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## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This Handbook contains information that both scholars and parents need for reference during the school year. It covers a number of significant topics designed to give scholars and parents an overview of Uplift policy and procedure. Please be aware that not all topics related to your school or Uplift can or will be included in this Handbook; however, it is designed to cover those areas which we believe are most important to your child’s success. Please be aware that while this Handbook is updated annually, Uplift policy adoption or revision, as well as changes in the law, may occur throughout the year. Changes in law, policy, program, or administrative regulation that affect Handbook provisions will be made available to scholars and parents through newsletters, the school website, and/or other communications. In case of conflict between Uplift policies, the policy that was most recently adopted by the Uplift Board will be followed.

It is important that you review this entire Handbook and keep it as a reference point during the school year. If you have any questions about the information in this Handbook, please contact your school’s Academic Director.

This Handbook will also be available on the school website.

As used in this Handbook, “Uplift” or “the District” refers to Uplift Education. Uplift Education is the charter holder and legal entity governing all Uplift schools. The term “parent” also includes a legal guardian.

In addition to this Handbook, each school may have school-specific procedures that will be included in the Appendix. Questions regarding the procedures or requirements at your school should be directed to your school’s Academic Director.

## **COVID-19**

If any provision of this Scholar Handbook conflicts with current COVID-19 safety protocols or mandates, the current COVID-19 safety protocol or mandate will be followed.



## **UPLIFT MISSION AND VISION**

Uplift's mission is to create and sustain public schools of excellence that empower all scholars to reach their highest potential in college and the global marketplace and that inspire in scholars a life-long love of learning, achievement, and service in order to positively change their world.

## **UPLIFT PLEDGE**

I pledge to do my best this day.  
To honor myself and others  
In everything I do.

To accept responsibility for my own learning and  
to encourage others, as I embrace my own opportunities to grow

To exercise leadership  
and prepare myself for college at every opportunity!  
For me, mediocrity is not an option;  
Only excellence will do.

Who I am has value.  
What I think has value  
Who I will become is invaluable to the world.

## **HISTORY OF UPLIFT EDUCATION**

Uplift Education (“Uplift”) was formed in 1996 as “The North Hills School” and was one of the first nonprofits to receive a charter from the State of Texas to operate an open-enrollment charter school and is known as a “Generation One Charter.” Uplift opened its first school in 1997 in Irving, Texas. Since that first charter school was opened, Uplift has expanded across the Dallas – Fort Worth region. Approximately 24,000 scholars will be enrolled in Uplift schools for the 2021-2022 school year. Uplift’s commitment to providing a high-quality college preparatory education is evident in its success to date. In the fall of 2021, Uplift graduated more than 830 seniors, 100% of whom were accepted into college. Uplift expects to continue to expand its network and to welcome more scholars and families into Uplift schools.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Uplift is a Texas non-profit corporation and a tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Uplift is governed by a Board of Trustees which meets at identified dates and times throughout the year in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. If you have any questions about Uplift Education, generally, or the governance structure, please contact the Central Management Office at 469-621-8500.

## PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Texas Legislature passed the original charter school law in 1995, thereby creating the opportunity for charter schools to exist and flourish in Texas. The purposes of the law were to: (1) improve student learning; (2) increase choice of learning opportunities within public schools; (3) encourage different and innovative learning methods; and (4) establish a new form of accountability for public schools. Accordingly, charter schools operate with more flexibility than traditional public schools. If you have questions about the differences between traditional public schools and public charter schools, please contact your school Academic Director or the Central Management Office.

## INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Uplift models its academic program on the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. Uplift is in the process of obtaining authorization to offer the K-12 IB continuum for all its schools. The aim of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet help to create a better and more peaceful world. This mission implies a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others, and the world around them. Each of the IB programmes is committed to the development of students according to the IB learner profile, a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success. The profile aims to develop learners who are:

**Inquirers:** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable:** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Thinkers:** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators:** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled:** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and consequences that accompany them.

**Open-minded:** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring:** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers:** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and

forethought and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced:** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Reflective:** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

## **COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE**

Uplift believes that for scholars to be fully successful, the school, parents, and scholars must work together. The Commitment to Excellence Compact is an accountability statement which puts into words those commitments which reflect our organizational symbol -- the triangle. These commitments are the underpinnings of the “whole village” concept – “it takes a village to raise a child.” Each triangular side depicts the one of the three areas of responsibility necessary to ensure each scholar’s academic success: School-professional community, Parent/Guardian-home, and Scholar-individual.

