (830) 879-3073 ext. 1001
- Section 504 Coordinator: Heather Ramirez | 310 North Main St., Cotulla, TX 78014 | (830) 879-3073 ext. 1030

Military Readiness Support

CHS provides structured support to students pursuing military enlistment, including:

- Scheduled recruiter visits
- Information on enlistment, training, and benefits
- ASVAB testing opportunities

Recruiters operate independently of the district.

College Preparatory Planning

CHS encourages all students to follow a college-preparatory program that includes:

- English I–IV
- Algebra I & II, Geometry, and Precalculus or Calculus
- Three lab sciences: Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
- Two years of the same foreign language
- Social Studies: World Geography/History, U.S. History, Government, and Economics
- One Fine Arts credit

Students should consult with counselors and review college admission requirements to personalize their plans.

College Entrance Exams

CHS is an official test center for the SAT and ACT. Students are encouraged to test in their junior year.

Codes:

- CHS School Code: 441-575, • SAT Center Code: 44274, • ACT Center Code: 185300

Fee Waivers are available for eligible students. Contact Mrs. Maldonado, CHS Counselor.

Test Registration Sites:

- www.act.org

- www.collegeboard.org

A complete ACT/SAT fee chart is available in the Counseling Center.

College Fair

CHS hosts the **TACRAO College Fair** each fall, offering students the chance to meet with college representatives and explore postsecondary options.

Concurrent College Coursework

College courses taken outside CHS must be approved in advance by the principal to count toward graduation.

Complaints and Concerns

Students or parents with concerns should follow these steps:

1. Address the issue with the teacher or team.
2. If unresolved, request a meeting with the principal.
3. If still unresolved, contact the superintendent's office.
4. Formal complaints may be submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Policy FNG (LOCAL) and related forms are available from the principal, superintendent, or online at www.cotullaisd.net.

Computer and Internet Resources

Students are provided access to district computers and internet services for educational use only.

- Usage must be supervised and tied to academic purposes.
- All students and parents must sign the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- Violations may lead to disciplinary action or loss of technology privileges.

Reminder:

All email, internet use, and digital files on district devices are subject to monitoring. No content is considered private. See policy CQ (LEGAL/LOCAL) for more information.

Conduct and Student Behavior

Cotulla ISD enforces a consistent Student Code of Conduct that applies on campus, during school events, and in situations affecting school interests.

The Code of Conduct outlines:

- Expected student behavior
- Disciplinary consequences
- Roles and authority of district personnel

Students and parents should review both districtwide and campus-specific expectations. Transportation-related rules are outlined in the Transportation section.

Conference Period

Each teacher is assigned a daily conference period for planning and parent meetings.
To schedule a conference:

- Email the teacher using the campus staff directory, or
- Call the campus office to request an appointment.

Course Selection and Scheduling

Cotulla High School provides structured support to guide students in selecting courses that align with graduation and postsecondary goals.

Planning Process

1. Students receive a sample four-year graduation plan.
2. Counselors provide individual and group support in course selection.
3. Seniors meet with counselors in the fall to finalize post-graduation plans.
4. Juniors participate in small-group planning sessions.
5. Freshmen and sophomores receive advising focused on endorsement and pathway choices.
6. The CHS Counseling Center offers resources on careers, scholarships, and college options.
7. Students may visit counselors by appointment only. Teachers must notify the counseling office before sending a student.

Course Load Requirements

- Grades 9–11: Enrolled in 8 courses
- Grade 12: May be released after 5th period if on track to graduate
- Grade 11: May request early release after 6th period with counselor and administrative approval

Credit Policies

- A full-year course earns 1.0 credit if both semesters average 70+
- If one semester is passed but the average is below 70, the student earns 0.5 credit for the passing semester

Credit by Exam – With Prior Instruction

Students may earn credit for previously attempted but incomplete courses by passing a Credit by Exam (CBE).

Eligibility Examples

- Course failure due to excessive absences
- Incomplete coursework (e.g., homeschool transfer)

Requirements

- Must be approved by a teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee
- Minimum passing score: 70
- CBE may not be used to regain eligibility for extracurricular participation

Testing Windows for 2024–2025

- December 11–15, 2024
- May 13–17, 2025

Students must register at least 30 days in advance. Parents may be responsible for test fees if exams are administered outside scheduled dates.

Credit by Exam – Without Prior Instruction

Students may also earn credit for courses they have never taken through acceleration testing.

Requirements

- Minimum score: 90
- Must register 30 days before testing

2024–2025 Testing Dates

- December 11–15, 2024
- May 13–17, 2025

Contact the school counselor for more information. See policies EHDC (LOCAL/LEGAL) for additional guidance.

Criminal Charges

Students charged with certain crimes may face disciplinary consequences separate from any legal proceedings.

Key Points

- Charges accepted by the district attorney (DA) may lead to DAEP placement or expulsion
- Off-campus incidents may still affect school placement if they impact the educational environment
- School consequences apply even if legal charges are dropped or reduced
- Upgraded charges after investigation may lead to more serious school consequences

See also the section on Deferred Adjudication/Deferred Prosecution.

Crisis Management

Cotulla ISD maintains a districtwide crisis plan to ensure student and staff safety.

Campus Responsibilities

- Each campus has a designated crisis team
- Emergency drills and response protocols are practiced regularly
- Parent contact and reunification procedures are updated annually

In an Emergency

- Parents should follow official instructions to avoid delays in student release
- The Cotulla ISD Central Office serves as the emergency command center
- The Superintendent or designee is the official spokesperson

For updates during an emergency, call the district at 830-879-3073 or monitor official communications.

Curriculum and Assessment

Cotulla ISD delivers rigorous, TEKS-aligned instruction that supports academic growth and meets all Texas Education Agency (TEA) standards.

Curriculum Design

- Aligned vertically (across grade levels) and horizontally (across campuses)
- Includes: ELAR, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE, Fine Arts, CTE, LOTE, Technology
- Instructional materials meet House Bill 1605 standards (where applicable)
- Programs are inclusive of English Learners, Special Education, and 504 accommodations

Accelerated and Intervention Programs

- Supplemental Accelerated Instruction (HB 1416) for students not meeting STAAR standards
- Gifted and Talented services aligned with state plans
- RTI and MTSS address academic and behavioral needs

Assessment Overview

- STAAR (Grades 3–8 and high school EOC)
- TELPAS (for English Learners)
- TSI (college readiness)
- District benchmarks and formative checks

Results inform instruction and interventions. Parents receive required assessment reports under TEC §39.025 and §28.0211.

Grading and Reporting

- Campus grading policies follow EIA (LOCAL) and EIC (LOCAL)
- Report cards are issued each grading period; progress reports issued at midpoints
- Promotion and credit decisions are based on TEKS mastery, attendance, and assessments

Parent and Guardian Rights

- Parents may review instructional materials and curriculum
- Requests should be made to the campus administrator in line with TEC §26.006

D

Damage to School Property

Students are expected to respect district property. The following are prohibited:

- Vandalizing or defacing buildings, furniture, books, or technology
- Misusing or failing to return district-issued materials (textbooks, laptops, calculators, etc.)

Parents may be held financially responsible for damage caused by:

1. A child's negligent conduct, or
2. Willful and malicious actions by children ages 10–17

Disciplinary consequences and criminal charges may apply.
See policy FNCB (LEGAL) for details.

Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law (see policy FFH [LEGAL/LOCAL]).

Cotulla ISD is committed to maintaining a respectful and inclusive environment. The district prohibits any form of:

Dating Violence:

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Discrimination (race, religion, gender, disability, etc.)

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office (or on the district's website).

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Retaliation against students who report misconduct

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from

a teacher that are caused by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct:

- Physical abuse, stalking, threats, or coercion in a dating relationship
- Derogatory comments, slurs, or jokes related to a student's identity
- Unwanted sexual advances or conversations
- Retaliation such as threats or unfair grading after a report

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH (LOCAL) for the appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with the law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

Disciplinary action may be taken even if the behavior is not criminal.

See policy FFH (LOCAL) for more information.

Deadly Conduct

Deadly conduct occurs when someone recklessly puts others in danger of serious injury—such as:

- Discharging a firearm toward a person, building, or vehicle
- Threatening behavior that creates imminent danger

These actions are serious criminal offenses and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including possible expulsion.

Deferred Adjudication / Deferred Prosecution

Students charged with a crime may receive one of the following legal dispositions:

- **Deferred Adjudication:** The court postpones judgment. If conditions are met, the case may be dismissed.
- **Deferred Prosecution:** The prosecutor or court delays the hearing for up to 6 months.

Important:

- These legal outcomes do not suspend school disciplinary consequences.
- Students must still complete all assigned school discipline, including DAEP or expulsion if applicable.

Deliveries to Students on Campus

- To maintain campus safety and minimize disruptions to instruction, Cotulla ISD limits deliveries to students during the school day (7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.). This policy applies to all campuses, including Cotulla High School, Frank Newman Middle School, Ramirez/Burks Elementary, and Encinal Elementary.

General Guidelines

- **Lunch Deliveries:** Parents or guardians may deliver lunch only for their own child. Lunches must be dropped off at the front office. Students will not be called out of class; office staff will notify students at appropriate times.
- **Third-Party Deliveries:** Food or item deliveries from services such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, or other vendors are not permitted.
- **Gift Deliveries:** Small items (e.g., birthday treats or balloons) may be delivered only with prior approval from the campus principal. These items will be held in the front office and may be picked up by students at the end of the school day.
- The district reserves the right to deny or restrict any delivery that compromises safety or disrupts the school environment.

Valentine's Day Exception

- No deliveries of any kind (including food, flowers, balloons, or gifts) will be accepted on Valentine's Day at any Cotulla ISD campus.
This restriction is in place due to the volume of deliveries and the significant disruption they cause to instructional time and campus operations.
- Normal lunch deliveries to students from parents will continue as usual.

Encouragement for Outside Celebrations

- Families are encouraged to celebrate birthdays and special occasions outside of school hours whenever possible. Questions about delivery policies should be directed to the campus principal.

Distribution of Published Materials or Documents

Cotulla ISD supports students' and community members' rights to express ideas while ensuring the educational environment remains focused and free from disruption. All materials intended for distribution or display on campus—whether school-sponsored or not—must follow the guidelines below and receive prior approval when required.

School Materials

Materials created by school organizations, clubs, or student groups (e.g., posters, flyers, murals, brochures, campus newsletters, and yearbooks) may be distributed or displayed with prior approval from campus administration. These materials must be supervised by a designated faculty member and align

with school goals and expectations.

Non-School Materials from Students

Students may request to distribute or post materials not produced under the school's direction, such as flyers, petitions, or posters. To do so, they must:\

- Submit the materials to the campus administration in advance.
- Include the name of the sponsoring individual or organization.
- Wait up to two school days for an approval decision.

Each campus has a designated area for posting approved non-school materials. Any materials posted without permission will be removed, and students may face disciplinary action according to the Student Code of Conduct. Students may appeal denied requests in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

Posters and Signs

Any individual or organization wishing to set up a poster or sign must have the permission of an administrator, who will designate the place where the material may be displayed.

Non-School Materials from Others

Individuals or groups not affiliated with the district—including employees acting outside of their official roles—may not distribute or display materials on school property unless they receive prior approval in accordance with policy GKDA. These materials must:\

- Be submitted to the campus administrator or designee.
- Include the name of the sponsoring person or organization.
- Comply with all content limitations outlined in district policy.
- Receive a decision within two school days.

Appeals may be made using district complaint procedures outlined in DGBA (employees), FNG (students/parents), or GF (community).

Exceptions to Prior Review

Prior approval is not required for the following:\

- Adults distributing materials to other adults during school-sponsored meetings held after hours.
- Attendees of approved community or student group meetings distributing materials during the meeting.
- Electioneering during active polling hours when a school facility is used as a voting location, in accordance with state law.

All distributed materials under these exceptions must be removed from school property immediately following the event.

Disruptions

Students are prohibited from disrupting the school day or school activities. According to Texas law, disruptive behaviors include:

- Blocking hallways or exits without permission
- Interfering with school assemblies or transportation
- Using threats, violence, or force to prevent others from participating in school events
- Entering classrooms without permission and causing a disturbance
- Loud or profane language that disrupts learning

Violations of these rules will result in disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Social Events

School rules apply at all events, including dances, rallies, or extracurricular activities. Additional expectations:

- Guests must follow Cotulla ISD rules
- Students are responsible for the behavior of their guests
- Students who leave an event early may **not return** without permission from the administrator or sponsor in charge

Dress Code

Cotulla ISD expects all students to dress in a way that supports safety, learning, and respect for others. The following standards apply to all campuses.

General Expectations

- Clothing must be clean, appropriately sized, and school-appropriate.
- Attire must not interfere with instruction, student safety, or school operations.
- Prohibited content includes:
 - Profanity, vulgar images, or sexual references
 - Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or gangs
 - Symbols or slogans that promote violence, hate, or illegal activity

Tops (Shirts & Blouses)

- Must cover the chest, midsection, back, and undergarments—whether sitting, standing, or raising arms
- No strapless, halter, backless, crop tops, sheer/mesh, or spaghetti straps unless layered
- Undergarments, including bralettes or sports bras, may not be worn as outerwear
- Shirts must be buttoned appropriately (within 3 inches of collar unless layered)
- No tops with prohibited content (see General Expectations)

Bottoms (Pants, Shorts, Skirts, Dresses)

- Must be worn at the waist and properly secured
- No sagging or exposure of undergarments/skin
- Must be appropriately fitted (not too baggy or too tight)
- Length:
 - Grades PreK–5: No shorter than 3 inches above the knee

- Grades 6–12: No shorter than 4 inches above the knee
- Rips/holes above mid-thigh must be patched or covered
- Leggings/yoga pants:
 - Allowed in PreK–5 with a long top covering the rear and pelvic area
 - Grades 6–12: Not allowed unless part of an approved program (e.g., athletics, dance)

Prohibited Bottoms:

- Pajamas or sleepwear
- Cut-offs or low-rise pants
- Bottoms with excessive holes or inappropriate messages

Footwear

- Must be worn at all times and be safe for school use
- Not allowed: Flip-flops, slides, slippers, house shoes, cleats, steel-toe shoes (unless approved for CTE), or shoes with heel taps
- On P.E. days, closed-toe athletic shoes are required
- Exceptions must be pre-approved by the school for medical or instructional purposes

Hair & Facial Hair

- No facial hair (no mustaches, beards, or goatees)
- Hair must not cover the eyes or obstruct vision
- Extreme styles, unnatural colors, or symbols that promote drugs, gangs, or hate are not allowed
- Hair must be secured for safety in PE, athletics, and CTE
- CROWN Act-related hairstyles will be reviewed individually
- Final decisions rest with the campus principal

Headwear

- No hats, caps, or hoods inside buildings during the school day
- Jacket hoods may only be worn outdoors below 45°F or in inclement weather
- Not allowed: Bandanas, scarves, sweatbands, or handkerchiefs unless approved for medical, religious, or cultural reasons
- Headbands/bows are allowed if not excessive or distracting
- Staff may confiscate prohibited items; repeated issues may require parent pickup

Accessories

- Chains (including on wallets, shoes, or backpacks) are not allowed
- Jewelry: One earring per ear, not exceeding 3 square inches
- Body piercings (including spacers or string placeholders) are not allowed
 - Covering piercings with tape or clothing is not acceptable

Eyewear & Makeup

- Sunglasses are not allowed indoors unless prescribed
- Only prescription eyewear may be worn in classrooms

- Distracting makeup is not permitted

Tattoos

- Tattoos (including temporary) must be covered if offensive or distracting
- Drawing on skin with permanent markers (e.g., Sharpies) is prohibited
- Students are responsible for providing proper covering if required

Enforcement & Exceptions

Special Events

- Spirit days and school-sponsored events may have adjusted dress codes with advance notice
- Students in extracurricular activities must follow dress and grooming guidelines set by their coaches or sponsors

Ceremonies (e.g., Graduation, Awards)

- Event-specific guidelines will be provided in advance
- Graduation:
 - Males must wear a collared shirt and be clean-shaven
 - All students must meet expectations for formality and appearance

Correction Procedures

- Students out of dress code will be asked to correct the issue immediately
 - Parents may be contacted to bring appropriate clothing
 - Temporary items may be issued if available
- Repeated violations may result in ISS or DAEP placement

Authority & Appeals

- Campus administrators will make final decisions on dress and grooming compliance
- Parents may appeal to the Superintendent or designee
- The district may adjust these guidelines as needed with proper notice

See Board Policy FNCA (LEGAL/LOCAL) for more information on student dress and grooming.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up (Student)

To support student safety and ensure a smooth traffic flow, each Cotulla ISD campus has designated procedures for student drop-off and pick-up. Parents/guardians are expected to follow these guidelines closely. Campus principals have the authority to establish site-specific procedures and adjust them as needed for safety and efficiency.

General Expectations (All Campuses)

- Students should only be dropped off and picked up in designated areas during approved time windows. Do not use staff parking lots or side streets unless authorized.

- Early drop-off is not permitted before the designated supervision time begins on each campus.
- Students arriving after the campus start time must be signed in by a parent or guardian at the front office and will be marked tardy.
- Any changes to dismissal routines (e.g., alternate pickup person) must be made in writing and submitted to the campus office by noon on the day of the change. In emergencies, phone calls will be accepted before the designated cut-off time established by each campus.
- For safety reasons, students will only be released to individuals listed on their emergency contact or registration card unless prior written permission is provided by the parent/guardian.

Elementary Campuses (Encinal Elementary and Ramirez-Burks Elementary)

- Morning drop-off is from 7:25 AM to 7:45 AM. After 7:50 AM, students must be signed in at the front office.
- Afternoon pick-up begins at 3:15 PM. Students must be picked up by 3:30 PM unless otherwise arranged.
- Parents/guardians may not walk across the driveway with students. Those who do so assume responsibility for any incident.
- No students may be dropped off or enter through unauthorized entry points such as back gates or cafeteria parking lots.
- All parents will be issued dashboard name cards for pick-up. These must be visible to staff.

Newman Middle School

- Parents and guardians are expected to drop off and pick up students at the main entrance only.
- No student pick-up is allowed from side streets or parking lot shortcuts unless directed by administration.
- Students who walk or bike home must have a signed release form on file and are expected to follow all safety guidelines when exiting campus.

Cotulla High School

- Afternoon dismissal and bus departure occurs at 3:50 PM.
- Students should exit behind the buses and may not walk in front of or between buses.
- Only authorized vehicles may access campus bus zones during dismissal.

Uncollected Students

- Students who are not picked up at the designated time will be escorted to the front office.
- A parent/guardian will be required to sign the student out and may be asked to complete a late pick-up form.
- Chronic late pick-up may result in administrative intervention or a referral to support services.

Driver's License Attendance Verification

Students between the ages of 16 and 18 who are applying for a driver's license must obtain a verification form from their school campus. This form certifies that the student has met the 90% attendance requirement for the previous semester and must be submitted to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Forms can be requested from the campus principal's office.

E

Early Dismissal / Leaving School Procedures

In accordance with Texas Education Code §§ 25.085 and 25.087, Cotulla ISD requires all students to remain on campus for the full instructional day unless properly dismissed through the school office. Leaving campus without approval is considered a violation of compulsory attendance laws and may result in disciplinary or legal consequences.

Authorized Dismissal Methods

A student may be dismissed early only if the school receives verified permission from a parent or legal guardian through one of the following methods:

- In-person sign-out at the front office,
- A confirmed phone call to the campus office, or
- A signed note delivered before the time of dismissal.

All early release requests must include:

- The reason for leaving,
- The anticipated time of dismissal, and
- The name of the authorized adult picking up the student, if applicable.

Students will not be released without administrative approval, and verification may be required before the student is signed out.

Emergency Drills

Students, teachers, and staff at all Cotulla ISD campuses will participate in a variety of emergency procedure drills throughout the year. These drills provide vital practice for responding safely and calmly in real emergency situations.

What to Expect

- **Types of Drills:** Each campus conducts fire evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, secure drills, and other required emergency exercises.
- **Frequency:** Texas law limits most drills to no more than eight per semester/16 per school year, though additional drills may be held as needed to maintain readiness
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- **Execution:** When a drill is initiated—typically signaled by an alarm or public address announcement—students must follow staff and emergency personnel directions promptly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

- Communication: An “all clear” signal (via PA system or emergency communication system) will indicate when it is safe to return to normal activities.

Safety and Support Measures

- Emergency Drill Notifications are sent out after the drill is initiated.
- Parents will receive advance notification of any drills.
- During drills, visitor access to buildings may be temporarily restricted.
- After drills, staff conduct accountability checks and provide support for students who experience stress or do not understand the procedures tasb.org+6txssc.txstate.edu+6pfisd.net+6.

Why We Practice

Regular, well-executed drills help everyone respond calmly and safely during emergencies. They also help ensure compliance with TASB guidance and Texas safety mandates.

By participating responsibly and following instructions, students help maintain a safe school environment for everyone.

Enrollment Procedures

Parents or guardians who reside within Cotulla ISD may enroll their child at any campus by providing the following:

Required Documents (per Texas Education Code §25.002):

- A birth certificate or other legal proof of the student’s identity.
- Records from the most recently attended school, if applicable.
- An up-to-date immunization record, or valid documentation for provisional enrollment, exemption, or delayed schedule per TEC §38.001.

♦ TEA and TASB Guidance: These are legal requirements for all Texas public schools, and CISD’s procedures are in compliance. Districts are also obligated to notify law enforcement if identity documentation is not submitted within 30 days.

Additional Documents Requested by Cotulla ISD:

- Copy of the student’s Social Security card (optional, not required by law).
- Migrant status records, if applicable.

Note: Presenting falsified documents is a criminal offense.

Forms to Be Completed at Time of Registration:

- CISD Registration Card
- Medical Information and Permission Form
- Home Language Survey
- Insurance Form
- Free/Reduced Lunch Application (Hopkins Cafeteria)
- Request for Records from Previous School

- Migrant Status Form
- Student-Parent Compact
- Directory Information Release
- Internet Access Permission
- Attendance Warning Letter
- Student Residency Questionnaire (McKinney-Vento)
- Receipt of Student Handbook and Code of Conduct

Transfer Students:

- Must have all academic and disciplinary records reviewed by the campus principal before acceptance.
- Students transferring from non-accredited schools may be required to validate coursework via testing.
- Expelled students will not be admitted until the expulsion term ends or exoneration is documented.

Tuition Charges:

If a transfer student is accepted from outside CISD boundaries, tuition may be charged per TEC §25.038.

Note: As a public school, Cotulla ISD must comply with state rules regarding promotion; these are based on mastery of TEKS and success on the Texas Student Assessment Program. Therefore, we reserve the right to test any student entering our schools from charter, private, or out-of-state schools before determining grade placement.

Testing and Placement:

All new students—including those from private, charter, or out-of-state schools—may be tested to determine proper grade placement, in line with mastery of the TEKS.

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations

Cotulla ISD encourages students to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including academic clubs, student organizations, athletics, fine arts, and other school-related programs. These activities offer students valuable opportunities to develop leadership skills, teamwork, and a sense of school pride. Participation is a privilege, not a right, and students are expected to represent the district with integrity and responsibility.

Eligibility Requirements

Participation in extracurricular activities is subject to both state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL). The following guidelines apply:

- **Academic Performance:**
 - A student must maintain a minimum grade of 70 in all regular classes to remain eligible for extracurricular participation.
 - For students enrolled in advanced academic courses (including Pre-AP, AP, GT, and dual credit), the passing standard for eligibility is 60, per UIL Side-by-Side guidelines.

- Eligibility is reviewed at the end of each grading period. Ineligible students may not participate in competitions or public performances during the suspension period but may continue to practice or rehearse.
- **Special Education Students:**
 - Students served under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must meet the performance criteria established in their IEP in order to remain eligible.

Attendance for Activities

To minimize instructional loss, the following limits apply to extracurricular absences as outlined in Texas Administrative Code §76.1001:

- Up to 10 absences per year for non-post-district competitions.
- Up to 5 absences for post-district competitions prior to state.
- Up to 2 absences for state-level competitions.

Any additional absences require prior approval from the campus principal. Participation in a non-approved activity without approval may result in an unexcused absence.

Behavioral Expectations

Sponsors, coaches, and organization leaders may set additional standards of behavior for their teams or groups. These may include expectations for attendance, grooming, and personal conduct. Students who violate these standards may be removed or suspended from the activity.

If the misconduct also violates school rules, students may face additional disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct or board policy.

Student-Initiated Noncurricular Groups

Students are allowed to form and participate in noncurriculum-related, student-led groups that meet outside of instructional time, consistent with board policy FNAB (LOCAL). These meetings must not interfere with instructional time or school operations.

Policy References

- FM (LEGAL/LOCAL): Student Activities
- FO (LEGAL/LOCAL): Student Discipline
- FNAB (LOCAL): Student Expression – Use of School Facilities for Noncurriculum-Related Meetings
- UIL Side-by-Side Guide: <https://www.uil-texas.org/policy/tea-UIL-side-by-side>

Extra Instruction / Academic Intervention

Cotulla ISD is committed to ensuring all students receive the support needed to meet or exceed grade-level standards. When a student demonstrates academic difficulty—either through classroom performance or on state assessments—the district will provide targeted intervention in compliance with House Bill 1416 (2023) and other applicable state laws.

State-Required Accelerated Instruction (HB 1416)

Per House Bill 1416, students in grades 3–8 who do not meet the “Approaches Grade Level” standard on a STAAR assessment—and high school students who do not meet that standard on an End-of-Course (EOC) exam—are entitled to supplemental accelerated instruction. These state-mandated academic interventions must:

- Include at least 15 or 30 hours of support per subject area (depending on prior year performance);
- Be delivered by a certified teacher or through approved high-quality tutoring;
- Be provided in groups of no more than 4 students, unless parent permission is granted for a larger group;
- Occur outside of core classroom instruction.

To fulfill this requirement, Cotulla ISD will offer accelerated instruction during its summer school programs. If parents choose not to send their student to summer school, the district will provide interventions throughout the regular school year.

Note: When interventions are scheduled during the school year, they may limit a student’s participation in extracurricular activities, electives, or enrichment classes, particularly at the elementary level. State law requires academic needs to take priority.

Accelerated Education Plans (AEPs)

If a student fails to meet the “Approaches Grade Level” standard on two consecutive assessments in the same subject, Cotulla ISD will create a formal Accelerated Education Plan (AEP). This plan will outline the intervention schedule, instructional method, and progress monitoring steps.

Note: HB 1416 removed the requirement for Accelerated Learning Committees (ALCs), but AEPs remain mandatory for qualifying students.

Campus-Based Planning and Implementation

Each campus will design intervention plans based on:

- Individual student needs,
- Teacher input,
- STAAR/EOC performance,
- Grade-level goals, and
- Available staffing and tutoring support.

Interventions may take place during the school day (without replacing core subjects), before/after school, or through campus-based pullouts or enrichment blocks.

District Academic Support Options

Cotulla ISD offers multiple layers of support, including:

- In-school targeted tutorials,
- After-school and before-school programs,
- Summer instruction and enrichment,
- Embedded intervention time during the academic day.

Parents are encouraged to partner with campus leadership to help ensure timely progress.

Students Receiving Special Education or Section 504 Services

Students who receive special education or Section 504 accommodations will continue to receive interventions aligned with their IEP or 504 plan. These students are also eligible for accelerated instruction under HB 1416 when applicable.

Documentation and Monitoring

All accelerated instruction services will be:

- Scheduled in accordance with state law,
- Logged and monitored by campus staff,
- Reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and
- Reviewed regularly for instructional effectiveness.

Failure to participate in state-required intervention may result in delayed promotion, credit recovery, or modified instructional placement.

Parent Rights and Communication

Parents will receive written notification if their child qualifies for accelerated instruction. Families have the right to:

- Participate in AEP planning meetings,
- Request instructional adjustments,
- Decline a larger group tutoring setting,
- Appeal intervention-related decisions through the district's grievance process.

For additional information, see district policy EHBC (LEGAL/LOCAL) or visit tea.texas.gov/HB1416.

F

Facility and Equipment Use Policy

Cotulla ISD welcomes the use of its facilities and equipment by nonprofit civic, cultural, welfare, recreational, social, educational, and fraternal organizations, provided such use does not conflict with any school-related programs. School-related activities always take priority.

Requests for facility or equipment use must be submitted in advance using the appropriate form available on the district website or from the Superintendent's Office. Requests will be approved based on availability and adherence to district policy. A usage fee may be assessed to cover utilities, custodial services, damages, or wear-and-tear. Payment is due prior to facility use.

All fundraising activities by external groups must directly benefit Cotulla ISD students.

- Campus Use Requests: School-related activities must be scheduled through the campus principal.
- District-Wide or Intercampus Use Requests: Must be scheduled through the Superintendent's Office.

Each principal is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date log of individuals issued keys to campus facilities. Staff and community members with keys may not duplicate or lend them without explicit principal approval. Lost, stolen, or damaged keys will result in fees for replacement or rekeying.

Cotulla ISD career and technical education programs may offer community services as part of instructional activities. These services must align with instructional goals and must not interfere with local commercial enterprises. Donations to the student club or organization facilitating the service are permitted.

Fees and Other Financial Obligations

State and local funds provide basic instructional materials at no charge to students. However, students may be responsible for:

- Materials for personal class projects.
- Membership dues for clubs or student organizations.
- Security or equipment deposits.
- Personal athletic or P.E. gear.
- Voluntarily purchased items (e.g., yearbooks, photos, class rings).
- Musical instrument rental and uniform cleaning.
- Apparel retained by students for extracurricular activities.
- Student ID cards and parking fees.
- Fees for lost or damaged library books, technology, or instructional materials.
- Driver education courses (if offered).
- Optional credit courses requiring off-site facilities.
- Summer school tuition (when not tuition-free).
- Transportation fees for students residing within two miles of campus.
- Up to \$350 for credit recovery programs when a student exceeds absence limits and a parent opts for the recovery program (requires signed request form).

Fee Waivers

Students and parents who cannot pay a required fee may request a waiver from the campus principal in accordance with policy FP [LEGAL/LOCAL].

Textbooks, Equipment, and Technology

Students are financially responsible for all district-issued materials, including textbooks, laptops, iPads, and other devices. Lost or damaged items must be reported and paid for at the school office. Receipts will be issued. Refunds will be provided if items are recovered after payment. No new items will be reissued until obligations are cleared.

Field Trips Educational/Instructional

Cotulla ISD recognizes that field trips provide meaningful educational experiences that extend learning beyond the classroom. All field trips must directly relate to the instructional goals of the classroom, enrich curriculum objectives, and support student engagement, real-world application, and cultural exposure.

Eligibility & Approval

- Field trips must be pre-approved by the campus principal and the Superintendent or designee for competitive activities.
- Teachers must submit requests for trips at least two weeks in advance.
- Students must meet academic and behavioral expectations to be eligible to participate, including passing all classes, maintaining good attendance, and avoiding discipline referrals during the current and prior six-week periods.

Chaperone & Volunteer Guidelines

- All field trip chaperones must be approved by the campus principal.
- Parents or staff may not chaperone their own child's group.
- All chaperones must undergo and clear the L-1 fingerprinting process at their own expense.
- Family members of chaperones are not permitted on school transportation or field trips unless they are part of the attending group/class.

Student Requirements

- Students must travel with school-provided transportation unless prior written approval is obtained through a release form.
- A field trip permission slip signed by both the student and parent/guardian is required prior to participation.
- Sponsors must carry student files on the trip, including permission slips, medical information, and emergency medical release forms.
- Any student whose form is incomplete will not be allowed to attend or be released to a parent after the trip.

Non-Compliance

- Parents/guardians arriving unapproved at a trip destination may be asked to sign a release form. Their child will then be removed from the school group and placed in the parent's care, no longer under school supervision.
- Any student with recent illness or without physician clearance (if needed) will not be permitted to attend.

This policy applies across all campuses and grade levels and is supported by TEA guidance for safety, supervision, and instructional alignment. For additional procedural reference, see TASB Policies FMG (LEGAL/LOCAL).

Field Trip Eligibility End of Year

Eligibility for end-of-year field trips requires students to meet teacher-defined academic, behavior, and participation expectations. Students must be passing all classes, maintain appropriate conduct, and have at least a 90% daily attendance average for the school year at the time of the trip. Students who do not meet

these standards or have repeated discipline issues may be excluded from participation.

Fighting

Cotulla ISD maintains a zero-tolerance policy for fighting and aggressive physical contact to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff. Fighting disrupts the learning environment, threatens student safety, and will not be tolerated on school property, in district vehicles, or at any school-sponsored or school-related activity, on or off campus.

Definition of Fighting

"Fighting" is defined as:

- Any physical contact or aggression between two or more students with the intent to injure, provoke, or retaliate.
- Mutual participation in a physical altercation, regardless of who started the incident.
- Acts may include hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, hair-pulling, or any other form of physical confrontation.

Expectations and Student Responsibility

Students are expected to:

- Avoid engaging in physical retaliation.
- Report any physical or verbal confrontation to a teacher, administrator, or other school employee immediately.
- Seek assistance from an adult if confronted by another student.

A student claiming self-defense must demonstrate that:

- Every reasonable attempt was made to avoid the conflict or leave the area.
- Physical retaliation was the last resort and proportionate to the threat.
- Documentation and evidence will be evaluated during the campus investigation.

Simply claiming self-defense does not guarantee exemption from disciplinary consequences.

Consequences

Students involved in fighting may face the following disciplinary actions, based on the severity and circumstances:

- Parent notification and conference
- In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Placement in the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)
- Referral to law enforcement and issuance of a citation for Disorderly Conduct (if age 10 or older)
- Restitution for damages (if applicable)
- Counseling or conflict resolution sessions

Note: If a student initiates physical contact with the implied intent to harm, it may be classified as:

- Assault by Contact
- Assault with Bodily Injury
- Aggravated Assault, depending on the severity of injuries sustained

Investigation Protocol

When a fight occurs, the following steps will be taken:

1. Immediate response by campus staff to ensure safety and separate involved students.
2. Investigation by campus administration and the School Resource Officer (SRO), including:
 - Interviews with involved students and witnesses
 - Review of security footage (if available)
 - Collection of written statements
3. Determination of consequences based on findings, using the Student Code of Conduct as guidance.
4. Documentation of the incident and outcomes in the student information system.

Parent Communication

- Parents/guardians of all students involved will be notified by phone and/or written notice.
- A conference may be required prior to the student's return to class.
- In serious cases, the district will notify law enforcement and provide incident documentation upon request.

Prevention Measures

To reduce the incidence of fighting and promote a positive school culture, Cotulla ISD will:

- Provide conflict resolution and social-emotional learning through guidance lessons and assemblies.
- Train staff to de-escalate confrontations and identify warning signs of aggression.
- Utilize campus behavior intervention teams to address repeated conflicts.
- Encourage anonymous reporting of threats or planned altercations through BRIM or campus-designated systems.

Food Allergies

Cotulla ISD is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, including those with food allergies. Parents are required to notify the school as soon as possible if their child has been diagnosed with a food allergy, particularly one that could result in a serious or life-threatening reaction through ingestion, inhalation, or skin contact.

To ensure student safety, the following steps must be taken:

- Parents/guardians must provide written documentation from a licensed physician identifying:
 - The food(s) to which the student is allergic.
 - The nature and severity of the allergic reaction.

- Emergency procedures and medications, if applicable (e.g., epinephrine auto-injector).
- An individual healthcare or emergency action plan will be developed by the school nurse in collaboration with the parent and physician.
- Emergency medication must be submitted to the campus nurse in its original, labeled container.

All campus personnel who interact with students are trained annually on recognizing symptoms of anaphylaxis and responding appropriately, including the use of epinephrine when prescribed. While Cotulla ISD cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, reasonable accommodations will be made to reduce the risk of exposure, especially in cafeterias, classrooms, and during school-related events.

For additional information, refer to Board Policy FFAF (LEGAL/LOCAL). Contact the campus nurse or administrator with any questions or updates.

Food and Drinks

Cotulla ISD follows guidelines established by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and federal law regarding Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV). These regulations apply to all public schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.

The following rules apply districtwide:

- FMNV and outside food may not be provided or distributed to students in the cafeteria or food service areas during the instructional day, as defined by TDA (midnight to 30 minutes after the end of the school day).
- Exceptions may be made for specific events **as** determined and approved by campus administration.
- Parents/guardians may only provide food or drinks for their own child. Deliveries or food sharing between students is prohibited during school hours.
- Parents must notify the teacher in advance when planning to bring birthday treats or snacks to ensure coordination and compliance.
- Due to allergy concerns, food sharing is not allowed. All treats brought must be store-bought, clearly labeled, and nut-free when required by student medical needs.

Cotulla ISD reserves the right to modify or cancel special events involving food for health, safety, or instructional reasons.

For more details, see Board Policy CO (LEGAL) and the USDA/TDA Smart Snacks guidance.

Food Services

Cotulla ISD participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), offering all students access to nutritionally balanced meals each instructional day for both breakfast and lunch. Some evening meals may be provided depending on student need and qualifying campus populations.

Fundraising

Cotulla ISD permits student organizations, classes, and parent groups to conduct fundraising activities for approved school-related purposes. All fundraising must receive prior written approval from both the campus principal and the Superintendent or designee before any activity may begin.

Districtwide Fundraising Guidelines

- Fundraisers must directly support an instructional, extracurricular, or campus initiative.
- A written request must be submitted to the principal and superintendent's office at least 14 calendar days before the proposed event.
- No advertising, ordering, or solicitation may begin until official approval is granted.
- Fundraising activities must not interfere with instructional time and should be scheduled to avoid disruption to the academic calendar.
- In some cases, students may be given the option to contribute a voluntary amount (e.g., up to \$50) in lieu of participating in fundraising.

Student Participation and Refunds

Students are encouraged to participate in fundraisers associated with their group or organization (e.g., NJHS, Student Council, Band, Grade Level). However, if a student opts out and instead chooses to pay directly for a ticket, trip, or event:

Please Note: Refunds will not be issued if the student becomes ineligible or chooses not to attend, for any reason, once the funds have been committed (e.g., toward transportation, admission, class shirts, or reservations).

Fundraising Reconciliation

After the fundraiser:

- The sponsor or organizer must complete the Fundraising Reconciliation Form (available through the superintendent's office).
- All financial records must be submitted for reconciliation and formal closure of the event.
- No new fundraising requests will be considered until all prior activities are properly reconciled.

All fundraising efforts must comply with Cotulla ISD's financial procedures and state accounting standards for student activity funds and external contributions.

For more information, see Board Policies FJ (LEGAL/LOCAL) and GE (LEGAL/LOCAL).

G

Gang-Free Zones

In accordance with Texas Penal Code Section 71.028, Cotulla ISD student handbooks include information on gang-free zones and the consequences of engaging in criminal gang activity near school property.

A gang-free zone includes any location within 1,000 feet of a school, school bus stop, or district-owned

property. Criminal offenses, including gang-related activities, committed in these zones are subject to enhanced penalties.

A gang is defined as an organization, combination, or association—partially or wholly composed of students—that:

1. Perpetuates itself through recruitment or decision by membership rather than free association; and/or
2. Engages in illegal or violent behavior.

The district consults with law enforcement to identify gangs, gang attire, signs, or symbols.