*This Compact is made between Uplift, the school, the scholar, and the parent/guardian, in the shared pursuit of a rigorous college preparatory education and leadership development for the academic year.*

### **SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

#### **We believe that every child ...**

- Has the capacity to learn, grow, and develop into a knowledgeable, reflective, caring, ethical, and contributing citizen.
- Must have access to the very best programs and practices a school can offer.
- Must be engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
- Thrives academically, socially, and emotionally in a democratic learning environment where trust and respect are paramount and where family and community are actively involved.
- Faces significant life choices and needs support in making wise and healthy decisions.
- Deserves educators who are prepared to work with this age group, who are themselves lifelong learners and who are committed to their own ongoing professional development and growth.

Therefore, we proudly dedicate ourselves to becoming the best school educators that we can be and an active advocate for all children and youth.

#### **As part of the school faculty, I fully agree with and commit to the following:**

- I will exhibit the rigor required to ensure actions are based on educational best practices and will do whatever it takes to meet individual scholar needs.
- I will attend and participate in all staff meetings and professional development to ensure best teaching practices become universal for continuous improvement.
- I will “go the extra mile” by being available before and after school to work with scholars and parents by addressing any concerns.



- I will respond to communications from scholars and parents within twenty-four (24) hours during the school week.
- I will remain focused on standards and excellence leading to results that support and implement the mission of Uplift and the school.
- I will utilize data to support and measure curricular and academic achievement.
- I will protect the safety and well-being of all Uplift and the school Community members and further organizational goals by enforcing all rules, codes, policies, procedures and values of Uplift and the school.
- I will promote Uplift and the school, its staff, scholars and community in a positive way at all times.
- I will contribute to the school by offering my suggestions in constructive ways.
- As a returning member to the Uplift and the school community, I will offer my support and guidance through modeling, chairing of events and helping out where I can to support new to staff and new teachers. I will also actively seek out leadership opportunities for myself and communicate these with the Academic Director.

#### PARENTS/GUARDIAN COMMITMENT

As a parent, I fully agree with and commit to the following:

- I will make sure our child arrives at school every day before the start of classes and is there until school is dismissed for the day every instructional day on the school calendar unless my child is sick or there is an emergency.
- I will pick my child up from school on time or accept the consequences or penalties.
- I will notify the School if my child is unable to attend school. I understand that daily attendance is essential to scholar success.
- I will make arrangements so my child can be at school before or after the school day for tutoring, detention or other after school programs when required or needed.
- I will always help my child in the best way I know how and I will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that I will check my child's homework every night, let him/her contact the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and try to read with him/her every night.
- I will communicate respectfully with faculty and staff.
- I will read all papers that the School sends home, sign if necessary, and return the next day.
- I will participate in all meetings and conferences concerning my child.
- I will support the academic expectations and curricular programs of the school including allowing our child to go on school field trips, including out-of-town experiences.
- I will be a role model for my child as I follow the rules, codes, policies, procedures and the core values established by the school.
- I will adhere to school attendance policies ensuring the academic success of my child.
- I will ensure that my child follows the school rules, codes, policies and procedures so as to protect the safety, interests and rights of all individuals in the classroom. I will support the school as it administers consequences in response to scholar behavioral choices in accordance to the school policy.

- I will support the school and my child by signing up for volunteer work and make a good faith effort to complete the recommended volunteer hours for each parent/guardian.

## SCHOLAR COMMITMENT

As a Scholar, I fully agree with and commit to the following:

- I will arrive at school every day by the start of classes in order to guarantee a full instructional day.
- I will strive to become a global citizen by acting as a thinker, risk-taker and balanced scholar.
- I will approach my learning with creativity, curiosity and enthusiasm.
- I will attend tutoring, detention or any other support services that are needed as required by school officials.
- I will attend each day any mandatory summer program and/or Saturday programs.
- I will work, communicate and behave in accordance with the school's honor code.
- I will complete all of my homework every night and attend each session of any required or assigned enrichment program.
- I will contact my teachers if I have a question or concern related to my academic or social well-being.
- I will be respectful and cooperative toward my parents and teachers.
- I will be principled in all my actions and accept responsibility for them.
- I will be knowledgeable of and follow all school rules, codes, policies and procedures.
- I will always behave in a caring manner that protects the safety, interests and rights of all individuals in the classroom and school community.
- I will conduct myself in an inquiring manner that is conducive for learning.
- I will be a reflective, open-minded member of my learning community who will show empathy, tolerance and respect.
- I will maintain academic integrity ensuring my work is my own.