Gang Activity – School-Related Discretionary DAEP Placement

A student may be placed in the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) for participating in gang-related activity, including:

- Pledging, affiliating, or recruiting for a public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang;
- Soliciting another person to join such organizations;
- Engaging in such activity on or off school property during a school-related event.

Gifted and Talented (G/T) Program

Cotulla ISD is committed to identifying and serving students who demonstrate high potential and advanced abilities in accordance with Texas Education Code §29.121 and the TEA State Plan for G/T Education. The G/T program provides enriched and differentiated instruction designed to meet the unique academic and intellectual needs of gifted learners.

Definition of a Gifted and Talented Student

According to TEC §29.121 and the TEA State Plan:

A gifted and talented student is a child or youth who performs at, or shows the potential for performing at, a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment, and who:

- Exhibits high performance capability in intellectual, creative, or artistic areas
- Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership
- Excels in specific academic fields

These students require educational experiences beyond the regular curriculum to fully develop their abilities.

Program Services at Cotulla ISD

The district provides G/T students with learning opportunities that include:

- Differentiated instruction in the core curriculum
- Advanced research and independent study
- Development of communication, creative, and critical thinking skills

- Enrichment activities and advanced-level projects
- Acceleration options, as appropriate
- Access to Pre-AP, dual credit, and academic competitions at the secondary level

Nomination Process

Cotulla ISD accepts G/T nominations year-round from:

- Teachers or school staff
- Parents or guardians
- Peers or self-nomination
- Community members or other interested individuals

A final call for nominations is issued each May to support timely screening for the next school year.

Screening and Identification

Screening tools and procedures are selected to ensure equity and eliminate bias. Instruments may include:

- Renzulli Rating Scales completed by teachers
- NNAT (Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test)
- Norm-referenced achievement tests (e.g., ITBS)
- Parent and teacher observation forms or anecdotal evidence

Identification decisions are based on multiple data points and a balanced profile of student abilities.

Nondiscrimination Statement: No student will be denied G/T consideration or services based on race, ethnicity, sex, religion, national origin, disability, or English proficiency.

Selection Committee

Each campus uses a G/T Selection Committee, which includes:

- The campus principal
- The campus counselor
- A G/T-trained teacher
- At least one additional qualified educator

This committee reviews all screening data and determines appropriate placement using a consensus-based approach. Students may be:

- Placed into the G/T Program
- Monitored for further consideration
- Remain in the general education setting with differentiated instruction

Parent Notification and Consent

Parents are notified in writing of the committee's decision. Students may not begin G/T services until:

- The parent attends an orientation session
- A permission-to-participate form is signed and returned

Transfer Students

Students transferring from another district with documented G/T services will receive probationary placement into Cotulla ISD's G/T Program. Full eligibility will be reviewed by the campus committee based on local criteria.

Furloughs (Temporary Leave)

A furlough may be granted if a student needs a temporary break from G/T services due to academic, social-emotional, or scheduling needs.

- A decision must be reached by consensus between the parent, student (if age-appropriate), G/T teacher, and campus administrator
- Furloughs may last from six weeks to one semester, but no longer than the current school year

Exiting the G/T Program

Students may be exited from the G/T Program through one of the following processes:

1. Teacher or counselor recommendation due to changes in performance, engagement, or behavior
2. Parent request submitted in writing
3. Student request, with parent consent

Exits must be supported by multiple forms of data and include a documented parent conference. No student will exit based on a single factor.

Note: Parents may voluntarily withdraw a student at any time. However, if withdrawal occurs against professional recommendation, the student may not be re-nominated until the next school year has passed.

Program Evaluation

The G/T Program is evaluated annually to ensure alignment with state standards and community needs. Evaluation tools include:

- Parent and teacher surveys
- Feedback from G/T specialists or consultants
- Review of curriculum offerings and identification procedures
- Analysis of student products and participation trends

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers responsible for providing G/T instruction must:

- Complete 30 hours of foundational training in gifted education
 - Receive 6 hours of annual professional development in G/T strategies
- This ensures compliance with TEC §29.123 and TEA guidance.

Grading

Overview of Grading Policies (TEA and TASB Compliance)

Cotulla ISD's grading policies are established in accordance with Texas Education Code §28.0216, the Texas Administrative Code, and district board-adopted policies including EI (LEGAL/LOCAL), EIA (LEGAL/LOCAL), and EIE (LEGAL/LOCAL). These policies ensure that student grades reflect academic achievement and mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) rather than behavior, effort, or non-instructional factors.

Grading procedures are designed to:

- Provide consistency and fairness across all grade levels and campuses;
- Accurately reflect each student's progress toward academic mastery;
- Align with state standards and accountability expectations; and
- Support timely feedback, opportunities for improvement, and parent communication.

Under state law, a teacher's assignment of a grade is final and may not be changed unless it is determined that the grade was:

- Arbitrary,
- Contained a documented error, or
- Issued in a manner inconsistent with district-approved grading guidelines.

The following grading procedures are grouped by elementary, middle school, and high school divisions to reflect age-appropriate instructional practices and assessment strategies.

Grading Policy (Grades PK–5)

Elementary

Cotulla ISD uses a consistent grading system across all elementary campuses that reflects student mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Grading is based solely on academic achievement, not behavior, effort, or participation in non-instructional activities.

Grading Guidelines and Methods

Teachers assess student performance using a variety of instructional strategies, including but not limited to:

- Daily work and class participation
- Projects and research-based tasks
- Teacher observations and anecdotal records
- Quizzes, tests, and performance assessments
- Homework and independent practice
- Oral and written compositions
- Rubrics, checklists, and anecdotal notes

Grading should be based on documented mastery of content, using multiple and balanced assessment

sources.

Grade-Level Grading Scales

Pre-Kindergarten

Progress is reported using the following scale:

- S – Satisfactory (70% and above)
- NI – Needs Improvement (50–69%)
- U – Unsatisfactory (below 50%)

Kindergarten & 1st Grade

A standards-based report card is used:

- 4 – Exceeds grade-level expectations
- 3 – Meets grade-level expectations
- 2 – Progressing toward expectations
- 1 – Not meeting expectations
- NA – Not assessed at this time

Grades 2–5

Core content areas (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies) use numeric grading:

- 100–90: Excellent progress
- 89–80: Above average
- 79–70: Average
- 69–60: Needs improvement
- 59 and below: Failing

Specials (Fine Arts, Music, Technology, PE):

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- U – Unsatisfactory
(*Conduct grades are issued separately.*)

Report Cards & Progress Reports

- Report cards are issued every six weeks.
- Parents are required to pick up the first and fourth six-week report cards during scheduled campus events.
- Progress reports are distributed at the three-week mark to notify parents of academic concerns.
- Students whose grades fall below 70 after progress reports may be required to attend tutorials.
- Parents are encouraged to schedule a formal conference at least once per semester or upon request.

Language Arts Grade Calculation (Grades 2–5)

- Reading – 50%
- English – 50%

Each of these is further divided into:

- Summative assessments – 50%
(e.g., compositions, unit tests, final projects)
- Formative assessments – 50%
(e.g., classwork, quizzes, homework)

A minimum of two composition grades must be recorded per grading cycle.

Grade Assignment Criteria

1. At least 12 total grades must be recorded each six-week period in each core subject.
 - Minimum 2 summative grades, spaced at least 3 weeks apart.
2. 40% of a student's grade must come from summative tasks (major tests, projects).
3. 60% may come from formative tasks (classwork, quizzes, homework).
4. Grades may not reflect behavior, late slips, or unrelated compliance factors.
5. Grades may be rounded up (e.g., 69 to 70) if supported by clear campus-approved criteria.
6. Major assessments must be communicated at least three class days in advance.

Reassessment and Retesting Policy

Cotulla ISD is committed to supporting student mastery of essential academic standards. In accordance with this commitment, students who do not demonstrate proficiency on a summative (unit) assessment will be provided an opportunity for reteach and reassessment, as outlined below:

7. Eligibility and Requirements
Only students who fail a summative/unit test are eligible for reassessment. To qualify for a retest, the student must attend a teacher-assigned tutorial or remediation session, either before or after school, as determined by the teacher.
8. Reteach and Retest Guidelines
Reteach and retest must occur within five (5) school days of when the student is notified of the failing grade. Teachers may set a single retest date for all eligible students in the class.
9. Grading Procedure
The higher of the two grades (original or reassessment) will be recorded in the gradebook. The maximum score that may be recorded on a reassessment is 70.
10. This policy applies to major assessments and is designed to encourage learning through accountability, while providing a fair opportunity for students to improve their academic performance.

Attendance & Grading Requirements

- Students must be enrolled at least 15 days during a grading period to receive grades.
- “NG” (No Grade) will be used if attendance or records are insufficient.
- Teachers must communicate with parents if report card grades cannot be assigned.

Grading Policy Secondary (Grades 6–12)

Applies to Newman Middle School and Cotulla High School

Cotulla ISD secondary campuses assess student achievement based on mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). All grades must reflect demonstrated academic performance and comply with state law, including Texas Education Code §28.0216, which ensures grading decisions are objective and based on district-approved standards.

Grading procedures must not include non-academic penalties (e.g., incomplete headings, failure to return signed documents) and must follow Cotulla ISD Board Policies EI (LEGAL/LOCAL), EIA (LEGAL/LOCAL), and EIE (LEGAL/LOCAL).

Grading Scale

Numeric Range	Letter Grade	Description
90–100	A	Excellent Progress
80–89	B	Above Average Progress
76–79	C	Average Progress
70–75	C–	Needs Improvement
0–69	F	Unsatisfactory (Failing)
I	Incomplete	Makeup required
NG	No Grade	Assigned under specific circumstances only

Six Weeks Grade Assignment

1. Minimum of 12 grades must be recorded per six-week grading period in each subject.
2. At least two summative grades are required, spaced across the grading period.
3. Summative grades (major tests, projects) must account for at least 40% of the total grade.
4. Formative grades (quizzes, classwork, homework) must not exceed 60% of the total grade.
5. Projects may receive multiple grades, each tied to a unique component (e.g., content, organization, format).
6. Duplicate grades (same grade recorded more than once) are not permitted.
7. A variety of assessment strategies must be used throughout the grading period.
8. Teachers may raise report card grades (e.g., 69 to 70, 79 to 80, 89 to 90) if applied equitably across all students.
9. Grades must be based solely on academic performance—non-instructional factors may not impact the grade.

English Language Arts (ELA) Grading Breakdown

- Reading – 50%
- English – 50%

Within each:

- 50% Summative Grades
- 50% Formative Grades

Each six weeks must include at least:

- Two composition grades (in English)
- Five formative grades

No Grade (NG) and Incomplete (I) Guidelines

- NG may be issued if:
 - The student enrolled during the last 5 days of the grading period without records.
 - No assignments were submitted.
 - The student withdrew prior to the end of the grading cycle.
- NG must be resolved by the end of the third week of the next grading period.
- I (Incomplete) must also be resolved within 3 weeks.
 - Not permitted during the final six weeks of the year.
 - May impact UIL eligibility unless resolved per policy.

Communication and Timelines

1. Daily assignments must be graded and returned within 3 school days.
2. Tests must be graded and returned within 3 school days.
3. Projects and research papers must be graded within the grading cycle they are submitted.
4. Students and/or parents may review graded work upon request.
 - Exceptions: Semester exams and district-created assessments, which may only be reviewed in-person (no copies distributed).

Homework

- Assigned for reinforcement only
- Should be evaluated in a timely manner
- Must not be punitive in nature

Late Work

- Deduct 10 points per class day, up to a maximum 30-point penalty
- Teachers must exercise professional discretion
- Repeated failure to turn in work may result in administrative consequences

Make-Up Work

All students shall be allowed to make up work when they are absent from class. It is the student's responsibility to obtain missed assignments and complete them within the time permitted.

- Students are allowed one day for each day of excused absence, up to a maximum of five days, to complete make-up work.
- Teachers may allow additional time in extenuating circumstances.
- Assignments given before the absence may be due immediately upon return.
- Make-up tests should be scheduled during tutorials, when possible.
- A written excuse (signed by a parent, guardian, or physician) must be submitted upon return, even if prior notification was provided.

Students who fail to submit make-up work within the allowed period may receive a reduced grade according to the district's late work policy—up to a maximum of 30 points deducted per

assignment.

Progress Reports and Conferences

- Progress reports issued every 3 weeks
- When a student's grade drops from passing to failing after a progress report, teachers must contact parents immediately
- Parent contact must be documented
- Teachers are expected to hold at least one conference per semester

Promotion and Course Credit

Grades 6–8:

- Promotion requires:
 - Overall yearly average of 70 or above
 - Minimum 70 in three of the four core subjects: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies

Grades 9–12:

- Credit awarded when:
 - Semester grade is 70 or higher, or
 - Final average (combined semesters) is 70 or higher
- Credit recovery available for failed semesters
- Promotion by credits earned:
 - Grade 10: 6.5 credits
 - Grade 11: 13.5 credits
 - Grade 12: 20.5 credits

Reassessment Policy

- Students who fail a unit test may participate in a reteach and retest opportunity.
- Retesting is only allowed:
 - After attending tutoring
 - On a single date determined by the teacher
- Highest possible retest grade: 70
- No individual reteach sessions will be provided

Conduct Grades

Conduct grades reflect a student's behavior during each six-week grading period and serve as a tool for communication between the school and home regarding classroom behavior expectations.

Grade	Description
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E	Excellent
S	Satisfactory
N	Needs Improvement
U	Unsatisfactory

- Conduct grades are recorded on student report cards but are not entered in the teacher's academic gradebook.
- Conduct does not impact a student's academic average or GPA.
- Per Texas Education Code §28.0216, a student's academic grade must reflect mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and may not be influenced by behavior, attendance, or compliance-related issues.
- A grade of "U" may not be assigned unless:
 - The teacher has contacted the parent, and
 - The concern has been discussed with a campus administrator.

Grade Point Average (GPA) and Class Ranking (Newman Middle School)

The Board of Trustees voted to adopt EIC (Local) Academic Achievement Class Ranking on Monday, June 19, 2023. The document can be found on the CISD Website:

- Fall and Spring Semester grades are used to calculate GPA at the end of each semester.
- Grades of 69 or below do not receive credit or "points."
- Eligible courses locally designated as honors shall be categorized and weighted as Honors courses.
- All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as Regular courses.
- Honors were previously identified as Pre-AP courses.
- High School courses taken at NMS will be identified as Honors courses and receive the weighted points as well.
- High School courses currently available at NMS include:
 - Algebra I
 - Art I
 - Spanish I
 - Principles of Agriculture
 - Principles of Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications

GPA Scale:

Category Weight

Honors +3

Regular +0

Conversion scale for transfer students with letter grades:

Letter Grade	Numeric Equivalent
A+	100
A	95

Letter Grade	Numeric Equivalent
A-	90
B+	89
B	85
B-	80
C+	79
C	75
C-	70
D or F	69

(An exception to this is if a transcript from an outside district records a 65 as passing. In this event, a grade of 70 will be used to honor the passing standard utilized by the previous school district.)

Highest Ranking 8th Grade Students

1. The highest-ranking students will be selected from the top 10 highest averages.
2. All subject grades from the student's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade school years will be averaged to determine the highest-ranking students.
3. Subject area grades from other school districts will be transferred to compute the highest average.

Grade Point Average Conversion Scale (Cotulla High School)

The state of Texas requires that no more than one credit from each area or strand is to be used to satisfy the graduation requirement. Grades are posted on a semester basis as the courses are taken, satisfying state requirements. Therefore, grades are averaged in the order the courses are taken. Any extra credits just add to the students' credit number and enhance their learning.

Courses eligible for advanced weighted grades include dual credit and honors courses. Dual credit courses will be weighted on a higher conversion scale based on the rigor and challenging demands of those courses. Class rankings are based on the weighted GPA averages for each student, not the numerical average, because classes falling under advanced and dual credit are weighted higher than regular classes.

GPA CONVERSION SCALE – Beginning with the Class of 2014 to Class of 2026

NUMERICAL GRADE	GRADE POINT	GRADE POINT	GRADE POINT
	Advanced Placement or DUAL- CREDIT	Pre-AP	REGULAR
100	8.5	7.5	6.5
99	8.4	7.4	6.4

98	8.3	7.3	6.3
97	8.2	7.2	6.2
96	8.1	7.1	6.1
95	8.0	7.0	6.0
94	7.9	6.9	5.9
93	7.8	6.8	5.8
92	7.7	6.7	5.7
91	7.6	6.6	5.6
90	7.5	6.5	5.5
89	7.4	6.4	5.4
88	7.3	6.3	5.3
87	7.2	6.2	5.2
86	7.1	6.1	5.1
85	7.0	6.0	5.0
84	6.9	5.9	4.9
83	6.8	5.8	4.8
82	6.7	5.7	4.7
81	6.6	5.6	4.6
80	6.5	5.5	4.5
79	6.4	5.4	4.4
78	6.3	5.3	4.3
77	6.2	5.2	4.2
76	6.1	5.1	4.1
75	6.0	5.0	4.0
74	5.9	4.9	3.9
73	5.8	4.8	3.8
72	5.7	4.7	3.7
71	5.6	4.6	3.6
70	5.5	4.5	3.5
69 and below	0	0	0

Graduating Senior Requirements and Information

Cotulla High School is committed to supporting every senior toward a successful, dignified, and memorable transition to postsecondary life. This section outlines the academic, financial, behavioral, and procedural requirements for seniors to participate in graduation ceremonies and related events.

Academic Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a Cotulla ISD diploma, a student must:

- Earn the required number of state and local credits under one of the approved graduation plans:
 - Foundation Plan
 - Foundation with Endorsement(s)
 - Foundation with Endorsement(s) and Distinguished Level of Achievement
- Pass all five required STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) exams:
 - English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History

Students who do not meet testing requirements may become eligible to graduate through the Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) process if all coursework is successfully completed.

Students with Disabilities

Students receiving special education services may graduate in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). If all IEP goals have not been met, students may participate in the graduation ceremony and receive a certificate of attendance, while retaining the right to continue their education through age 21. (See policy FMH(LEGAL))

Note: Students may only participate in one commencement ceremony.

Graduation Ceremony Expectations

Graduation is a solemn and formal school function. Participation is a privilege—not a right—and is contingent upon appropriate academic standing, behavior, and financial responsibility.

- Seniors assigned to DAEP or ISS for more than five days during the spring semester may lose the privilege to speak or participate in the ceremony.
- Appropriate attire is required: students should dress as if attending a formal job interview.
- While receiving diplomas, students must follow all ceremonial protocols. Disruptive behavior or gestures may result in removal from the ceremony.

Graduation Activities

Pending student eligibility, seniors may participate in the following events:

- Commencement Exercises
- Baccalaureate
- Graduation Reception
- Senior Awards Banquet
- Senior Fun Day
- Senior Trip

Details and eligibility requirements are communicated by campus administration.

Financial Obligations

Seniors must be in financial good standing with the district to participate in senior activities or receive graduation-related items. Debts may include:

- Unpaid dues (e.g., club, class, organization)
- Unreturned or damaged textbooks and technology

- Uniform fees (e.g., band, athletics, spirit programs)
- Outstanding fundraising obligations
- Tuition reimbursement for failed dual credit coursework

Failure to clear obligations may prevent participation in prom, cap and gown distribution, diploma pick-up, and other senior events.

Graduation Speakers

The following criteria apply for selecting student speakers:

- Opening and closing remarks may be delivered by class officers or students in the academic top 10.
- Students assigned to DAEP or with more than 5 days in ISS during the spring semester are ineligible.
- If more students qualify than spots available, speakers will be selected through a random drawing.
- Valedictorian and salutatorian will also speak during the ceremony.

Speaker selections and speech approvals follow district policy FNA(LOCAL).

Local Graduation Honors and Class Rank

Cotulla ISD calculates class rank using final grades through the fifth six-week grading period of senior year. GPA and class rank determine eligibility for:

- Valedictorian and Salutatorian
 - Must have attended Cotulla High School for 7 consecutive semesters
 - Must graduate in 8 semesters under the Distinguished Plan
- Top 10% Recognition
- Honor Graduates
- Highest-Ranking Graduate Scholarship Certificate (State of Texas)

Class Rank Calculation Guidelines

- Weighted GPA is based on specific core academic and dual credit courses.
- Retaken classes (after a passing grade) and some local program courses (e.g., dual credit welding, PCT, or construction) are excluded from GPA calculations.
- Courses are weighted as follows:

Category	Weight Added
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Dual Credit	+10 points
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Honors	+3 points
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Regular	+0 points
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Refer to board policy EIC(LOCAL) for full rank and GPA procedures.

Graduation Testing Requirements

Students must pass all STAAR EOC exams. Retest opportunities are available throughout the year. Seniors who do not meet test requirements must complete additional support interventions and may become eligible through an IGC process.

Grades-Transferred

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the regular category and the district has accepted the credit, the district shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank. When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the district's weighted grade system, the district shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the district only if the same or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the district.

Graduation Expenses

Graduation-related expenses are the responsibility of the student and family. These may include:

- Class rings
- Graduation invitations
- Cap and gown
- Senior portraits
- Banquet and trip fees

Planning ahead—beginning junior year—is strongly encouraged.

State Scholarships and Financial Aid

Students may be eligible for the following:

- Texas Early Graduation Scholarship
(For students who complete graduation requirements early.)
- TEXAS Grant Program
(For eligible students who graduate under Foundation with Endorsements or Distinguished plans.)

For more information, contact the CHS Counseling Center.

Graduates-Senior Exemption from Final Examinations

Seniors meeting specific criteria may be exempted from final examinations for the semester ending in May. Criteria include attendance, academic performance, and disciplinary record.

Graduates-Three-Year Graduates

Cotulla High School supports flexible graduation pathways for students who meet all academic and credit requirements within three years of high school enrollment.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Completion of all coursework and credit requirements outlined by the Texas Education Code and Cotulla ISD graduation policy
- Successful performance on all End-of-Course (EOC) assessments
- Approval of a formal graduation plan in consultation with a school counselor
- Completion of any required endorsements, programs of study, or college readiness benchmarks

Planning and Approval:

- Students interested in graduating early must notify their school counselor no later than the fall of their junior year.
- A written graduation plan must be developed, signed by the student, parent/guardian, and counselor, and approved by campus administration.
- Students and families should consider the impact of early graduation on college admission timelines, scholarship eligibility, military service readiness, and extracurricular participation.

Additional Notes:

- Three-year graduates are still eligible to participate in the spring graduation ceremony and may be included in class rankings, honors, and recognitions as outlined by district policy.
- Early graduates may forfeit participation in senior-year activities or dual credit programs offered exclusively in the fourth year.
- Students should consult their counselor for information on how early graduation may affect financial aid eligibility, including FAFSA timing.

Graduates- Valedictorian/Salutatorian

Selection criteria for Valedictorian and Salutatorian include academic performance and adherence to program requirements. In case of ties, specific tiebreaker policies are applied.

Guidance and Counseling Services

Cotulla ISD is committed to providing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that supports all students' academic, personal, social, and career development. Each campus is staffed with a certified school counselor who works collaboratively with students, families, and educators to ensure students are prepared for lifelong success.

Program Overview

In accordance with TEC §33.005 and the Texas Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs, Cotulla ISD counselors implement a balanced program built around four key components:

1. Guidance Curriculum – Direct instruction to help students develop essential skills in decision-making, responsible behavior, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and cultural awareness.
2. Responsive Services – Immediate support for students facing emotional, social, or mental health concerns, including referrals to outside agencies when appropriate.
3. Individual Planning – Assistance with goal-setting, graduation planning, postsecondary readiness, and monitoring academic progress.
4. System Support – Collaboration with school staff, families, and the community to create a supportive learning environment.

Counseling services are developmentally appropriate, aligned to student needs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, and guided by best practices recommended by the Texas Education Agency.

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to meet with counselors regularly to discuss:

- High school graduation requirements
- College and career readiness, including dual credit and endorsements
- Postsecondary planning (including ApplyTexas, FAFSA, SAT/ACT)
- Course selection and scheduling
- Career and vocational pathways

Each spring, Cotulla ISD counselors assist students in grades 5–11 with developing and reviewing their personalized graduation plans, as required by TEC §28.02121.

Personal Counseling

School counselors are available to support students experiencing personal, social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. This may include:

- Anxiety or stress
- Grief or trauma
- Conflict resolution
- Mental health or substance use concerns

Counselors may provide brief, solution-focused support or refer students to licensed mental health professionals in the community when needed.

Parental Notification and Consent

Per TEC §33.006, parents will be notified and written consent obtained before students participate in:

- Ongoing small-group or individual counseling
- Referrals for external counseling services
- Psychological or social-emotional assessments

Parents may preview counseling materials and may request in writing that their child not participate in specific guidance activities.

Crisis and Abuse Reporting

Texas law (TEC §38.004 and §261.101 of the Family Code) requires all school personnel—and any member of the public—to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or local law enforcement.

If you suspect a child is being harmed, please contact:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
- Online Reporting: www.txabusehotline.org

School counselors and administrators are available to assist families in accessing mental health and safety resources when abuse is suspected.

Confidentiality and Limitations

Counseling services are confidential, with the following exceptions:

- The student is a danger to self or others
 - There is suspected abuse or neglect
 - The student shares information about illegal activity
- In such cases, counselors must report the concern to appropriate authorities or parents, in accordance with law and district policy (See FFE(LEGAL), FFG(LEGAL), and FFB(LOCAL)).

Accessing Services

Students may request to speak with their counselor at any time. While walk-ins are welcome, appointments are encouraged to minimize disruption to instructional time. Parents are also welcome to schedule conferences with the counselor to support their child's academic and emotional well-being.

H

Harassment

[See *Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*]

Hazing

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, directed against a student that endangers the student's mental or physical health or safety for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members include other students.

Hazing is strictly prohibited by the district. Any student involved in hazing will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Hazing is also a criminal offense. A person commits a criminal offense if they:

- Engage in hazing;
- Solicit, encourage, direct, aid, or attempt to aid another in hazing; or
- Have firsthand knowledge of a planned or actual hazing incident and fail to report it to the campus principal or superintendent.

[See Board Policies FFI (LEGAL), FNC (LOCAL), and FNCC (LEGAL) for additional information.]

Health and Medical Services

Emergency Medical Treatment

In accordance with TEC §38.002, parents or guardians must provide up-to-date emergency contact information each year. This information allows school personnel to respond effectively in the event of an accident or medical emergency.

Campus-specific procedures:

- Elementary (Encinal & Ramirez/Burks): School nurses or aides provide first aid. Parents are contacted as needed.
- Middle School (Frank Newman MS): All illnesses or injuries are reported to the front office or nurse. Parents are notified for care beyond first aid.
- High School (Cotulla HS): No student may leave campus due to illness without nurse or administrator verification and parental consent.

Nurse's Office & Health Screenings

Each campus maintains a nurse's office or aide station to administer first aid and support students during illness or injury. Students must have a current Emergency Health Card on file.

Key protocols:

- A student may not leave due to illness unless cleared by nursing or administrative staff.
- Upon returning to school after illness, a doctor's or parent's note is required.
- Annual physical fitness assessments (Grades 3–12) are conducted per TEC §38.101.

Medication Administration Policy

Per TEC §22.052 and TAC §217.11, Cotulla ISD follows strict guidelines:

- All prescription and non-prescription medications must be provided by a parent/guardian in their original, properly labeled container.
- A written consent form is required before school staff can administer any medication.
- Medication for 15 days or less requires a parent note; for long-term use, a CISD Health Services Medication Orders and Consent Form is required.
- Self-carry is allowed only for asthma, diabetes, or anaphylaxis medications with proper documentation.

Prohibited: Students may not possess medication on campus without written authorization.

Health Screenings & Physical Exams

- Vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings are conducted in compliance with Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) guidelines.
- Fitness Gram testing is conducted annually in grades 3–12.

Immunizations (TEC §38.001; TAC §97.62)

All students must be fully immunized unless they have a valid exemption:

Required vaccines:

- DTaP, Polio, MMR, Hepatitis A & B, Varicella

Exemptions:

- Medical: Signed by a licensed U.S. physician; valid for 1 year unless noted.
- Conscientious/Religious: Must use the official DSHS notarized affidavit submitted within 90 days.

Provisional Enrollment: Allowed if at least one dose is received; full compliance must be achieved per DSHS schedule.

Insurance Coverage

Optional student insurance is offered annually, including:

- School-time coverage
- 24-hour coverage

The district may provide secondary insurance for students in extracurricular programs, subject to Board approval.

Head Lice Protocol

Mass screenings are discouraged. Only the parents of affected students are notified. Students may return after treatment and re-check by school personnel. Persistent issues may trigger intervention or outside referrals.

Psychotropic Drugs (TEC §38.016)

District employees may not recommend psychotropic medications. Only licensed professionals (nurses, physicians, mental health providers) may suggest evaluation.

Mental Health Intervention & Suicide Prevention

Per TEC §38.351 and local policy FFB(LOCAL):

- All staff are trained to recognize mental health concerns.
- Heather Ramirez, Federal Programs Coordinator, is the district liaison.
- Staff must report concerns to the liaison, who notifies families and provides referrals.
- Parental consent is required before screening or treatment.

Mental Health Evaluations

In accordance with Texas Education Code §38.004 and Texas Administrative Code Title 19, §103.1201, Cotulla ISD does not conduct mental health care screenings, psychological exams, or social-emotional evaluations without prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

Exceptions to this requirement may apply in the following situations:

- When the evaluation is ordered by a court of law,
- When required as part of a Texas Education Agency (TEA) special program monitoring investigation, or
- When the student is in immediate danger of harming self or others, requiring intervention for safety.

Parents have the right to:

- Review the content and purpose of any planned mental health assessment or related materials in advance,
- Decline participation by refusing written consent, and
- Receive notification of any mental health services or referrals made by school personnel.

This policy aligns with TEC §26.009 regarding parental rights to opt out of psychological testing and FERPA privacy protections related to student records.

Medical Appointments

Per TEC §25.087(b)(2), absences for medical or legal appointments are excused if students return the same day with proper documentation.

Medical Emergencies on Campus

- Students must immediately report illness or injury to the nurse or front office.
- Students are not permitted to leave campus without clearance through proper channels.
- Emergency procedures are reinforced through routine safety drills.

Higher Education Learning

Note: Dual credit courses must be taken through Southwest Texas College (SWTC) to be eligible for high school course credit or to satisfy graduation requirements. Courses taken from other institutions must receive prior written approval from campus administration.

Homeless Students

For assistance or more information about services for homeless students, please contact the District Homeless Liaison:

Dr. Ramiro Nava
(830) 879-3073, ext. 1011

Homework

Cotulla ISD supports the use of homework as a tool to reinforce learning, build responsibility, and extend practice beyond the classroom. Homework is designed to complement classroom instruction and provide meaningful opportunities for students to apply what they have learned.

Purpose and Expectations

- Homework may include reading, skill practice, or extension assignments to reinforce content taught in class.
- Teachers may assign homework as needed to support academic goals and student development.
- Assignments will be evaluated in a timely manner, with feedback provided to support student growth.
- When appropriate, teachers will return corrected classwork and homework within a reasonable timeframe, typically within one week.

Parent and Student Roles

- Parents are encouraged to:
 - Provide a quiet, distraction-free space for homework and reading.
 - Support routines that build study habits and responsibility.
 - Encourage students to read daily.
- Students are expected to:
 - Take responsibility for bringing home and returning materials, including books, homework, and supplies.
 - Complete assignments with integrity and on time.

Legal Reference

In accordance with Texas Education Code §26.006, parents have the right to access instructional materials used in their child’s education. Homework may reflect or extend those instructional materials. Teachers will use developmentally appropriate guidelines to ensure assignments align with student needs and district goals.

Homework is intended to reinforce skills and concepts taught in the classroom. It should be purposeful, directly connected to instruction, and evaluated promptly to provide students with meaningful feedback. Assignments may include reading practice or skill reinforcement, and students are encouraged to read daily at home. Parents are encouraged to provide a quiet and consistent environment for home study. Teachers will return corrected homework in a timely manner, generally within one week.

Honor Roll Recognition

Cotulla ISD celebrates academic excellence through Honor Roll recognition each six-week grading period. Students who maintain high academic performance are publicly recognized at the campus level to encourage continued achievement and academic focus.

Honor Roll Standards (Grades 2–12) Districtwide

- “A” Honor Roll: All grades must be 90 or above in core academic subjects.
- “B” Honor Roll: All grades must be 80 or above in core academic subjects, with at least one grade of 90 or higher.

Grades in core content areas—including Math, Reading, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies—are considered for eligibility. Conduct and effort grades do not affect honor roll status but are still reported to parents.

High School Dual Credit Exception

For Dual Credit courses at Cotulla High School, an “A” is defined as a grade of 83 or higher, per college partner grading policies. This adjustment applies only to honor roll calculations involving dual credit courses.

Refer to Section II of this handbook for full grading and GPA guidelines.

Honors Waiver – No Pass, No Play

The following guidelines will be used for high school students who do not make a 70 average in an advanced or honors course from the no pass–no play provision:

1. A student seeking a no pass–no play waiver for honors, Pre-AP, AP, or dual credit classes must fill out the necessary forms. (Students in a regular class are not eligible to apply for a no-pass, no-play waiver.)
2. A student may only apply for an advanced or honors course waiver if their failing grade in an advanced or honors course was 50 or above.
3. A student should have the expectation that they may receive a maximum of four waivers during the school year (two per semester).

I

Identification Badges

All students are required to have a campus-issued ID badge in their possession and comply with all identification requirements set by their campus. ID badges are used daily in the cafeteria and library, and may be stored and distributed by classroom teachers depending on campus procedures.

- The first ID badge is provided at no cost.
- A \$2.00 replacement fee will be charged for any lost, damaged, or defaced ID.
- Students who alter or deface their badge in any way must purchase a replacement.

Immunizations: Within Health and Medical Service

Insurance Coverage: Within Health and Medical Service

L

Leaving Campus (Cotulla High School Students)

Early Release for Work / Career Prep II

Cotulla High School supports career readiness through a work-based learning opportunity for eligible seniors. Students may request early release from campus to participate in paid employment aligned with real-world career skills. The program prioritizes academic success and must not interfere with graduation requirements.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be classified as a senior.
- Must have earned at least 21 credits toward graduation.
- Must have passed all required STAAR EOC assessments.
- Must be enrolled in a minimum of five class periods on campus.

Program Guidelines:

- Work release requests must be submitted and approved prior to the start of the fall semester; late requests will not be accepted after schedules are issued.
- Students must leave campus promptly during their scheduled work release period.
- Students may not return to campus during the school day.
- Students must not be employed by immediate family members or work at home-based businesses.
- Students are required to sign and adhere to a Shortened Day Contract outlining expectations.
- If a student becomes unemployed during the semester, they will be required to resume a full schedule for the remainder of the school year.

Monitoring:

- The campus School Resource Officer (SRO) will conduct routine workplace checks to verify student compliance.
- Work hours must align with normal school-day dismissal.

Noncompliance with program expectations may result in revocation of release privileges and disciplinary action.

Permission to Leave Campus During the School Day

For all other early dismissals (medical appointments, family emergencies, etc.), students must follow Cotulla High School's official sign-out procedure:

1. A parent note must be submitted to the Attendance Office before school begins. A dismissal slip will be issued with the approved release time.
2. The student must report to the library at the designated time to officially sign out.
3. Parents/guardians must enter the Front Office to check their child out or designate an approved individual listed on the registration form.

Note: Students who leave campus without following the procedures above will be considered truant and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Law Enforcement and Student Interaction

Questioning of Students

If law enforcement or authorized officials request to interview a student at school:

- The principal will verify the officer's identity and the reason for the interview.
- The principal will attempt to notify parents, unless a valid objection is presented.
- The principal will typically be present during the interview, unless objected to by the official conducting the questioning.

In cases involving child abuse investigations, the principal will fully cooperate with law enforcement, and parental notification may not occur as required by law.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law allows students to be taken into custody under the following circumstances:

- Compliance with a juvenile court order
- Arrest based on probable cause
- Probation violation (determined by a probation officer)
- Orders issued by Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement due to health or safety concerns
- Court directive to take the student into custody

Before releasing a student to a legally authorized person, the principal will verify identity and authority. Parental notification will be attempted unless a valid objection is raised or the parent has already been contacted.

Note: Notification may occur after the student has been released due to legal limitations on delaying or preventing the transfer.

Law Violations- Notification

The district is required by law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel responsible for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for a felony or certain misdemeanors.
- Staff who have regular contact with a student who:
 - Is required to register as a sex offender;
 - Has been convicted, adjudicated, or placed under deferred prosecution or adjudication for certain criminal offenses.

[See policies FL (LEGAL) and GRA (LEGAL) for more information.]

Library

Each Cotulla ISD campus library serves as an academic resource center designed to support classroom learning, independent study, and a lifelong love of reading. Libraries are equipped with books, multimedia materials, and digital technology selected to align with curriculum standards and to meet the

diverse academic and personal interests of students.

Library Use and Access

- Students may visit the library during designated hours, including before and after school and, with teacher permission, during class time.
- Library hours typically begin at 8:00 a.m., and students must sign in upon entering.
- A teacher-signed pass is required during class periods; only one student may be sent at a time per pass.
- Students must present a school ID to check out materials.

Checkout Procedures

- Books are checked out for a two-week period and may be renewed if needed.
- Students are responsible for all materials checked out in their name.
- Magazines and reference materials are for in-library use only during school hours.

Lost or Damaged Materials

- Students are expected to care for all library materials and will be required to pay for any lost or damaged items.
- Refunds will be issued for paid materials that are later returned in good condition.
- All library accounts must be settled at the end of each grading period.

Overdue Notices

- Overdue notices are sent regularly to students via school communication systems.
- Students are expected to resolve overdue items promptly, regardless of whether a notice is received.

Selection of Library Materials

- Librarians and teachers follow district-approved selection guidelines to ensure that each campus collection includes:
 - Accurate, up-to-date academic resources,
 - Materials suited to a range of reading levels and interests,
 - Age-appropriate content that reflects the maturity and academic needs of the student body.
- Because of the broad range of materials, students may encounter content that addresses complex or mature topics. Parents are strongly encouraged to:
 - Stay aware of their child's reading selections,
 - Engage in open conversations about library materials, and
 - Reach out to the campus librarian or administrator with any concerns.

Library Materials

Students are responsible for all books checked out in their name. Charges apply for lost, overdue, or damaged materials. Lost book refunds will deduct a \$3.00 fee. Students may not check out additional materials until their account is cleared.

This version is aligned with current handbook practices and reflects compliance with TASB and TEA expectations regarding access, fee waivers, and equitable use of district resources. Let me know if you'd like to attach the proper FP [LEGAL/LOCAL] link or add a note about ADA or Section 504 considerations.

Lost or Damaged Materials

Students are responsible for all school-issued materials, including textbooks, library books, technology, uniforms, or equipment. Any student who fails to return, loses, misplaces, or damages school property will be required to reimburse the district for the full replacement cost.

Until restitution is made, the student will be restricted from:

- Checking out any additional school materials,
- Participating in or attending extracurricular activities, including practices, performances, and competitions, and
- Engaging in school-sponsored events before, during, or after school hours.

These restrictions begin immediately after the last day of the school year in which the item was lost or damaged and remain in effect 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until the issue is resolved.

For questions regarding lost or damaged materials, please contact the campus principal or designated campus staff.