**Note: This Commitment to Excellence is reviewed regularly and parent input is sought in the review process. Notice of opportunities for parents to participate in the review will be provided by the Academic Director or the Title I Coordinator.**

## ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

### OPEN ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOLS

Uplift operates a network of open-enrollment public charter schools. Charter schools are public schools of choice and part of the public education system in Texas. However, charter schools are not subject to all of the laws that apply to traditional public schools. One of those exceptions is in the admission process. Charter schools are allowed to limit the number of scholars admitted based on the maximum enrollment allowed by the charter. If included in the charter, scholars with serious discipline issues may be excluded from admission. For more information about charter schools generally, view the Texas Education Agency website – charter schools and frequently asked questions. [www.tea.texas.gov](http://www.tea.texas.gov).



## NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Uplift does not discriminate in admissions on the basis of gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic or athletic ability, sexual orientation or gender identity, or the district the child would otherwise attend.

However, in accordance with the Uplift charter, an applicant who has a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or serious discipline problems (as defined under Subchapter A, Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code), may be denied admission.

## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Admission and enrollment of scholars is open to any person who resides within the geographic boundaries defined in the charter and who is eligible for admission based on the lawful criteria identified in the charter.

Enrolling in Uplift is a two-step process: (1) application for admission, followed by (2) enrollment.

1. Application for Admission: Application for admission is completed using the statewide common admission application, known as the Charter Student Admission Application (CSAA). The CSAA is used to gather basic information about the student applying for admission, including the student's name, date of birth, gender, grade applying for, parent/guardian, address of the student, and a phone number.

Uplift schools have an established application period during which CSAAs are accepted. Any person who lives within the geographic boundaries of the charter is eligible to apply. Parents must complete a CSAA and submit it to the school prior to the application deadline in order to participate in the lottery (or to be admitted to the school if there is no lottery). The CSAA deadlines will be posted on the school and Uplift websites. The number of available spaces in each grade will be determined prior to the lottery date. Certain applicants are exempt from the lottery to the extent spaces are available and provided an application is submitted prior to the application deadline. For more information, please see the Admissions and Enrollment Policy at Exhibit E.

Kindergarten scholars must be 5 years of age on September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enroll and first grade scholars must be 6 on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

2. Enrollment: After an applicant receives notice of being offered a seat, the enrollment process begins. If the applicant accepts the available position, Uplift may request additional information, such as the student's health records, records pertaining to special education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and dyslexia, academic records, verification of address, and in some instances, discipline records. These records, or any other additional information requested, should only be provided at the request of Uplift, and only during the enrollment phase. Uplift will not consider any additional information before the enrollment phase.

**Applicants with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or serious discipline problems may be denied admission. If this information is not disclosed in the application and is later discovered by the school, the applicant's admission will be revoked.**

## LOTTERY PROCESS

If more applications are received prior to the application deadline than spaces are available, the School will conduct a lottery or random drawing for the available spaces. Scholars admitted



through the lottery will be notified and asked to submit notice of acceptance by a published deadline. Those scholars who accept admittance will continue the enrollment process. Scholars not admitted through the lottery will be placed on a waiting list. If a space becomes available after the lottery is conducted, the space will be offered to the scholars on the waiting list in the order listed. Applications received after the lottery deadlines are added to the waiting list in the order received.

## **CURRENTLY ENROLLED SCHOLARS**

Once scholars are admitted to the school, they are not required to participate in the lottery or admission process, but they will be asked to indicate their intent to return to the school by completing the re-enrollment process which usually occurs in the early spring.

**A scholar who withdraws during the school year must reapply to be eligible for re-admission.**

Applications will be accepted prior to the application deadline and the scholar must be selected in the lottery in order to be re-admitted. Note: If a scholar withdraws prior to a pending disciplinary action, additional requirements may apply. See Code of Conduct. (Appendix A.)

## **ATTENDANCE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

Uplift schools begin the school year earlier than traditional school districts. Scholars are expected to be present on the first day of school and if they are not, they will not be counted as enrolled in the school and they may lose their space in the school. Absences due to emergencies or illness may be considered as acceptable reasons for not attending the first day of school. See process outlined in the Admissions and Enrollment Policy (Appendix D).

Additional Information about the admission process may be obtained from the Academic Director or Community Engagement and Enrollment Coordinator. Information about application deadlines and the enrollment process will also be posted on the school and Uplift websites.