M

Make-Up Work

All students shall be allowed to make up work when they are absent from class. It is the student's responsibility to obtain missed assignments and complete them within the time permitted.

- Students are allowed one day for each day of excused absence, up to a maximum of five days, to complete make-up work.
- Teachers may allow additional time in extenuating circumstances.
- Assignments given before the absence may be due immediately upon return.
- Make-up tests should be scheduled during tutorials, when possible.
- A written excuse (signed by a parent, guardian, or physician) must be submitted upon return, even if prior notification was provided.

Students who fail to submit make-up work within the allowed period may receive a reduced grade according to the district's late work policy—up to a maximum of 30 points deducted per assignment.

Married and/or Pregnant Students

1. Any student who shall be married at the time such student seeks enrollment in any school of the district shall report the fact of the marriage, the name of his or
2. her spouse, and the place where the spouse resides.
3. Any student who marries after enrollment in any school of this District shall promptly report that fact to the principal of the school attended by the student and shall also report the name of his or her spouse and the place where the spouse resides.
4. There shall be no discrimination against any married or pregnant student because of marriage or pregnancy. Such student shall be allowed to attend the school where assigned; however, the student shall be expected to attend classes regularly and keep up with his/her school work.
5. No married student and/or pregnant student shall be denied the right to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular or other activities of the school because of marriage or pregnancy.
6. In the event that any student shall be or become pregnant during any term while enrolled in a school in this District, then, for the benefit of her health and welfare and that of her expected child, and for the purpose of informing school personnel so that counsel, protection, and advice may be given, she shall be required to inform the principal of the school as soon as such condition is known to her. Upon being so informed, the LSPSP Coordinator shall attempt to obtain from the pregnant student the name of her attending physician and consult with the physician for the purpose of determining when, and if, it is in the best interest for the health and welfare of the student and her expected child, that other appropriate educational arrangements should be made. They will be placed in (PRS) Pregnancy Related Services until released from their physician.
7. After the birth of a child of any pregnant student, the mother shall be permitted to re-enter school upon written advice of her physician and approval of the principal.
8. Special services are available to assist such students to continue their education. Counselors should be consulted for further information.

Meetings of Non-Curriculum-Related Student Groups

Student-led, non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet before and after school, as designated by the principal, in accordance with policy FNAB(LOCAL). A list of approved groups is available in the campus office.

Medication Administration Policy:

Within Health and Medical Services

Mental Health Intervention and Suicide Prevention:

Within Health and Medical Services

Medical Appointments:

Within Health and Medical Services

Medical Emergencies on Campus: Within Health and Medical Services

N

NCAA Athletic Eligibility

Students who plan on attending NCAA Division I colleges as eligible athletes must meet the following requirements:

Achieve a cumulative minimum grade point average of 2.30 (based on a maximum of 4.00) in a core curriculum of at least 16 academic courses, including:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Math (Algebra 1 or higher)
- 2 years of Social Science

Additional requirements:

- Achieve a cumulative minimum grade point average of 2.00 (based on a maximum of 4.00) in a core curriculum of at least 16 academic courses, including:
 - 4 years of English
 - 3 years of Math (Algebra 1 or higher)
 - 2 years of Social Science
 - 2 years of Natural or Physical Science (including one year of lab science)
 - 4 years of additional core academic units
 - 1 year of additional core academic units

Only courses that are defined as "academic" will be counted. Remedial, special education, vocational, developmental, and basic courses will not qualify. Courses must be at the regular or higher level of instruction. Students must earn a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches their core-course grade-point average on the sliding scale (e.g., a 2.400 core-course grade-point average requires a minimum 860 combined SAT score) or a 71-sum score on the ACT. It is the student's responsibility to see that appropriate verification of course and grade point average forms are requested. Please visit the NCAA eligibility website for the scale at www.eligibilitycenter.org. The NCAA frequently revises standards and effective dates, so students should contact their prospective college for current information

Nontraditional Academic Programs

[See *Requirements for a Diploma*]

P

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents who desire private conferences with teachers or the principal should contact the school in advance to arrange conferences during the school day. At no time should a visitor call a teacher from the class for a conference at the door of the room. Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to visit. A 24-hour advance notice is required to observe a class

Parent/Student Complaints

To ensure fairness for all parties, parents or community members with concerns about a school employee should follow these steps:

1. Schedule a meeting with the employee to address the concern directly.
2. If unresolved, schedule an appointment with the employee's supervisor (e.g., a teacher's supervisor is typically the campus principal).
3. If the issue remains, the supervisor will coordinate a meeting involving the parent and employee to mediate and resolve the concern.
4. If applicable, the matter may be referred to a campus or district-level committee (e.g., for attendance, discipline, or eligibility issues).
5. If unresolved, the parent may schedule a meeting with the superintendent. After exhausting all internal avenues, the parent may submit a written request to the superintendent to be placed on the agenda for the next regular school board meeting.

Level One Complaint

A student or parent must request a conference with the principal within 10 school days of the incident or when the issue became known. The principal will schedule and hold a conference within 7 school days of the request.

Level Two Complaint

If unsatisfied with the outcome of the Level One meeting, the parent may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee within 10 school days. A written complaint must be submitted in advance, including:

- A statement of the complaint
- Supporting evidence
- The requested resolution
- The parent's signature and date
- The date of the Level One conference

Level Three Complaint

If the issue remains unresolved after Level Two, the parent may submit a written request to the

Superintendent to place the complaint on the next regular Board meeting agenda. The Superintendent will notify the parent of the date, time, and location of the meeting. The Board may hear the complaint in closed session if it involves personnel, unless the employee involved requests an open session.

An audio recording of the Level Three hearing will be made. The Board will determine what action, if any, is appropriate.

[See policy FNG (LOCAL) for additional information.]

Parking Cars on Campus

Students who hold a valid Texas driver's license, comply with the drug testing policy, and have proof of insurance on their vehicle may be permitted to bring cars to school if they agree to maintain these and to follow all school safety and parking regulations. All vehicles must be registered through the Assistant Principal. Upon registration, a parking permit will be issued so that it may be displayed on the vehicle at all times. The speed limit on school property is 5 mph. Upon arrival at school, cars are to be locked, and students are to come immediately onto the campus. Vehicles must be parked in the designated area only. The parking lot is off-limits during the school day. Students in the parking lot without permission from a teacher and/or administrator will be subject to disciplinary action. Students violating parking regulations may also be subject to a fine.

Cars parked along the red fire lanes will be ticketed by the La Salle County Sheriff's Department.

Physical Education Participation and Excuse Policy

Physical Education (P.E.) is a state-required component of the school curriculum. All students are expected to participate fully unless medically excused. In cases where a student has a temporary or permanent physical condition that limits participation, the following procedures apply:

Parent and Medical Excuses

- A written note from a parent or guardian is required if a student is unable to participate due to illness or injury.
- If the excuse extends beyond three (3) consecutive P.E. days within a six-week period, a physician's note is required.
- Ongoing or repeated requests for exemption without medical documentation will not be accepted and may negatively impact the student's P.E. grade.

Restricted Physical Education

Students may be placed in a restricted physical education program when physical limitations can be accommodated through activity modifications within the regular P.E. setting. This program is overseen by the regular P.E. teacher and tailored to the student's specific needs.

Adapted Physical Education

When a student's condition requires more significant adjustments beyond what can be provided in a regular P.E. class, adapted physical education may be assigned. This follows the same documentation and request process as restricted P.E., and may include collaboration with additional instructional or support staff.

Footwear and Safety

Students must wear appropriate footwear on designated P.E. days to ensure safety during physical activity. Failure to wear proper attire may result in limited participation and impact the student's grade.

Grading and Participation

Non-participation without an approved excuse will negatively affect a student's P.E. grade. All requests for exemption or program modification are subject to administrative review and must be submitted in a timely manner.

Parking and Traffic Regulations

Responsibilities

1. All students, faculty, and staff members who park their vehicles on the campus must secure and display a parking permit.
2. Strict adherence to rules pertaining to speed and parking will be required to protect pedestrians and vehicles and to provide access to firefighting equipment and ambulance.
3. Texas laws governing motor vehicle operation are effective on all campus locations.
4. All persons should report accidents that occur to the campus administrator.

Parking Regulations

1. Cars must be parked within the stripes on paved surfaces.
2. Drivers will refrain from parking in places that may obstruct traffic. It is a violation of these regulations to park in the following manner, which may result in the vehicle being towed away:
 - On any curb, sidewalk, or island.
 - By a red curb.
 - In front of a fire hydrant.
 - In any place designated as a loading zone or marked "no parking."
 - In front of a movable barrier.
 - In any driveway, entrance, or exit.
 - Double parking.
 - Parking without a permit fixed to the windshield.
 - Parking in two spaces.
 - Parking on lawn areas.
 - Cars parked illegally or without permits may be towed.

Registration

1. Parking permits are valid for both day and evening for the academic year.

2. One and only one permit will be issued per student.
3. Registration information includes the operator's name and address, a valid driver's license, school identification card, vehicle license number, and description. Also, the name of the vehicle insurance company and policy number are required (the vehicle must be insured before a permit will be issued).
4. Car permits must be affixed to the rearview mirror.
5. If a car is driven for a short period, you must register your car in the Assistant Principal's Office as well.

Personal Property

Students should only bring items necessary for instructional use (e.g., pencils, paper, rulers). The district strongly discourages bringing items of value—including electronics, jewelry, musical instruments, large amounts of money, or other personal items.

- The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings.
- Campus administrators may—but are not obligated to—investigate lost or stolen property reports.
- Prohibited items will be confiscated, fines may be assessed, and items will be returned only to a parent/guardian.
- Illegal items or evidence will be turned over to law enforcement.

Violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP)

As required by TEC §28.0212, a Personal Graduation Plan shall be created for:

- Any middle or high school student who fails a state-mandated assessment, or
- Any student identified as unlikely to graduate within five years of entering ninth grade.

The plan must:

- Be designed by a counselor, teacher, or staff member designated by the principal.
- Include student and parent input on academic goals.
- Specify interventions, accelerated instruction, or credit recovery opportunities.

HB 4545 (2021 Legislative Session)

- Retention and retesting requirements for 5th and 8th grade STAAR have been eliminated.
- Students who do not meet satisfactory standards must instead participate in accelerated instruction, which may include tutoring or other targeted supports, under the guidelines of TEC §28.0211.

For more information on promotion standards, curriculum mastery, or individual concerns, contact the campus principal, counselor, or the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. See also local board policies EIE(LEGAL), EIE(LOCAL), and EIF(LEGAL) for specific district regulations.

Placement

Placement of a student in remediation or advanced placement classes is determined by standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, past performance of the student, and entry placement tests. When new students are enrolled, they are placed in classes based on the information and records supplied at that time by the student and parents. If official records do not agree with verbal or unofficial information, student placement will be adjusted in accordance with the official records.

Playground

Only currently enrolled Cotulla ISD Elementary students are allowed to use the playground equipment. The playground will be closed between the hours of 3:30 PM and 8:00 AM and at all times when classes are not in session.

Pest Control Program

The district periodically applies pesticides. For more information, contact Leonarda Jasso at (830) 879-3073, ext. 2900.

Pest Management Plan

Only state- and federally-approved pest control products are used by the district. Except in emergency situations, notification signs will be posted at least 48 hours prior to pesticide application inside school buildings.

Parents who wish to receive advance notice before pesticide application within their child's instructional area may contact Leonarda Jasso at (830) 879-3073, ext. 2900.

Prayer

Students have the right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school as long as it does not disrupt instruction or school activities. The school will not encourage, discourage, or require any student to engage in or refrain from prayer or meditation.

Promotion and Retention

In accordance with Texas Education Code §28.021, a student shall be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of 70 or above, based on course-level or grade-level standards aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

General District Guidelines (Grades 1–11)

- Promotion is based on curriculum mastery, evaluated through course assignments and unit assessments.
- Each grade level, content area, and course shall have coordinated expectations and standards, including access to compensatory/accelerated instruction.
- Students in special education shall be evaluated according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and mastery expectations.

- Parents of students at risk of retention will be notified by the beginning of the fifth six weeks and advised to consider summer school or other district academic interventions.
- No student will be retained more than once in grades K–8 unless approved by a committee consisting of the student’s teacher(s), two administrators, and the parent(s).

Elementary Grades (1–5)

- Grade 1: Promotion requires mastery of 70% of all TEKS-based subject areas and “meeting standard” or above in English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) and Mathematics.
- Grades 2–5: Promotion requires:
 - An overall average of 70 or higher, and
 - A grade of 70 or higher in Language Arts and Mathematics.

Middle School Grades (6–8)

- Promotion is based on:
 - An overall average of 70 or higher, and
 - A grade of 70 or higher in at least three of the following core subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
- A student must pass both semesters or average a 70 across the year to earn credit for a course.

High School Grades (9–12)

- Grade-level advancement is based on course credits earned:
 - Promotion to Grade 10: minimum 6.5 credits
 - Promotion to Grade 11: minimum 13.5 credits
 - Promotion to Grade 12: minimum 20.5 credits
- Full credit is awarded if a student earns 70 or above in both semesters of a full-year course or if the final average of the two semesters is 70 or above.
- If a semester is failed and later repeated with a passing grade, credit is awarded for that semester. Both the original and retake grades are recorded and included in GPA calculations

Promotion Policy

To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student shall attain an overall average of 70 or above for the year in all courses taken. In addition, students shall attain an average of 70 or above in three of the following subjects: language arts (including required reading intervention classes), mathematics, social studies, and science. Districts are encouraged not to require a student to repeat any course in which an average of 70 or above is maintained for the year; the summer component of the optional extended year program may address the need for credit recovery. Eighth-grade students who are placed in 9th grade will not be allowed to participate in the end-of-year ceremony and are subject to the UIL Eligibility rules for “placed” students.

Protection of Student Rights

In accordance with Texas Education Code §§26.009–26.010 and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. §1232h, Cotulla ISD is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of students and families in all instructional and research-related activities.

Parents have the right to:

- Inspect all instructional materials used as part of the district's curriculum.
- Review any survey, analysis, or evaluation involving their child that is funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education before it is administered.
- Consent or deny participation in any such activity involving sensitive personal information.

Prior written notice and parental consent (or student consent if the student is age 18 or an emancipated minor) is required before a student may participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation funded by the federal government that includes one or more of the following topics:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parents
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of others with whom the student has a close family relationship
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as those with lawyers, physicians, or clergy
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parents
- Income, except when required by law to determine program eligibility or financial assistance

These protections apply to all federally funded surveys and any district-administered surveys containing sensitive content, as outlined above. For more information or to exercise your rights under TEC or federal law, contact the campus principal or refer to Board Policy EF (LEGAL) and FL (LEGAL).

Public Display of Affection

To preserve a respectful and professional learning environment, students are expected to refrain from public displays of affection (PDA) while on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. PDA includes, but is not limited to, hand-holding, kissing, hugging, or any form of intimate physical contact. Such behavior is considered disruptive to the educational setting and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Publications – Student Speech

The district retains the right to exercise editorial control over student expression in school-sponsored publications, including newsletters, yearbooks, and other print or digital media. In accordance with *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988), and TEC §25.901, educators may regulate student speech in these contexts when it is reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.

The district may refuse to publish or sponsor content that:

1. Substantially disrupts school operations.
2. Violates the rights of others.
3. Is vulgar, profane, or otherwise inappropriate.
4. Promotes illegal or unsafe behavior.
5. Is developmentally unsuitable for its intended audience.
6. Falls below editorial standards as determined by faculty sponsors.
7. Associates the school with a political viewpoint or controversy

Q

Questioning of Students

School officials are not required to notify parents when questioning students about school-related matters (TEC §37.001 and related case law). In the event law enforcement or other government agencies need to interview a student:

- The principal must verify and record the identity and credentials of the official and the purpose of the interview.
- If the questioning is part of a child abuse investigation, the principal will comply fully and refrain from notifying parents, in accordance with *Family Code §261.302* and FFG(LEGAL).
- In non-abuse matters, parental notification will be attempted unless the requesting officer objects.
- If an officer has a warrant, court order, or directive to apprehend, the school will not impede custody. If the student is removed from school grounds, proper sign-out procedures will be requested.

R

Random Drug Testing

Statement of Need and Purpose

Cotulla ISD has a vital interest in maintaining a positive learning environment that is safe and healthy for all students. To fulfill that purpose and as a proactive measure to keep our schools' drug-free, the district is adopting a random drug testing policy for students participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities and all students seeking campus driving or parking privileges. The program is academically non-punitive and is designed to create a safe, drug-free environment for students and assist them in getting help when needed. Employees of Cotulla ISD will also be encouraged to participate in the program on a voluntary basis.

By adopting a random drug testing policy, the district desires to:

1. Provide for the health and safety of all students.
2. Undermine the effects of peer pressure by providing a legitimate reason for students to refuse to use illegal drugs.
3. Deter students from using drugs.
4. Prevent injury or harm to students that may arise as a result of drug use during

extracurricular activities and/or driving.

5. Encourage students who use drugs to participate in a drug treatment program.

Students Subject to Testing

Since drug use can increase the risk of injury to students participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities and since these students are often role models for other students, the district shall require all students in grades 7 through 12 who participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities and/or request campus driving or parking privileges to undergo random drug testing. School-sponsored extracurricular activities are identified in (but not limited to) Attachment A. Participation includes practice, competition, and involvement in events of the extracurricular activities. Participation does not include attendance at school events such as athletic contests, drama productions, or social functions.

Informed Consent for Testing

Written parental consent to random student drug testing must be completed before a student is granted campus parking or driving privileges or allowed to participate in a practice or competition of a school-sponsored extracurricular activity. No student may join or participate in a practice or competition or be granted campus parking or driving privileges until the consent form is executed and on file with the designated school official. If the student is of legal age (age 18 or older), he or she must sign the permission form. Consent forms are valid for the current school year only. Because participation in extracurricular activities and campus driving or parking is a privilege and not a right, refusal to consent to random drug testing will result in the denial of parking privileges and/or participation in the identified extracurricular activities.

Dissemination of Information

Prior to the commencement of drug testing each school year, an orientation session will be held with all students and parents to explain the drug testing policy. The students and parents will be informed of the sample collection process, privacy arrangements, drug testing procedures, and other areas which may help to reassure the student and help avoid embarrassment or uncomfortable feelings about the drug testing process. The students and parents will also be provided an educational presentation about the harmful consequences of drug use. This random drug testing policy shall be distributed to all students in grades 7 through 12 at the beginning of each school year. Newly enrolled students will receive a copy of the policy as they register at their campus.

Testing Procedures

Frequency Initially, all students requesting campus parking or driving privileges or participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities will be tested. Thereafter, once each month, at least 30 students in grades 7 through 12 will be randomly tested. If a student is absent for the scheduled initial test, the parent will be responsible for taking the student to the nearest testing site acceptable by the district before the student is granted campus driving or parking privileges or allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities. Each school year the administration will determine the number of students to be tested. The testing entity will select the dates for conducting the monthly random drug test; the selection of dates will not follow any recognizable pattern.

A. Random Selection of Students will be chosen for the testing by computer-generated random selection conducted by the district. The random selection process is intended to eliminate subjective factors from playing a role in the selection of the students to be tested.

B. Testing Standards Testing will be conducted through accepted scientific means using approved practices and procedures established by the testing entity selected by the district. The testing parameters shall be set at industry standards as defined by the Texas Department of Health & Health Services. The testing entity will be certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) following the guidelines of the Texas Department of Health Services. The testing entity will have greater than five years of experience in toxicology testing and chain-of-custody procedures. The drug test is performed by urinalysis. Drug tests shall meet all requirements as required by the Texas Department of Health Services.