## **TRANSFERS**

Transfers may be permitted during the school year or for the subsequent school year on a discretionary basis. An Uplift scholar who is transferring to a different Uplift school shall not be required to re-enroll in the school being transferred to as the scholar is already enrolled in the Uplift network of schools. Reasons for transfer may include, but are not limited to, legally mandated reasons, such as because the school is identified by the Texas Education Agency as a “persistently dangerous” public elementary school or secondary school, or if a scholar who is a victim of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of a school that the scholar attends requests the transfer.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES:**

### **ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL**

**Scholars are not to arrive at school before the designated time for the school doors to be opened. Until such time as the school doors are opened, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure the health and safety of their scholars. There is no adult supervision provided by**

**Uplift before the opening of school. If at any time school administration is concerned about the health and safety of a scholar, appropriate State officials shall be notified. This may include law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS).**

- Doors generally open for scholars at 7:30 a.m.
- If a scholar arrives excessively early, a phone call will be made to the parent to remind them of the school's procedure regarding arrival to school and our concern for the scholar's safety. If the scholar continues to arrive before the designated time for the school doors to open, the school may impose consequences as determined appropriate by the school administration or notify State officials as addressed above.
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure scholars do not loiter around local businesses or homes.

#### DISMISSAL

**Scholars are prohibited from remaining on school grounds after dismissal unless they participate in a school sponsored after-school program. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their scholars are not on school grounds after dismissal. Outside of school sponsored after-school programming there is no adult supervision provided by Uplift after the dismissal of school. If at any time school administration is concerned about the health and safety of a scholar, appropriate State officials shall be notified. This may include law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS).**

- Parents who pick up their child at dismissal must do so following carpool guidelines distributed by the school at the beginning of the year. These guidelines are implemented for the safety of all scholars.
- A parent who wishes to pick up his/her scholar before dismissal must go to the main office in person to sign the scholar out. (See section below about picking up scholars early.)
- It is the responsibility of parents and legal guardians to ensure scholars do not loiter around local businesses or homes.

#### SCHOLAR WALKERS

A signed consent form from a parent must be on file in the campus office in order for a scholar to leave campus by walking. Scholars who leave campus by walking shall be dismissed at the regular dismissal time along with all other scholars and are prohibited from remaining on school grounds after dismissal. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure the health and safety of scholars after dismissal from school and to ensure scholars are aware of any change in plan for their dismissal. Only scholars in Middle School and High School will be allowed to leave campus by walking alone. Scholars in Primary School may only leave campus by walking so long as an older sibling picks them up first. **Outside of school sponsored after-school programming there is no adult supervision provided by Uplift after the dismissal of school. If at any time school administration is concerned about the health and safety of a scholar, appropriate State officials shall be notified. This may include law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS).**

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure scholars do not loiter around local businesses or homes.



## AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of a parent to ensure his/her scholar is not on school grounds after dismissal and that the scholar is aware of what he/she is to do at dismissal, such as whether the parent will pick-up the scholar after-school, if the scholar is leaving the campus by walking, if the scholar is participating in a school sponsored after-school activity, or the like, as well as any change to what the scholar is to do at dismissal. If a scholar is being picked-up at school by a parent, the scholar is responsible for going immediately to the parent's car when it arrives.

**Outside of school sponsored after-school programming there is no adult supervision provided by Uplift after the dismissal of school. If at any time school administration is concerned about the health and safety of a scholar, appropriate State officials shall be notified. This may include law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS).**

## AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – SCHOLAR PICK UP

Scholars must be picked up immediately at the end of an after-school activity (tutorials, sports, practice, etc.). If a scholar is in a supervised after-school activity, the teacher/sponsor will wait with the scholars in front of the school or gymnasium for 15 minutes after that activity ends, to allow for pick-up. A parent consent form must be on file with the school if a scholar is to leave the campus by walking (please see above).

**After the 15-minute period, no adult supervision will be provided by Uplift. If at any time school administration is concerned about the health and safety of a scholar, appropriate State officials shall be notified. This may include law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS).**

## EARLY PICK UP OF SCHOLARS

For early pick up, parents must go to the front office/attendance office and sign their child out of school. If there is an emergency or special circumstance, please call the office ahead of time to make arrangements. **Scholars will not be released to any non-parent who is not listed in the scholar's file as a person authorized to pick up the child.** Only after the parent or other authorized person signs the child out will the child be released to the parent or other authorized person. Once the after-school dismissal process has started, scholars will not be allowed to leave early and the parent must follow the established dismissal procedures for the safety of all scholars.