C. Collection of the Sample Student confidentiality will be of the utmost importance. All testing will be performed at the school site except when special circumstances require testing at South Texas Rural Health Services (this would include a student who has to be drug tested monthly and the student is absent on the day of on-site testing). The district will develop a methodology for keeping the identity of students confidential in case a positive test result occurs. Upon the testing entity's arrival at school, the randomly selected student names will be given to the designated school official, who will arrange for these students to report to the collection area. Any student randomly selected for testing who is not in school on the day of testing will be tested at the next available testing time (unless the student must be tested monthly due to a previous positive test); arrangements may be made for special collections with prior approval of the designated school official. Students will be tested in a private location under the supervision of a testing entity official of the same sex. Students will provide a urine sample in a restroom or other private facility behind a closed stall. The supervising school official will assist the testing entity representative in testing the warmth of the specimen and ensuring an accurate chain of custody. A testing entity representative will directly observe the students providing their urine sample. Facilities are secure with only one student testing at a time to assure security and confidentiality of each individual. The urine sample will be collected in a sealed specimen collection container provided by the testing entity. The students will provide the collected sample to the testing entity representative and the supervising school official will confirm that the student's identification information on the sample is correct. The testing entity representative will safeguard the specimens.

D. Refusal to provide a sample or noncompliance with the testing procedures by any student engaged in school-sponsored extracurricular activities and/or approved campus driving or parking privileges will be considered a positive test result and will be reported to the appropriate school representatives to face the consequences pursuant to this policy.

E. Substances The district reserves the right to test for alcohol, performance-enhancing substances (steroids), and any other test the Cotulla ISD deems necessary. The school district will comply with UIL mandates dealing with anabolic steroid testing.

Test Results

A. Confidentiality of Results Student privacy will be protected in accordance with all applicable laws. Records of test results will be kept confidential and provided only at the discretion of the Superintendent. Test results are kept separate from other school records and school personnel are only allowed to view the information if they have a legitimate educational interest in the results. Results will not be shared with law enforcement except as required by law. Upon written request of a parent or guardian or a student of legal age, test results may be released to treatment facilities. All test results will be destroyed when the student graduates from Cotulla ISD. The test results will not be transferred to another school district.

B. Positive Test Review Officer (PTRO) The testing entity will provide a PTRO for interpreting and verifying test results.

C. Notification Whenever a student's test result indicates the presence of a prohibited substance, the parent or guardian will be contacted by the school Superintendent or designee within one school day of receiving a confirmed positive test result. The district will inform the parents that a positive result occurred and refer them to the testing entity for further instruction. The PTRO will confer with a parent or guardian and determine if there is a medical explanation for the positive test result. If the parent or guardian provides a medical excuse with accompanying documentation within two days, the PTRO will report the test result as negative. However, without medical documentation, the PTRO will report a confirmed positive test result to the designated school official within one school day of conferring with the student's parent or guardian. The PTRO may use quantitative results to determine if positive results on repeat testing indicate recent use of illegal drugs or the natural decline of levels of the illegal drug from the body. If the PTRO feels the quantitative levels do not reflect current use, then a negative result may be reported.

D. Retest Students that test positive may request a second test. A request for a retest must be made to the designated school official in writing within 48 hours from the time the parents were first notified of a positive test result by the PTRO. Students bear the expense for any retest. However, where there is a valid medical excuse for a positive test, there is no need for retesting.

Consequences

Whenever a student tests positive for a drug in a test conducted under the provisions of this policy or the urine specimen has been determined to be adulterated, the student will face the following consequences:

Initial Positive Test Result (First Offense)

The student or parent must provide documentation to the Superintendent or designee that he or she has actively enrolled in a certified substance abuse counseling program as determined by the Department of Health Services within 10 school days of the initial conference of a positive test result.

The student will be allowed to continue with participation in extracurricular activities and will not lose parking or driving privileges for the first offense as soon as they submit to a retest and a negative result is received by the district.

The student will automatically be tested during each subsequent random drug testing event for one calendar year if the student wishes to return to any extracurricular activities.

Failure to meet these requirements within the specified timelines will result in the student being suspended from participation in all identified extracurricular activities and lose privilege for driving and parking privileges until documentation of completion of the counseling requirements is received by the Superintendent or designee and a negative (clean) drug test result is on file.

Second Confirmed Positive Test Result (Second Offense) Within One Calendar Year

A conference must be held between the campus principal or assistant principal, personnel responsible for administering the campus driving or parking privileges and/or the extracurricular activities the student participates in, the student, and the parent or guardian.

The student will be suspended from participation in all identified extracurricular activities or campus driving or parking privileges for 45 calendar days from the date that the parent and student are informed of the positive test result. However, if participation in the extracurricular activities is required for the class or affects the student's grade, the student may be required to satisfy participation requirements in alternative ways.

The student must provide documentation that he or she is actively attending or successfully completed an additional requirement of counseling from an entity certified by the Department of Health Services.

The student must submit to a new drug test and have a negative (clean) test result within 45 calendar days as of the date of the conference with the parent.

The student will automatically be tested during each subsequent random drug testing event for one calendar year.

Failure to meet these requirements within the specified timelines will result in the student being suspended from participation in all identified activities until documentation of completion of the counseling requirements is received by the Superintendent or designee and a negative (clean) drug test result is on file.

Third Confirmed Positive Test Result (Third Offense) Within One Calendar Year

A conference must be held between the campus principal or assistant principal, personnel responsible for administering the campus driving or parking privileges and/or the extracurricular activities the student participates in, the student, and the parent or guardian.

The student will be suspended from participation in any identified extracurricular activity or campus driving or parking privileges for 90 calendar days from the date that the parent and student are informed of the positive test result. However, if participation in the extracurricular activities is required for the class or affects the student's grade, the student may be required to satisfy participation requirements in alternative ways.

The student must provide documentation that he or she attended and successfully completed additional requirements of counseling from an entity certified by the Department of Health Services.

The student must submit to a new drug test and have a negative (clean) test result at the expiration of the suspension period.

The student will automatically be tested during each subsequent random drug testing event for one calendar year.

Failure to meet these requirements within the specified timelines will result in the student being suspended from participation in all identified activities until documentation of completion of the counseling requirements is received by the Superintendent or designee and a negative (clean) drug test result is on file.

Fourth Confirmed Positive Test Result (Fourth Offense) Within One Calendar Year

A conference must be held between the campus principal or assistant principal, personnel responsible for administering the campus driving or parking privileges and/or the extracurricular activities the student participates in, the student, and the parent or guardian.

The student will be suspended from participation in any identified extracurricular activity or campus driving or parking privileges for one calendar year (365 days). However, if participation in the extracurricular activities is required for the class or affects the student's grade, the student may be required to satisfy participation requirements in alternative ways.

The student must provide documentation that he or she attended and successfully completed additional requirements of counseling from an entity certified by the Department of Health Services.

The student must submit to a new drug test and have a negative (clean) test result at the expiration of the suspension period.

The student will automatically be tested during each subsequent random drug testing event for one calendar year.

If the student participates in a class associated with the extracurricular activity (such as but not limited to Athletics or Band), the student will be reassigned to another class until the suspension is lifted.

Failure to meet these requirements within the specified timelines will result in the student being suspended from participation in all identified activities until documentation of completion of the counseling requirements is received by the Superintendent or designee and a negative (clean) drug test result is on file.

Substance Abuse Counseling All costs for counseling will be the responsibility of the parent. The district will accept substance abuse counseling provided by a licensed chemical dependency counselor or at any agency certified by the Texas Department of Health Services.

Refusal to participate in a drug test after signing the consent form will result in the same consequences as if the student had received a positive test.

Academically Non-Punitive Action A positive drug test will not affect the student's grade in any curricular

class associated with the extracurricular activities. However, if participation in the extracurricular activities is required for the class or affects the student's grade, the student may be required to satisfy participation requirements in alternative ways. The result of the drug tests will not be documented in the student's academic records.

Relationship to the Student Code of Conduct

This random drug testing policy does not in any way modify the disciplinary provisions of the Cotulla ISD Student Code of Conduct or Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code. If a student sells, gives, delivers, possesses, uses, or is under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or alcohol, the student will be subject to the disciplinary provisions of the Student Code of Conduct. A positive drug test is not in and of itself proof that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. For more information on district disciplinary rules regarding drugs and alcohol, please refer to the Cotulla ISD Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook.

Appeal Process

A parent or student may appeal a positive result in accordance with District Policy FNG (Local) governing student and parent complaints. Consequences established in this drug testing policy will not be deferred pending the completion of the appeal process. If the conclusion of the appeal is not in the student's favor, the number of days the student was prohibited from participation during the appeal process will be deducted from the total days of suspension the student must serve as a consequence for the positive drug test. If the conclusion of the appeal is in the student's favor, the student will be allowed to return to normal participation in all activities.

Rank in Class (Cotulla High School)

Class rank is determined by a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) after numerical grades have been converted to the Grade Point Conversion Scale (see chart). Official class rank and GPA are recorded on the student's Academic Achievement Record (AAR) at the end of the first semester of their senior year and then again at the end of the last semester of the school year in which they graduate, which holds as the final GPA and class rank for graduation. A student's AAR is an official school record of all courses and grades, and once recorded, they cannot be removed. Courses designated as Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, or Dual Credit are weighted for the purpose of class ranking for students who entered high school as freshmen.

Dual Credit and AP courses will receive equal weight as Advanced courses. Pre-AP courses will be weighted as Pre-AP and all other courses will be classified as regular. When a student changes course levels resulting in a level change of weighted points, points will be awarded on a semester basis or yearly basis, whichever applies. Students transferring to Cotulla High School from other school districts will receive the above weighted points as delineated no matter what weighted points, they received from their previous school district. No student will be considered for the top two class rank positions unless that student has been continuously enrolled at Cotulla High School for the seven consecutive semesters immediately preceding graduation.

Traditionally, the positions of valedictorian and salutatorian are awarded to the two top-ranking students. Honor students graduating Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Cum Laude will receive special recognition during the graduation ceremony.

- Summa Cum Laude: GPA 100 – 96.7
- Magna Cum Laude: GPA 96.6 – 93.3
- Cum Laude: GPA 93.2 – 90

Records Retention

Special education records will be securely maintained for 5 years post-enrollment, then properly destroyed per district policy.

Recovering Credit Through Repetition of Courses

Students at Cotulla High School who fail both semesters of a full-year course must repeat both semesters and earn a combined average of 70 or higher to receive credit or qualify for entry into the credit recovery program. If a student passes one semester of a full-year course, credit will be awarded for that semester only.

The following guidelines apply:

- Students must obtain counselor approval before repeating any previously failed semester of a course.
- Seniors seeking to repeat a failed first semester before completing the second semester must have counselor approval. Seniors who passed the first semester but are failing the second may enroll in the second semester through credit recovery.
- Only passing grades (70 or higher) earned through an approved regular course, summer school, or credit recovery program will be accepted for credit replacement.
- Both the original failing grade and the new passing grade will be included in GPA calculations unless the original course teacher accepts the credit recovery work and adjusts the grade accordingly.
- All students must meet additional eligibility criteria established by CHS administration to participate in credit recovery.

These measures are in place to support student success while maintaining academic integrity and adherence to state and district policy.

Release of Students from School

In accordance with TEC §25.087, student attendance is mandatory, and early release is discouraged unless necessary. To minimize disruption to learning:

- Parents must submit a written request for early release, and students must follow sign-out procedures.
- Only individuals listed on the student's emergency contact card may check out a student.
- Students who become ill during the school day must receive permission to see the nurse. The nurse, not the student, will determine if the student should be sent home and will notify the parent or guardian

Report Cards, Progress Reports, and Parent Conferences

Cotulla ISD issues report cards every six weeks to communicate each student's academic performance, conduct, and attendance in each class or subject. In addition, a written progress report will be provided to parents at the end of the first three weeks of each grading period.

If a student receives a grade below 75 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent is expected to schedule a conference with the teacher of that course to discuss academic concerns and support strategies.

Report cards are typically issued on the Thursday following the close of each six-week period.

Parents are encouraged to schedule additional conferences throughout the year to monitor their child's academic progress and overall development. Open communication between home and school is essential for student success.

Responsibilities of Students

Students are expected to come to school prepared to learn and to conduct themselves in a way that supports a safe and respectful learning environment. All students must follow school rules, demonstrate personal responsibility, and respect campus expectations for behavior, property, and academic engagement.

Personal Belongings and Inappropriate Items

To minimize distractions and maintain order, students should not bring personal or non-instructional items to school. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Toys (balls, cars, stuffed animals, etc.)
- Trading cards (e.g., Pokémon cards)
- Makeup, nail polish, or similar personal grooming products
- Food, candy, or gum not approved by a teacher
- Electronic devices, including cell phones, smartwatches (e.g., Apple Watches), earbuds, and similar technology unless expressly permitted for instructional purposes

In accordance with TEC §37.001(a), the campus principal has the discretion to prohibit or confiscate any item deemed inappropriate or disruptive to the educational setting.

Confiscation and Return of Items

- Any prohibited or inappropriate items brought to school may be confiscated immediately.
- Confiscated items will only be returned to a parent or legal guardian during school office hours.
- Teachers and school staff are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items, including toys and electronics.

Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for:

- Respecting school property and the property of others
- Following campus rules and staff instructions
- Keeping non-instructional items at home unless requested by a teacher
- Reporting concerns related to safety or behavior to a trusted adult

Retaliation

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation]

S

Six Weeks Progress Reports

Date Ending First Three Weeks of Grading Period Report Mailed/Sent to Parent or Guardian:

1. August 28-September 4, 2025
2. October 13-16, 2025
3. November 17-21, 2025
4. January 26-30, 2026
5. March 9-13, 2026
6. April 27-30, 2026

Report Card Dates:

1. September 25, 2025 (1st 6 weeks) OPEN HOUSE TBD
2. November 6, 2025 (2nd 6 weeks)
3. December 18, 2025 (3rd 6 weeks)
4. February 12, 2026 (4th 6 weeks) **OPEN HOUSE TBD**
5. April 9, 2026 (5th 6 weeks)
6. May 21, 2026 (6th 6 weeks) Elementary (sent home with students)
7. May 29, 2026 (6th 6 weeks) Secondary (mailed)

Safety

Cotulla ISD is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff. While the district has adopted and regularly reviews comprehensive safety procedures, student cooperation is essential in supporting school safety.

Students are expected to:

- Refrain from conduct that places themselves or others at risk.
- Adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, this handbook, and all campus-specific safety rules issued by school staff or bus drivers.
- Immediately report any threats, unsafe behavior, or suspicious individuals to a teacher, principal, or other staff member.
- Be familiar with all emergency evacuation routes, shelter-in-place procedures, and warning signals.
- Follow the directions of teachers, bus drivers, law enforcement officers, and other staff during drills or real emergencies.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents/guardians may purchase low-cost accident insurance to help cover medical expenses in the event of student injury. The district may provide limited coverage for students involved in extracurricular activities, which pays secondary to any existing family insurance.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

To ensure proper care in the event of a medical emergency during school or a school-related activity, parents are required to complete an Emergency Medical Consent Form each year. This includes contact information, known allergies, medications, and preferred medical providers. Please notify the school nurse of any updates throughout the year.

Bleeding Control Kits (Stop the Bleed)

In accordance with Texas Education Code §38.030 and House Bill 496, Cotulla ISD is equipped with bleeding control stations in all school facilities and portable classrooms. Designated staff are trained in the use of these trauma kits to respond to severe injuries. These stations are available for use during emergencies before medical professionals arrive.

Threat Assessment and Safe & Supportive Schools Program

As required under TEC §37.115, Cotulla ISD has established a Threat Assessment Team on each campus as part of its Safe and Supportive Schools Program. This multidisciplinary team evaluates potential threats, supports at-risk students, and helps maintain a safe environment through early intervention and wraparound services. Reports of potential threats are taken seriously and handled in accordance with state-mandated protocols.

Anonymous Reporting of Safety Concerns

Students, parents, and community members are encouraged to report concerns involving threats, bullying, or school safety. Reports can be made confidentially to a campus administrator or anonymously using the district's reporting system (contact your school office for instructions).

Drills: Fire, Tornado, Lockdown, and Other Emergencies

In compliance with TEC §37.108, the district conducts emergency response drills regularly, including:

- Fire drills
- Severe weather (tornado) drills
- Lockdown and active threat drills
- Evacuation and shelter-in-place procedures

When the alarm sounds, students must follow the instructions of teachers or emergency responders promptly and remain calm and orderly.

Emergency School Closing

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies affecting school operations, Cotulla ISD will notify parents through:

- District website: www.cotullaisd.net
- District Facebook page
- Local television news stations (KSAT 12, KENS 5, WOAI 4, KGNS 8)
- Local radio stations (KXTN 107.5 FM, KTSA 550 AM)

Parents are encouraged to ensure all contact information is current in the district's notification system to receive real-time alerts.

Safety at School

Cotulla ISD is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. In accordance with Texas Education Code §37.108, each campus follows an approved Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and adheres to health and safety protocols required by law. Campuses may implement additional site-specific safety procedures to address building design, traffic flow, and supervision needs.

Campus Access and Visitor Procedures

To maintain a secure school environment:

- All visitors must check in at the campus front office upon arrival.
- Photo identification is required for all visitors.
- Some campuses, including Encinal Elementary, are equipped with a secure vestibule and metal detectors.
- Visitors may be asked to use a buzzer system for entry and must follow all posted safety signage and staff instructions.

In accordance with TEC §37.105, unauthorized persons will be asked to leave school property and may be subject to removal by law enforcement if they fail to comply.

General Safety Guidelines for Students and Families

To ensure student safety on and around campus, Cotulla ISD expects all families to follow these rules:

- Use crosswalks when walking to and from school.
- Walk on sidewalks or along the edge of the road where no sidewalks exist.
- Drop off and pick up students only in designated areas.
- Do not walk across driveways—parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring children are escorted safely.
- Proceed directly to school in the morning and go straight home after dismissal.
- No skateboards, inline skates, or wheeled shoes are permitted on campus.
- Bicycles must be walked on school property and parked in designated bike racks.
- Playground equipment may only be used with staff supervision and permission.

Health and Conduct Expectations

- Students may sanitize hands upon entering the building.
- Facemasks are optional and may be worn as preferred by the student or family.

- No tobacco, vaping, or e-cigarette use is permitted on school property, including inside vehicles (TEC §38.006).
- Cell phone use while driving on school grounds is prohibited for all drivers.

School Resource Officers and Emergency Preparedness

- Certain campuses, such as Encinal Elementary, are staffed with a School Resource Officer (SRO) to support student safety and security.
- Regular safety drills (fire, lockdown, evacuation) are conducted in alignment with state law and district protocols.

School Facilities Use by Students Before and After School

Designated areas of the school campus will be open to students before and after school for approved purposes. Students are expected to remain in the specific area where their supervised activity is taking place. Unless granted permission by the supervising teacher or sponsor, students may not access other areas of the campus. After dismissal, students not involved in an authorized after-school activity under adult supervision must leave school grounds promptly.

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student behavior on campus before and after school and at all school-sponsored off-campus events. These include rehearsals, tutorials, club meetings, and athletic practices. Students are subject to the same behavioral expectations and disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct, along with any additional rules established by sponsors or administrators for specific programs.

Use of Hallways During Class Time

Students are not permitted to loiter or stand in hallways during instructional time. Unauthorized presence in hallways may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Searches and Student Property

General Searches

To promote a safe and drug-free environment, school officials may conduct searches without a warrant, as permitted by law and TEC §37.009.

Personal Belongings

Student belongings, including backpacks, may be searched at any time school officials have reasonable cause to believe they contain items prohibited by district policy. The student's presence is not required for the search to take place.

Desks and Lockers

Desks and lockers remain the property of the district, even when assigned to students. Searches may be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists. Students are responsible for the security of their assigned space and should not share combinations or leave lockers unlocked. Parents will be notified if contraband

is discovered.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are subject to search at any time based on reasonable suspicion. Students are responsible for the contents of their vehicle and must ensure it is locked at all times. Vehicles found to contain prohibited items may result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

Use of Trained Dogs

Trained detection dogs may be used without notice to alert school officials to the presence of contraband in lockers, vehicles, classrooms, and common areas. If a trained dog alerts to a location, school officials may search the area further.

Schedule Changes

Student schedules are created based on academic needs, student preferences, graduation requirements, and staffing availability. While schedule changes may occasionally be necessary, they are limited to specific timelines and reasons. Each campus follows procedures tailored to its students' grade levels and academic structure.

1. Teacher/Classroom Requests (Elementary Only)

Applies to: Encinal Elementary and Ramirez/Burks Elementary

- Teacher change or classroom placement requests are not considered until after the first six weeks of school.
- All changes after this point are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the campus principal.
- Requests must be based on substantial academic or social needs, not personal preference.

2. Middle School Schedule Changes

Applies to: Newman Middle School (Grades 6–8)

- Schedule changes are allowed during the first 10 school days of the year.
- All change requests are subject to review by a counselor or administrator.
- Schedule changes may be made for:
 - Placement errors (e.g., duplicate classes)
 - Special programs (e.g., ARD, 504, ESL)
 - Principal-identified student needs
- No elective or teacher changes are permitted after the deadline unless there is documented justification.

3. High School Schedule Changes

Applies to: Cotulla High School (Grades 9–12)

Cotulla High School builds its master schedule around student course selections made in the spring. Because staffing is based on these choices, schedule changes are limited.

General Guidelines:

- All schedule change requests require a parent/guardian signature.
- Clerical corrections (e.g., missing class periods, wrong courses) will be addressed immediately.
- Valid requests must be made during the first week of the semester.

Permitted Changes Include:

- Student did not meet a course prerequisite
- Physical or academic hardship documented by the teacher or counselor
- Course level mismatch (e.g., Pre-AP placement concerns)
- ARD or 504-related instructional needs
- Principal-approved exception for extenuating circumstances

Schedule Change Timeline at CHS:

Change Type	Time Frame
Elective preference changes	Before school begins (pre-registration)
Urgent/academic need-based changes	Through end of Week 1 of the semester

Appeals:

If a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision, they may appeal to the campus principal for final review.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Under Section 504, no qualified student with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. For more information, please refer to 34 CFR §104.4(a) or contact the campus Section 504 Coordinator.

Site-Based Decision Making

Cotulla ISD engages stakeholders in district and campus planning through site-based decision-making committees composed of staff, parents, and community/business representatives. These committees advise on:

1. Goal setting
2. Organizational structure
3. Staffing
4. Professional development
5. Curriculum and instruction
6. Resource allocation

Parents or community members interested in participating should contact 879-3073 ext. 1001 or their campus principal.

Skateboards, Scooters, and Rollerblades

Use of skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, and similar items is prohibited on school property. If a student uses any of these as transportation to school, the item must be walked and carried once on campus. Items must be stored in a designated location approved by campus administration during school hours.

Social Activities

School-sponsored social activities such as dances and parties must take place on campus unless otherwise authorized by the principal. All after-hours use of school facilities must be scheduled through the administrative office.

Special Programs

Cotulla ISD offers a variety of special programs designed to meet the unique needs of eligible students. These include services for:

- Gifted and Talented students
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Emergent Bilingual (English Learner) students
- Migrant students
- Students with dyslexia
- Students with disabilities, including those served under Section 504

Each program has a designated coordinator who can assist with eligibility questions, available services, and referrals to additional support resources both within the district and through outside agencies.

For more information, please contact the appropriate program coordinator listed below:

- Gifted and Talented Program: [Heather Ramirez] – [(830) 879-2374 & Extension 1030]
- Dyslexia & Migrant Programs: [DeAnna Nava] – [(830) 879-2374 & Extension 7101]
- Homeless Student Support: [Dr. Ramiro Nava] – [(830) 879-2374 & Extension 1011]
- Bilingual and English Learner Services: [Heather Ramirez] – [(830) 879-2374 & Extension 1030]
- Section 504 Services: [DeAnna Nava] – [(830) 879-2374 & Extension 7101]

Student Leadership and Honor Societies

Cotulla ISD promotes student leadership as an opportunity to grow in scholarship, service, character, and responsibility. Leadership roles may include positions such as class officers, club officers, student council members, and representatives in student organizations or event courts. These roles are both a privilege and a responsibility.

Requirements for Student Leadership and Honor Positions

Students seeking election or appointment to leadership roles or positions of honor—including class office, club leadership, and participation in popularity courts (e.g., homecoming or prom court)—must first obtain faculty approval. Teachers evaluate candidates using the following criteria:

- Scholarship: Students must be passing all subjects
- Citizenship: Students must demonstrate above-average conduct and positive campus citizenship
- Dependability: Students must fulfill responsibilities reliably and on time
- Cooperation: Students must work well with peers, staff, and the school community

Once elected or appointed, students are expected to maintain these standards. If a student receives a negative report in any of the above areas after taking office, they will be placed on probation for three weeks. A second infraction will result in removal from the position.

Extracurricular Eligibility

Participation in any popularity court or honorary position must meet UIL and district eligibility standards. Students who do not meet these criteria may be removed from consideration or disqualified from participation.

National Honor Society (NHS) – Cotulla High School

Cotulla High School hosts a chapter of the National Honor Society, Los Jefes. Students in grades 10–12 may apply if they meet the following minimum criteria:

- A cumulative GPA of 92.00 or a weighted GPA of 5.70
- Evidence of leadership, service, and strong moral character

Faculty members evaluate eligible applicants. Final selection is made by the NHS Faculty Council. Induction takes place in January, and officer installation is held in May. Students must maintain NHS standards to remain in good standing.

National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) – Newman Middle School

Seventh-grade students at Newman Middle School may be eligible for NJHS based on a minimum cumulative average of 92.00 and demonstrated excellence in leadership, service, and character. Members are selected by the Faculty Council and inducted each Spring. Transfer students with documented NJHS membership must meet local chapter standards within one semester to retain membership.

Honor Course Eligibility – Newman Middle School

Students interested in enrolling in Honors Courses must:

1. Maintain a 90 or higher in the related course from the previous year
2. Score Meets or Masters on the relevant STAAR assessment
3. Have a teacher recommendation
4. Maintain a grade of B or better to remain in the course

Student Organizations and Clubs

Cotulla High School and Newman Middle School support a range of academic, service, and special interest organizations. Students may contact their campus principal or club sponsor for a list of offerings or to learn how to start a new club.

Student Discipline

Cotulla ISD maintains high expectations for student behavior and uses a range of disciplinary interventions designed to uphold student safety, instructional integrity, and campus culture. Disciplinary measures follow the guidelines of the Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 37 and district policy. Discipline is progressive, fair, and aligned to student needs and developmental levels.

Types of Disciplinary Interventions

Detention

Detention is used for minor infractions and may be assigned during lunch, before school, or after school under staff supervision. Missed detentions without valid documentation will result in additional consequences.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

ISS serves as an alternative to out-of-school suspension for offenses requiring disciplinary action. It allows students to remain on campus in a structured, supervised setting while continuing academic work.

ISS Guidelines:

- Students must report promptly and remain in the ISS room for the full day.
- Assignments are provided by classroom teachers; supplemental behavioral or character-building tasks may be added.
- No talking, breaks, or disruptions are allowed; lunch is eaten in isolation.
- Students are not counted absent while in ISS and may not participate in any school-sponsored events during placement.
- Participation in extracurriculars may resume the morning after the final day of ISS.
- Failure to comply with ISS expectations may result in additional ISS days or escalation to DAEP.

Per TEC §37.008, Cotulla ISD's ISS program complies with state authorization for continuing education in a structured setting 2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

OSS is used for serious misconduct and temporarily removes the student from the school environment.

OSS Guidelines:

- Students are prohibited from attending or participating in any school-related events until the morning after the final OSS day.
- Students remain responsible for assignments and may attend classes virtually if permitted.
- Disruptions during virtual OSS attendance may result in revoked access.
- OSS days count as absences under compulsory attendance unless excused.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)

DAEP is used for persistent or serious disciplinary infractions, as outlined in TEC §37.006 and §37.007.

DAEP Key Points:

- Students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in a separate, structured environment.
- Students may complete academic coursework via:
 - Digital platforms
 - Independent study packets
 - Summer school (if eligible)

- While in DAEP, students may not:
 - Attend or participate in extracurriculars, clubs, or co-curricular activities
 - Hold or run for honorary positions

Return from DAEP:

- Students are required to reapply or re-audition for extracurriculars.
- A six-month probationary period begins upon campus reentry.
- Organizations may consider DAEP history among other criteria but may not exclude solely based on DAEP placement.
- Students failing a course or EOC test while in DAEP may attend summer school; time spent may or may not count toward DAEP days at administrative discretion2024-2025_Student_Paren....

Law Enforcement & School Resource Officers (SROs)

Cotulla ISD partners with local law enforcement to ensure a safe educational environment. Each campus has at least one SRO—a commissioned peace officer under TEC §37.081.

SRO Duties:

- Maintain campus safety
- Conduct safety education
- Support crisis response plans
- Serve as a mentor and liaison—not as a routine disciplinarian

Limits & Legal Compliance:

- SROs may not be assigned general disciplinary tasks (TEC §37.0812).
- Must follow FERPA for student privacy and state reporting requirements for use of restraint or law enforcement action (TEC §37.0021).

Interaction with Students:

- High school students receive instruction on lawful and respectful interaction with peace officers as required by TEC §28.012.

Threat Assessment & Behavior Monitoring

Cotulla ISD maintains a multidisciplinary Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive Team at each campus in compliance with TEC §37.115. This team:

- Responds to threats and concerning behaviors
- Assesses risks
- Refers students to appropriate services
- Maintains records until a student's 24th birthday

Student Speakers

The district provides eligible students the opportunity to deliver opening remarks at designated school events, including high school football games and pep rallies. To be eligible, a student must

be enrolled in one of the top two grade levels of the school and hold a position of honor based on neutral, objective criteria. These positions include:

- Student Council Officers
- Senior Class Officers
- National Honor Society Members
- Football Team Captains

Students interested in delivering an introduction must submit their name to the campus principal during the first week of the fall or spring semester. Eligible students will be randomly selected and matched to specific events. If the selected student declines or becomes ineligible, the opportunity will not be reassigned for that event.

At the principal's discretion, students honored with positions such as homecoming king or queen, prom royalty, or officers of school-sponsored organizations may also be invited to speak at special events in accordance with district policy [see FNA(LOCAL)].

Summer School

Students in grades 1 through 8 who are identified as needing academic support may be required to attend summer intervention programs. These programs focus on instruction and practice in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to ensure mastery of grade-level content. Successful completion of the summer program may be a prerequisite for promotion to the next grade level.

Middle and high school students who fail required courses during the school year should attend the district's summer school program. Assistance may be available for students who qualify based on financial need.

Summer school offerings and details for grades PK–12 will be announced each spring and posted on the district website at www.cotullaisd.net. Information will also be available through each campus principal's office.

STAAR

In addition to classroom assessments and teacher evaluations, students at designated grade levels must participate in the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), as well as other state-mandated tests such as TELPAS and STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) exams.



Tardiness

Cotulla ISD expects all students to arrive at school and to class on time each day. Prompt attendance supports learning and reduces classroom disruptions. Tardiness is monitored daily and may result in disciplinary consequences if it becomes frequent or chronic.

What Is Considered Tardy?

- A student is tardy if they arrive after the scheduled start time of class or school but within 15 minutes.
- Students arriving 15 minutes or more after the start of class are marked absent for that period, unless they provide a valid, documented excuse (e.g., medical or legal appointment).
- Repeated tardiness is considered a disciplinary issue and will be addressed according to the Student Code of Conduct.

Tardy Procedures by Campus

Elementary Campuses (Encinal & Ramirez/Burks Elementary):

- Students arriving after 7:50 AM are marked tardy.
- Parents must park and escort the student to the front office to sign them in.
- Students will receive a tardy slip before going to class.
- Excessive tardiness will follow this progressive action plan:
 1. 1st & 2nd Tardy – Verbal warning
 2. 3rd Tardy – Parent conference with Attendance Clerk
 3. 4th Tardy – Parent conference with Administrator
 4. 5th Tardy – Referral to the Attendance Committee

Newman Middle School:

- Students not inside the classroom when the tardy bell rings will be marked tardy.
- Tardiness is tracked each six weeks and will result in escalating consequences:
 1. 1st & 2nd Tardy – Warning
 2. 3rd Tardy – 1 day of lunch detention
 3. 4th Tardy – 3 days of lunch detention
 4. 5th Tardy – Referral to administration for further disciplinary action
- Any student tardy more than twice in a single day will be referred to the administration.

Cotulla High School:

- High school students are expected to be on time to every class.
- Excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary consequences, including detention, loss of privileges, or other administrative actions based on campus policy.

Telecommunications/Electronic Devices, Including Mobile Phones

All electronic devices are strictly prohibited during local and state assessments. Possession or use of such a device during testing may result in invalidation of the assessment.

Students may bring mobile phones or electronic devices to school but must comply with all campus-specific policies and restrictions. Use of personal electronic devices—including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, music players, handheld gaming devices, and similar technology—is subject to administrator discretion and may be limited during the school day.

The district is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal electronic device brought to school.

Use During School-Sponsored Events

Students participating in school-sponsored events (e.g., field trips or extracurricular activities) may

carry a cell phone for the purpose of contacting a parent or guardian, provided they have received prior approval from the campus administrator.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. [See also FNCE(LOCAL).]

Technology at School

Cotulla ISD Acceptable Use of Technology

Cotulla ISD provides students and staff access to technology resources for instructional purposes. Through these systems, users may communicate and collaborate across the district, with other educational institutions, and online globally. All use must comply with federal and state law, including the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), as well as local policies and Cotulla ISD's Acceptable Use Guidelines.

Cotulla ISD implements filtering systems to block access to inappropriate content; however, no filter is 100% effective. All users are expected to navigate the internet responsibly, and the district reserves the right to monitor usage at any time. Misuse may result in disciplinary consequences, including suspension, expulsion, or legal referral if warranted.

Student Use of Personal Devices and Cell Phones

In alignment with the Texas Education Agency's 2024 Model Policy for Mobile Phone Use in Schools, Cotulla ISD upholds the following expectations for personal electronic devices on all campuses:

- **Instructional Time Cell Phone Ban:** Students are not permitted to use cell phones or personal electronic devices during instructional time unless explicitly authorized by the teacher for academic purposes.
- **Secure Storage:** During class time, personal devices must be turned off and stored in a student's backpack or in a location designated by the campus or classroom teacher.
- **Common Areas:** Campus principals may extend the restriction to common areas (hallways, restrooms, cafeterias) to ensure student safety, privacy, and focus.
- **Testing Environments:** All devices must be powered off and stored away during state and local assessments. Unauthorized possession or use during testing may result in test invalidation and disciplinary consequences.

Cotulla ISD staff are authorized to:

- Confiscate personal devices used in violation of these rules;
- Search devices (school-issued or personal) with reasonable suspicion of policy or law violations;
- Deny device privileges for students who misuse technology.

The district is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage of personal devices brought to school or school-related activities. Students and parents should understand that bringing such devices is a privilege—not a right—and one that can be restricted or revoked.

For the complete district Acceptable Use Policy and procedures, including detailed guidelines on digital citizenship, filtering, security, and technology support, please refer to policy CQ(LOCAL) and CQ(REGULATION), as well as FNCE(LOCAL).

Telephones

Campus/classroom telephones are designated for official school business use only. Students needing to use a phone during the school day must request permission through the campus office or designated staff member. Unauthorized use may result in disciplinary action.

Textbooks

State-adopted textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or course. Students are responsible for the care of all books issued to them. Any damage or excessive wear should be reported immediately. Students who lose or damage textbooks will be required to pay for the replacement. Until payment is made or the book is returned, the student may lose the privilege of taking home district instructional materials but will still be provided access during the school day.

In accordance with TEC §31.104(d), if payment is not made, the district may withhold the student's official academic records, but must still provide the parent or student access to all records pertaining to the student.

Threats to Student Safety

Cotulla ISD is committed to the protection of students and staff. In the event of a threat—natural or man-made—the district will act swiftly using the following general protocol:

1. Immediately notify emergency services and law enforcement.
2. Evacuate or secure students under staff supervision as needed.
3. Coordinate with transportation for relocation if warranted.
4. Fully investigate all verbal, written, or electronic threats.
5. Pursue disciplinary action and/or criminal charges when appropriate.

All threats—regardless of perceived intent—are taken seriously. Making a false threat is a serious offense and may result in school discipline and criminal prosecution.

Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Teams

In compliance with TEC §37.115, Cotulla ISD has established a Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team (TASS Team) at each campus. These multidisciplinary teams are responsible for identifying, evaluating, and responding to students or individuals who may pose a threat to themselves or others.

Team Responsibilities:

- Assess reported threats of violence, concerning behavior, or signs of harm.
- Refer students for mental health services when appropriate.
- Implement intervention strategies and safety protocols.
- Support the district's multi-hazard emergency operations plan.
- Train all team members using TEA-approved, evidence-based models.

Parental Notification and Consent:

Before conducting a threat assessment involving a student, the team must:

- Notify the parent or guardian.
- Provide an opportunity to participate in the process.
- Share the results and conclusions of the assessment.

A student may not receive mental health-care services through the team without written parental consent, except in emergencies.

Immediate Action and Imminent Threats:

If a student poses an immediate threat, any school employee may take appropriate action to prevent harm, including contacting law enforcement or emergency services. The TASS Team will then conduct a full evaluation, notify guardians, and determine ongoing steps.

Recordkeeping:

Threat assessment records will be retained in the student's file until the student's 24th birthday, in accordance with TEC §37.115(j-1).

Reporting:

Each team reports required data to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) annually, including:

- Number and type of threats assessed.
- Disciplinary outcomes and referrals.
- Interventions and services provided.
- Demographic data (as required under TEC).

For more information, parents may contact the campus principal or the district safety coordinator.

Transfers

Cotulla ISD accepts transfer applications for students residing outside district boundaries. Applications must be submitted to the Superintendent's Office and are available at the Central Administration Office. Approval of transfers is subject to district policy and may be revoked if terms of the transfer agreement are violated.

For additional information on transfer eligibility, refer to the sections titled "Requesting Transfers for Your Child" and "Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education."

Transportation

School-Sponsored Trips

Students participating in school-sponsored events are required to travel to and from the event using district-provided transportation. Exceptions may be granted if a parent submits a written request to the campus principal in advance, authorizing the release of the student to the parent or another designated adult.

Bus Routes

Cotulla ISD provides bus transportation at no cost to students who reside two or more miles from their assigned campus or live on a designated hazardous route. Bus routes are posted at each school and updated as needed.

Parents/guardians of eligible students will receive a Transportation Policy and Procedures Manual from the Transportation Department. A signed confirmation form must be returned within one week of receipt. Students will not be permitted to ride the bus until this confirmation is submitted.

Alternate Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations

Parents may request that a child be picked up or dropped off at a childcare facility or grandparent's residence, provided the location is on an approved stop along an established route. Contact the Transportation Department at 830-879-3073 ext. 2900 for route information or alternate location requests.

Bus Conduct

Student behavior on district transportation must reflect the standards outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Students are expected to:

- Follow the driver's instructions at all times
- Board and exit in an orderly manner at designated stops
- Keep aisles clear of personal belongings
- Remain seated and wear seat belts when available
- Refrain from defacing or damaging any part of the vehicle
- Keep all body parts and objects inside the bus
- Avoid the use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons
- Maintain appropriate classroom behavior

Misconduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension of bus privileges.