## DESIGNATION OF PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK UP

As part of the enrollment process, the scholar's parent / guardian must designate the persons who are authorized to pick up the scholar from school. Only a parent or those additional authorized persons will be allowed to pick up the scholar. If it is necessary for someone other than the designated person to pick up the child, the parent must notify the school in writing and specifically identify the person who will be picking up their child. School personnel will require proper identification of the person before releasing the child.

## FAMILY DISPUTES OR CUSTODY ISSUES

The school will assume both parents have equal right of access to their child, including the right to pick up the child from school, unless the school has been provided with a court order which specifically limits the access of the parent to his or her child at the school. A divorce decree



identifying custody or visitation schedules is not sufficient to prohibit access of a parent unless the decree specifically so provides. Parents involved in divorce or custody proceedings should make every effort to manage these issues without disruption to the scholar or school environment. Parents who fail to comply with this request may be removed from the school campus by police.

**The school will not be involved in decisions relating to custody or family disputes, including but not limited to, decisions relating to dropping off or picking up a child from school. It is the responsibility of parents, and not the school or Uplift Education, to ensure the correct parent is picking up the child from school. Uplift Education is not a police agency and does not have authority to enforce a court order or any other custody document, and is, therefore, not responsible for enforcing a custody order. If a parent is concerned about whether a custody order is being adhered to, he or she is directed to contact law enforcement or a court of law.**

#### CLOSED CAMPUS - LEAVING CAMPUS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The school operates on the closed campus concept. Scholars are not allowed to leave campus during the school day, including during meal periods, without first obtaining permission from the Academic Director. At no time are scholars allowed to leave the campus without prior permission from parents and the Academic Director. Parent approval must be documented by either written note or by a school documented phone call. If a scholar is authorized to leave early, the scholar must sign out in the main office or with the attendance clerk before leaving campus.

#### ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

At Uplift, we believe that every school day is critical. In order to set clear expectations for scholars and signal instruction time is paramount, we expect all scholars to be present each and every day of school, **beginning the first day of school**. Please see the Minimum Attendance Requirement below. If an absence is unavoidable, a parent should **email** the main office/attendance coordinator before 8:30 a.m. on the date of the absence with the reason for the scholar's absence. **Teachers are not responsible for communicating this information to the office.** All absences will be verified by the school attendance coordinator and if the school has not been notified of the absence, the absence will be recorded as "unexcused." If the parent does not have access to email, it is important that the parent calls in and speaks directly to the person in charge of attendance. If the parent cannot reach the attendance coordinator, a message may be left on the attendance coordinator's school voice mail. However, it is the parent's responsibility to verify the message was received.

When the scholar returns to school, the scholar must provide the main office or attendance coordinator with a note signed by a parent explaining the reason for the absence. If a note is not provided within three school days of the scholar's return, the absence will be marked "unexcused." (Example: If a scholar is absent on Monday and returns to school on Tuesday, then Tuesday would be considered day one; Wednesday, day two; and Thursday, day three.)

#### MINIMUM ATTENDANCE REQUIRED:

**Except as otherwise provided in this policy or by administrative regulation, a scholar in any grade level from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 may not be given credit or a final grade for a class unless the scholar is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. In order to receive credit or a final grade for a class, a scholar is required to attend class 90 percent of the days class is offered regardless of whether the scholar's absences are excused or unexcused.**

**A scholar who is in attendance less than 90 percent of the days a class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the scholar files a request and the school's Academic Director and/or designee(s) determines there are extenuating circumstances that warrant issuance of credit or a final grade to the scholar for the class. In order to receive credit or a final grade for the class, the Academic Director and/or designee(s) may require the scholar to complete an Academic Plan that provides for the scholar to meet the instructional requirements of the class.**

**If a scholar is denied credit or a final grade for a class by the school's Academic Director and/or designee(s), the scholar may appeal the decision through the Parent Grievance Policy. For questions regarding the Minimum Attendance Requirement, please contact your Academic Director.**

#### EXCUSED ABSENCES:

The following situations are excused absences if the required documentation is provided:

- **Personal Illness:** A note signed by a parent must be given to the main office or attendance coordinator when the scholar returns to school. If the personal illness exceeds three consecutive days, a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition causing the scholar's extended absence from school is required. If a scholar has excessive absences due to personal illness, the Academic Director, at the Academic Director's discretion, may require a physician's or clinic's statement of illness after a single day's absence to excuse the absence.
- **Medical appointments:** An appointment with a health care professional is excused if the scholar provides documentation of the visit. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments outside school hours if possible or after the second period when attendance is taken. If unable to schedule a medical appointment outside of school hours, parents are encouraged to bring the scholar for the portion of the day they are not in the doctor's office.
- **Observance of religious holidays:** Scholars may be excused for the purpose of observing religious holy days. If it is necessary to travel for the purposes of observing the holiday, only one day of travel to and one day for travel from the site where the scholar will observe the religious holy day is excused. The Academic Director may require a letter from the religious leader documenting the need for travel or the basis of the religious holiday if the holiday is not an easily recognized or common religious holiday. Travel to attend a baptism or a wedding, for example, is not an excused absence under this category.
- **Extracurricular activities:** Participation in a school-approved and supervised extracurricular activity is excused.
- **College trips:** Junior and senior scholars may be excused for up to two days each year to visit an accredited college or institution of higher education for the purpose of determining



the scholar's interest in attending the college or institution, provided the trip is approved in advance by the RTC counselor or Academic Director. (See Guidelines for Visiting College Campuses – available from RTC Counselor.) The scholar must provide documentation of the visit when returning to school.

- **Attendance at required court appearances:** If a scholar is required to appear at court – including truancy court – the absence may be excused. A copy of the subpoena or court hearing notice requiring the scholar to appear should be presented upon return to the school.
- **Naturalization ceremonies:** Appearance at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the scholar's application for U.S. citizenship or taking part in a U.S. naturalization oath ceremony is excused if documentation of the appearance is provided.
- **Death or serious illness in immediate family:** Attendance at a funeral for an immediate family member (parents, siblings, and grandparents) may be excused for up to three days if travel is required, unless a longer period is approved by the Academic Director. An absence due to the serious illness of immediate family members (as defined above) may be excused for up to three days (including travel). A note from the parent is required upon return.
- **Military deployment of parent:** Absence for the purpose of a scholar visiting with his or her parent prior to the parent's leave or deployment, not to exceed three days per year, may be excused unless a longer period is approved by the Academic Director. A note from the parent is required upon return.
- **Other Absences:** Notwithstanding the above, other absences may be excused at the discretion of Uplift Education. Uplift Education's decision on whether to excuse an absence is final.

#### TRUANCY/NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ATTENDANCE LAW

A scholar is required to attend school under the law (TEC §25.085). A scholar who has unexcused absence(s) is considered truant and will be subject to disciplinary action and/or truancy proceedings. Truancy action may be brought for failure to comply with the compulsory attendance law if a scholar is absent without excuse on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period or three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period. Please check with the attendance coordinator at the school if you have any questions about these provisions.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

A scholar under the age of 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. Parents may be asked to meet with an administrator before proceeding with the withdrawal process. It is critical that Parents notify the Uplift school with the name of the school to which the scholar is transferring so that records can be sent promptly.



## COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Communication with parents is very important to the successful school experience. The school may use a variety of methods of communication, such as those listed below. Do not hesitate to reach out to the teacher or Academic Director if you have any questions or concerns about your child or communication with or from the school. The following are examples of common communication methods:

Method of Communication	Frequency	Purpose
Scholar Planner	Daily	All scholars will use their planner to record homework and long-range assignments, projects, and tests. The planner will also be used for other general planning purposes.
Tuesday Folder	Weekly	Send home school-wide events and documents (i.e. parent-forms, calendar of events, lunch menu, fundraisers, progress reports, etc.)
Written Communication	As Needed	Communicates a scholar's level of success in following the classroom management plan (i.e., notices of exceptional behavior, choice management referrals, classroom detention forms, etc.)
Parent Link	As Needed	Campus employees use this software to send messages in a phone call, email and text message.
Uplift App	As Needed	Parents can set the app to send notifications when grades are entered, lunch account balances are low, library books are late, or check the campus calendar and add events to their own cell calendar.
PowerSchool	As requested/Accessed	Scholar grade and attendance information can be accessed through the PowerSchool Public Portal. Parents can also sign up for daily, weekly or monthly emails with grade and attendance reports

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

### GRADE PLACEMENT AND RETENTION

Uplift schools provide a rigorous academic program that is designed to prepare all scholars for success in college. As such, the graduation requirements and academic standards are higher than traditional public school programs. Uplift determines grade placement and/or retention based on guidelines that ensure a scholar is prepared for the grade in which they are enrolled. Placement decisions in the primary and middle school are determined by several factors, including performance on standardized tests, internal assessments, emotional maturity and readiness for advancement, and school attendance, among others. The recommendation for placement or retention is made by the school administration in consultation with the Managing Director for the school. Please contact the Academic Director if you have any questions or concerns about your child's performance or placement.