District Vehicles

When riding in district-owned vehicles, including vans or cars, students must fasten seat belts and follow all behavior expectations.

Transportation Policy and Confirmation Form Insert

Cotulla ISD Transportation Policy and Confirmation Form Insert

Transportation Policy Overview Cotulla ISD provides safe and reliable school bus transportation for eligible students who reside two or more miles from their assigned campus or who live along designated hazardous routes. Transportation is a privilege, not a right, and students must adhere to all behavioral and safety rules.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Submit the signed confirmation form (below) within one week of receiving this document.

- Review transportation rules with your child.
- Ensure that your child arrives at the bus stop 5-10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time.
- Notify the Transportation Department of any address or childcare changes.

Bus Rules for Students:

- Follow the driver's instructions at all times.
- Remain seated with seat belt fastened (if available) while the bus is in motion.
- Keep aisles clear and refrain from bringing large or hazardous items on the bus.
- Use respectful language and behavior.
- Refrain from eating, drinking, or using tobacco products.
- No vandalism, physical aggression, or possession of prohibited items (weapons, alcohol, drugs).
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.

Consequences for Misconduct: Violations of transportation rules will be addressed in accordance with the Cotulla ISD Student Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension of bus privileges.

Alternate Pick-Up/Drop-Off: A parent may designate a childcare provider or grandparent's residence as the regular transportation stop, provided it is along an approved route. Submit requests to the Transportation Department at 830-879-3073 ext. 2900.

Transportation Services Confirmation Form

Return this signed form to the Transportation Department within 5 school days.

Student Name: _____ Campus: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Contact Phone Number: _____

Alternate Contact: _____

I have received and reviewed the Cotulla ISD Transportation Policy. I understand the expectations for my child and acknowledge that transportation services may be suspended if these expectations are not followed.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Transportation Department Use Only: ☐ Entered into Transportation System ☐ Route Assigned:
_____ ☐ Confirmation Received on: _____

For questions or route changes, contact the Cotulla ISD Transportation Department at 830-879-3073 ext. 2900.

Tutoring

Cotulla ISD offers academic tutoring to support students who are failing or in danger of failing a course

or STAAR assessment. Tutoring may be offered during school hours, before, or after school. Compulsory attendance laws and the 90% attendance rule apply to tutorial sessions.

A campus committee, led by the principal, will monitor tutorial participation and determine eligibility for extracurricular activities if performance is impacted. The district is not required to provide transportation for tutorial sessions.

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Use of District Equipment

- Students may use school equipment under direct supervision of the staff member responsible.
- Employees may only use district equipment for instructional or student-related purposes. Technology may be used for limited personal use in accordance with the District's Acceptable Use Policy.
- All off-hours use must be approved by the equipment supervisor and campus principal.

V

Vandalism

Cotulla ISD facilities and resources represent a significant investment by taxpayers. Any student caught damaging, defacing, or vandalizing school property will be held financially responsible for repairs or replacement and may face criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on district property are subject to school jurisdiction. Students and staff must adhere to all parking regulations and assume full responsibility for securing their vehicles.

- Vehicles may be searched if there is reasonable suspicion of contraband or policy violation, with or without the student present.
- Students must unlock their vehicles for inspection upon request. Refusal will result in parent contact and may lead to police involvement.
- The district is not liable for damage or theft involving vehicles on campus.
- Illegally parked vehicles may be towed at the owner's expense.
- Campus administrators may revoke a student's parking privileges at their discretion.

Note: A suspended student driver may not transfer driving responsibility to another student for the same vehicle.

Video Surveillance

To promote safety and security, Cotulla ISD may use video and audio recording equipment on school buses and in common areas of campus buildings. Students will not be notified when surveillance is in use.

Administrators may review footage to investigate misconduct, and disciplinary action will be administered according to the Student Code of Conduct.

Visitors to the School

Cotulla ISD welcomes parents, guardians, and community members to its campuses. All visitors are expected to follow safety procedures and conduct themselves in a manner that supports the educational environment. The district reserves the right to limit or restrict access to school property when necessary to protect students, staff, and the learning process, as allowed under **Texas Education Code §37.105**.

Visitor Requirements

To ensure safety and minimize disruptions, all visitors must:

1. Report to the front office upon arrival.
2. Present a valid government-issued photo ID to be scanned through the Raptor Visitor Management System.
3. Sign in and obtain a visitor badge, which must be worn visibly at all times while on campus.
4. Remain in authorized areas only and exit campus promptly upon completion of the visit.
5. Be at least 18 years old unless participating in a district-approved volunteer or mentoring program.
6. Refrain from video recording or photographing other students; pictures may only be taken of your own child with prior approval.

Lunch and Classroom Visits

- Parents/guardians may visit to eat lunch with their child; however, only the student may be visited—no other students may join.
- Lunch visits may be restricted during testing, campus events, or at the discretion of the principal.
- Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are allowed only with prior written notice and administrative approval.
 - Classroom visits must be scheduled at least one school day in advance.
 - Teachers may not leave instructional duties for conferences during classroom visits.
 - Visitors should remain unobtrusive, seated at the rear of the room, and not participate in instruction unless invited by the teacher.

Classroom visits may be limited to one class period (up to 50 minutes) unless extended access is approved by the campus principal.

Conduct Expectations for Visitors

All visitors must:

- Demonstrate courtesy, professionalism, and respect toward staff, students, and other families.
- Refrain from disruptive conduct, including vulgar language, yelling, aggressive behavior, or unauthorized access to campus spaces.
- Turn off or silence mobile phones during instructional visits.
- Dress appropriately for a school setting.

Violations of visitor expectations may result in:

- Immediate removal from the campus
- Temporary or long-term denial of access
- Referral to law enforcement for unauthorized or disruptive conduct (TEC §37.105)

Student Visitors

- Student visitors are not allowed on Cotulla ISD campuses during instructional hours unless pre-approved by the principals of both involved campuses.
- Unauthorized student visitors are subject to disciplinary action.
- No student should visit another school during school hours without written administrative coordination.

Student Pick-Up & Conferences

- Parents/guardians signing out students during the day must present ID, sign the student out in the office, and wait in a designated area.
- Students should remain in class until a staff member escorts them when a parent arrives.
- After-school pick-ups should occur in the designated waiting area, and parents must wait to be released by the teacher.

Visitation Guidelines

- Emergency visits may be accommodated by escorting the student to the front office.
- Visitors disrupting instruction may be asked to leave.
- All visitors must sign out upon departure.

Visitors Who Are Registered Sex Offenders

Consistent with TEC §38.022(d) and Texas Family Code, the district prioritizes student safety while respecting parental visitation rights:

- Registered sex offenders cannot volunteer or enter classrooms when students are present.
- If a registered sex offender is a parent or guardian with legitimate business (e.g. counseling), a staff member or administrator will escort and supervise them.
- Common-area access (e.g. cafeteria, library) is restricted; visits may only occur when students are not present or under direct supervision.
- Attendance at school events (sports, performances) is generally prohibited for registered offenders unless local law or campus administration, in coordination with law enforcement, deems it permissible.
- Campus administrators will perform periodic registry checks and maintain awareness of registered offenders relative to the student body.

- Registered offenders who are students may be assigned to DAEP as permitted under TEC, if deemed necessary for safety.

Principle: Student safety comes first. All campus access by registered sex offenders will be strictly monitored, controlled, and aligned with law and district policy.

Legal Citation:

This policy reflects requirements under TEC §§ 21.003, 38.022(d) and aligns with best practice guidance for campus security and visitor management.



Walking Students

Cotulla ISD prioritizes student safety during arrival and dismissal times. While some families may choose for their children to walk home, this decision must align with established campus safety protocols and requires prior administrative approval.

At campuses where walking is permitted, the following expectations apply:

- Parents must complete a Release of Student form at the beginning of the school year if they wish for their child to walk home. Forms are available in the campus office.
- Walkers are released only after car pick-up traffic has cleared, to reduce congestion and ensure a safer exit process.
- Students are encouraged to use sidewalks and avoid walking in the street, as neighborhood traffic may be heavy before and after school.
- If a parent/guardian parks and walks to the school to retrieve a student, the student will be treated as a walker and will be released accordingly.
- Parents walking children to or from the school doors must hold the child's hand at all times. Children are not permitted to cross driveways or parking lots unattended.
- Students in grades below 4th grade will not be released as walkers unless prior administrative approval is granted.
- Students will not be released to underage or unlicensed drivers, regardless of the time of day.
- Siblings or family members who walk to pick up students must be listed on the student's approved release list with the campus attendance clerk. Requests must be made in writing.

Walking is a campus-level decision and may not be available at all campuses. Final approval rests with the campus principal and is contingent on safety considerations and traffic patterns.

Withdrawing from School (All Grades PK–12)

Cotulla ISD complies with state law regarding the proper procedures for student withdrawal from school. In accordance with Texas Education Code §25.094 and TAC §129.21, a student is considered enrolled until officially withdrawn through district procedures. Accurate and timely withdrawal ensures that

school records are updated and transferred without delay.

General Procedures for Withdrawal

- **Students Under Age 18:**
A parent or legal guardian must initiate and complete the withdrawal process. Parents are encouraged to notify the campus at least three school days in advance to allow for the collection of records and completion of necessary forms.
- **Students Age 18 or Older:**
Students who are 18 years of age or older, legally emancipated, or married may initiate their own withdrawal without parent or guardian consent.
- **Withdrawal Forms:**
Parents or eligible students must obtain a Withdrawal Request Form from the campus principal's office. The form must be completed and signed by designated school officials before withdrawal is finalized.

Withdrawal Checklist

On the student's final day, the withdrawal form must be presented to the following individuals or offices to confirm clearance:

- Teachers – Record current grades and confirm return of instructional materials.
- Librarian – Confirm return of all books and materials and clear outstanding fines.
- School Nurse or Health Aide – Review and release health records.
- Counselor – Verify last report card, transcripts, and schedule adjustments.
- Principal or Designee – Confirm all steps are complete and approve withdrawal.

Upon completion:

- A copy of the withdrawal form will be provided to the parent or student.
- A copy will be retained in the student's permanent record, in accordance with TAC §129.21(j).

Course Withdrawals (Secondary Campuses)

Students wishing to withdraw from individual courses must:

- Obtain written permission from a parent or guardian (if under 18).
- Meet with the counselor or principal to discuss the request.
- Obtain final approval from campus administration.

Course withdrawals are not guaranteed and may be denied if:

- The withdrawal would place the student below full-time enrollment.
- The request occurs after grading deadlines or would negatively impact graduation plans.
- It conflicts with state attendance or curriculum requirements under TEC §25.092.

If a student withdraws without completing the required process, they may be reported as truant, and school records—including transcripts—may be delayed. For assistance with the withdrawal process, parents or students should contact their campus registrar or counselor.



2025 – 2026

COTULLA ISD

STUDENT DRUG TESTING CONSENT FORM FOR MINOR STUDENT

(LESS THAN 18 YEARS OLD)

CAMPUS: (CHECK ONE) _____ Frank Newman Middle School

_____ Cotulla High School

I, _____, as parent or guardian of
(PRINT NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN)

(PRINT NAME OF STUDENT)

a minor student enrolled in Cotulla ISD and participating in school sponsored extracurricular activities and/or requesting campus parking/driving privileges (includes, but not limited to, all athletic sports, Band/Mariachi, Choir, Color guard, Drill Team, Drum Major, Twirler, One Act Play, Cheerleading, Mascot, FCCLA, FFA, FCA, NHS, Skills USA, Student Council, Spanish Club, Art Club, VICA, TAFE, and UIL activities), have read and understand Cotulla ISD's policy regarding random student drug testing.

I understand that my child will be asked to provide a urine sample for drug analysis, and I consent to such testing conducted as part of the District's drug testing policy.

I also understand that while my child cannot be compelled to produce a specimen, the giving of a specimen when requested by the District is a condition of my child's continued participation in the identified extracurricular activities/privileges. I understand that if a test of my child's specimen reveals an unexplained presence of a drug, the District may take action against my child up to and including termination of participation in extracurricular activities or removal of campus parking/driving privileges.

understand that refusal to submit to a test will have the same consequence as if my child had tested positive.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

COTULLA ISD

CAMPUS: (CHECK ONE) _____Frank Newman Middle School
 _____Cotulla High School

I understand that refusal to submit to a test will have the same consequence as if I had tested positive.

DATE _____



Parent Acknowledgment

As the parent or guardian of

_____, **NAME**
OF STUDENT (PLEASE PRINT)

I have read and understand Cotulla ISD’s policy regarding random student drug testing. I consent to such testing conducted as part of the District’s drug testing policy. I understand that if a test of my child’s specimen reveals an unexplained presence of a drug, the District may take action against my child up to and including termination of participation in extracurricular activities.

I understand that refusal to submit to a test will have the same consequence as if my child had tested positive.

PARENT SIGNATURE **DATE**



Attachment A

2025 – 2026
School Year

Cotulla ISD List of School Sponsored Extracurricular Activities and Privileges (may include, but are not limited to the following activities)

Cotulla High School

4H
Art Club
Athletics
Band
Business Professional of America (BPA)
Dazzling Cowgirls
Cheerleaders and Mascot
Family and Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Future Farmers of America (FFA)
Jazz Band
National Honor Society (NHS)
Mariachi
Science Club
Skills USA
Spanish Club
Student Council
Yearbook
CHS Parking Privileges
AND any other extracurricular activity, club or organization on the designated campus

Newman Middle School

4H
Art Club
Athletics
Band
Cheerleaders and Mascot
Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Junior Future Farmers of America (FFA)
National Honor Society (NHS)
Mariachi
Science Club
Spanish Club
Student Council
Yearbook
AND any other extracurricular activity, club or organization on the designated campus

COTULLA ISD



REQUIRED FORMS

APPENDIX B: CISD 2025-2026 Student Handbook and Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

My child and I have received a copy of the Cotulla ISD Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct* for 2024-2025. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Printed name of student: _____ Grade: _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Please sign and date this page. Remove it from the handbook and return it to the student's campus.

**APPENDIX C: CISD Notice Regarding Directory Information and
Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information 2025-26**

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Cotulla ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year or ten school days after receiving this notice.

The district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See Directory Information on page 8 for more information.]

For the following school-sponsored purposes: officially recognized school activities and sports, Cotulla ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment status

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (do give/do not give the district permission
(Student's name)
to use the information in the above list for the specified school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Please sign and date this page. Remove it from the handbook and return it to the student's campus.

**APPENDIX D: CISD Notice Regarding Directory Information and
Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information 2025-26**

OTHER PURPOSES

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Cotulla ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year or ten school days after receiving this notice.

The district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See Directory Information on page 8 for more information.]

For the following school-sponsored purposes: officially recognized school activities and sports, Cotulla ISD has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (do give/do not give the district permission
(Student's name)

to release the information in this list in response to a request made unrelated to school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Please sign and date this page. Remove it from the handbook and return it to the student's campus.

***Appendix E: CISD Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information
to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education***

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. [See Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education on page 8 for more information.]

Parent: Please complete the following only if you do not want your child's information released to a military recruiter or an institution of higher education without your prior consent

I, parent of _____ (student's name), request that the district not release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher education upon their request without my prior consent.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F: Acceptable Use Policy Signature Form

Cotulla ISD reserves the right to require renewal of the AUP and this signature page as needed.

Student Information Section: (PLEASE PRINT)

Last name _____ First name _____ Middle name _____

School _____ Grade _____

I have read and understand the Cotulla ISD Acceptable Use Policy (AUP on page 58 of this handbook) and agree to abide by its rules for acceptable use. I understand the possible consequences for violating the rules stated in the AUP.

Student signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian Section

I have read and understand the Cotulla ISD Acceptable Use Policy and discussed it with my child. I understand that the District has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial information by using Internet filtering software. I also understand that it is my responsibility, as a parent, to discuss appropriate use of software, email, and equipment use with my child.

Check one:

_____ I give permission for my child to use the district's computers for the electronic communications system (email) and to have internet access.

_____ I do not give permission for my child to use the District's internet access. However, I understand that my child may be required to use computers for purposes such as word processing, use of educational resources, completing required learning standards as stated in the Texas Education Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) or taking mandated online tests.

Signature of parent _____ Date _____

Home phone number _____

Email address _____

Please sign and date this page. Remove it from the handbook and return it to the student's campus.

**APPENDIX G: Cotulla Independent School District Student/Parent
Complaint Forms**

Cotulla Independent School District
Student/Parent Complaint Form

Level ONE

To file a formal complaint, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or US mail to the campus principal within the time established in FNG (LOCAL). All complaints will be heard in accordance with FNG (LEGAL) AND (LOCAL). Your complaint will be dismissed if it is submitted with incomplete information.

1. Student's name _____

2. Parent's name _____

3. Address and telephone number _____

4. Campus _____

5. The date of the event or action that gave rise to this complaint _____

6. A detailed factual description of all of the circumstance(s) that gave rise to this complaint. (Use additional pages if necessary)

7. Explain specifically how your child was harmed or injured by the facts that you provided in response to item 6 above.

8. Identify and attach any documents upon which you will rely during the complaint process and explain what those documents will prove. If you do not have these documents at the time, you file your complaint, you will be able to provide copies at the Level One conference. However, please identify, to the best of your ability, what those documents are and what you think they will prove.

9. The district wants to have all complaints resolved informally or at the lowest possible level. Explain your efforts to informally resolve your complaint including with whom you spoke, when you met, and the response you received. If you did not attempt informal resolution, give a detailed explanation why not.

10. Identify the remedy you seek for this complaint. In other words, what do you want us to do in response to your complaint?

Parent Signature	Date submitted

If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you.

Name	
Address	
Phone	



Cotulla Independent School District
Student/Parent Complaint Form

Level TWO

To appeal a Level ONE decision, or the lack of a timely response after a Level One conference, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or US mail to the superintendent within the time established in FNG (LOCAL). All appeals will be heard in accordance with FNG (LEGAL) AND (LOCAL). Your complaint will be dismissed if it is submitted with incomplete information.

1. Student name _____

2. Parent’s Name _____

3. Address & telephone number _____

4. Campus _____

5. Identify the date you received the Level One decision _____

6. Attach a copy of the Level One decision and specifically identify the part(s) of the Level One decision that you want the superintendent or his/her designee to review.

7. Specifically state why you disagree with the part(s) of the Level One decision that you identified in response to number 6 above.

8. Attach the documents you relied upon at Level One (if any) and explain how they support your position at responses 6 and 7 above. Only those documents identified will be considered at Level Two.

9. Identify the remedy you seek at Level Two. In other words, what do you want us to do in response to your complaint?

Parent’s Signature

Date submitted

If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you.

Name

Address

Phone

**Cotulla Independent School District
Student/Parent Complaint Form**

Level THREE

To appeal a Level TWO decision, or the lack of a timely response after a Level Two conference, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand delivery, fax, or US mail to the superintendent within the time established in FNG (LOCAL). All appeals will be heard in accordance with FNG (LEGAL) AND (LOCAL).

1. Student name _____

2. Parent's Name _____

3. Address & telephone number _____

4. Campus _____

5. Identify the administrator who held the Level Two conference and provided the Level Two decision.

6. Identify the date you received the Level Two decision.

7. Attach a copy of the Level Two decision and specifically identify the part(s) of the Level Two decision that you want the Board of Trustees to review.

8. Specifically state why you disagree with the part(s) of the Level Two decision that you identified in response to number 7 above.

9. Attach the document you relied upon at Level Two (if any) and explain how they support your position at responses 7 & 8 above. Only those documents identified will be considered at Level Three.

10. Please identify the remedy that you seek at Level Three. In other words, what do you want us to do in response to your complaint.

11. Do you want the Board to hear this appeal in open session? _____

If so, the Board will consider your request. However, you may not have a legal right under the Texas Open Meetings Act to require a meeting in open session.