**For high school scholars, the Uplift Education Credit Policy describes the credits required to graduate as well as credits necessary for grade placement, and procedures for credit recovery and transfer credits. Please contact the academic counselor if you have questions or concerns about this policy. (Policy is included in Appendix F.)**

Pursuant to Texas Education Code, §28.02124, Parental Option for Student Retention, if a parent or guardian would like for their child to retake a grade level or course, the parent or guardian must contact the Academic Director in writing. The Academic Director will then communicate with the

parent or guardian about retention and the process therein. Please note: The provisions of the law that permit parents to elect for students to be retained in the grade level or repeat a course in grades 4 and above will expire on September 1, 2022; The provisions of the legislation that permit parents to elect for students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 3 to be retained in the grade level has no expiration date.

## **ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

### **HONOR CODE**

*“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the school family, I pledge, on my Honor, not to lie, cheat, or steal in either my academic or personal life, or tolerate those who do.”*

Every scholar is expected to uphold the highest standards of honor with regard to academics, activities, and other related pursuits. By means of the Honor Code, scholars practice responsible leadership, accept personal responsibility, and develop strong character to create an atmosphere free from suspicion. Violation of the Honor Code includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and forgery, which are considered severe discipline problems and are subject to disciplinary action within the by-laws of the Honor Code. We believe that scholars can and must take responsibility for establishing and maintaining standards for their own behavior. At its core, the Honor Code is based on mutual respect and trust. It serves as a written model for what is expected from scholars. It also serves as a pledge to uphold the school’s values while maintaining college preparation as the number one priority.

Taking responsibility for one’s actions is vital to the maturity of each individual. The trust among all scholars in the school builds confidence in the overall school community and enables each scholar to be grounded in the leadership core values of INTEGRITY, INQUIRY, CHOICES, and REFLECTION which guide the scholar’s every decision.

Teachers may require scholars to write the full honor code on major assignments. Actions or attempted actions that run counter to these perceptions are violations to the honor code.

- A scholar’s word is expected to be the complete truth; therefore, lying and forgery are violations of the honor code.
- A scholar’s work is expected to be his/her own, unless properly credited; therefore, plagiarism and cheating are violations of the honor code.
- The property of others is to be respected; therefore, stealing – no matter how minor – is a violation of the honor code.

In situations that seem unclear, it is each scholar’s responsibility to check with the teacher or Academic Director regarding the honor code. Ignorance of the honor code will not be an excuse for a violation. Scholars who witness an honor code violation are required to report the action to the teacher who will notify the Academic Director. Witnessing an honor code violation and reporting it constitutes honorable behavior and is an expectation for all scholars. Scholars may opt to report a violation through an anonymous referral. Working together, we can ALL create a community of learners that value hard work, creativity, and commitment to college success. It is crucial that every member of the school community – scholars, parents, staff, and trustees – understands the importance of the school Honor Code and strives to maintain its integrity.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Scholars are expected to submit assignments, tests, quizzes, essays, and other work that are the result of their independent academic efforts. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying word for word and turning in as your own work information from books, magazines, essays, the Internet, etc.
- Rewording or rewriting text and information from documents not originally written by you and turning it in as your own work without proper citation.
- Paraphrasing with minimal word changes (citing the source or not).
- Borrowing ideas and patterns of thought without proper citation.
- Printing an essay from the Internet and turning it in as your own work.

Cheating is dishonesty for one's own gain. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Using a "cheat sheet" or other unauthorized notes during a test or quiz.
- Looking at someone else's paper for an answer on a test or quiz and changing an answer.
- Having someone else do all or part of your homework or assignment for you.
- Failing to mark an answer wrong when self-grading.
- Telling others or asking others the content of an exam or quiz.
- Giving a scholar or using an old test without teacher permission.
- Looking at an exam prior to taking it without teacher permission.
- Copying someone else's homework or other assignment.
- Splitting an assignment into parts and doing a section, sharing it with others and copying the rest from someone without teacher permission.
- Collaborating on any assignment unless the teacher has specifically designated it as a collaborative assignment.
- Using old assignments written by you or someone else instead of creating new work.
- Using an online translator or other translation in place of your own.

## CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

If a scholar is suspected of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, the following procedure will be followed:

- The scholar's exam, test, or quiz, or assignment will be confiscated by the teacher.
- The paper, exam, test, quiz, or assignment will be submitted to an administrator for consideration.
- The scholar will be required to meet with the teacher and the Academic Director for review of the scholar's work and, if found in violation of this policy and Uplift Scholar Code of Conduct, receive appropriate consequences in line with the severity of the offense. These may include:
  - Formal Choice Management Referral write-up.
  - Grade reduction on plagiarized work.
  - Re-do of plagiarized work.
  - Counseling and attendance at Academic Integrity Roundtable with the Dean of Scholars.



- Completion of community service hours.
  - Enrollment in academic probation.
  - Several instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may lead to suspension or expulsion.
- (See also Appendix G – Uplift Grading Policy for Grades 6-12).

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

Scholars are required to earn 1 credit in Physical Education before graduation. A scholar may be excused from activity due to health reasons for a maximum of three days with a note from a parent given to the PE teacher. If it is necessary to be excused for a period longer than three days, a doctor's note must be provided to the school. The scholar is still responsible for attending class and learning the curriculum even if physical restrictions prevent the scholar from actively participating in the program. All scholars are expected to wear the appropriate uniform in order to participate in physical education activities.

### **OFF-CAMPUS P.E.**

Although we are supportive of our many scholars who participate in a variety of athletic activities outside of the school curriculum, approval for off-campus Physical Education will be at the discretion of the school administration. Scholars interested in this option should contact the Academic Director.

### **ATHLETICS -CREDIT**

Scholars who participate on an athletic team may receive Physical Education credit in lieu of PE class. Contact the team coach for information about this option. (In Scholar Athletic code)

## **ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

We believe that physical activity is an integral component of a scholar's intellectual and emotional development. The athletic program of the school is designed to complement and foster our academic goals. We offer every scholar the opportunity to participate in a variety of programs provided they are able to maintain a level of academic performance consistent with our school mission. Our goal is the development of our scholars who are able to meet and balance the demands of our rigorous curriculum as well as the challenges of our sports programs

### **ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENT REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible to participate in competitions or performances for extracurricular activities a scholar must have no grade below a 70 in any class at a nine-week marking period. *Exception:* The first grade check for eligibility will be at the end of the 6-week period at the beginning of each year. (Required by UIL). Grades in AP/IB/Honors courses will be included. Quality points will not be factored into the grade to determine eligibility. Scholars enrolled in AP/IB courses may have one grade per scholar per semester exempted from the no grade below 70 rule. The grade may not be

below 60 and must be in an AP/IB course. Grades in regular courses are not exempted. The scholar must attend mandatory tutorials in the failed course until the grade is raised to passing. Only one grade per scholar per semester may be exempted. Failure to attend all tutorials will result in loss of the exemption.

- After the first six-week report period, grades for eligibility will be taken each nine weeks.
- A scholar failing at a nine-week period will lose eligibility to compete.
- Eligibility may be regained at any three-week progress period if the progress report in the failed class or classes indicates a passing grade. Three-week progress reports will not be used to withdraw a scholar's eligibility, only to restore it. A scholar may not regain eligibility before a three-week progress report period.
- The calendar will note on which day the books close for a given marking period. From that date each scholar has a seven calendar day grading period to compete or perform before any restriction to participation occurs. Any grace days taken at the beginning of the period of ineligibility will be added to the end of the period. The ineligibility period is in effect for fifteen consecutive school days.

For additional information on eligibility, please see your campus Athletic Director.

## SCHOLAR ATHLETIC CODE

The opportunity to participate in the athletic program at is a privilege available to all scholars. Because of the public nature of athletic programs sponsored by the district, scholars choosing to participate are expected to conduct themselves as leaders at all times during their season of participation and between consecutive seasons in a manner that will reflect the high standards and ideals of Uplift and its community. These high personal standards for conduct promote maximum achievement, safe performances, commitment to excellence in health and conditioning, and fulfill responsibilities as scholar leaders by setting a positive example for other scholars. Scholars who fail to do their homework or who receive an office referral may not be allowed to participate in events and practices and will be at the discretion of the school administration.

Sportsmanship is not only expected, it is mandated. Good sportsmanship eliminates problems and makes for a rewarding experience for those who witness and participate in athletic events. Scholar must remember to abide by the following:

- Maintain self-control at all times,
- Show respect for opponents and officials.
- Parents who bring younger children to athletic events, must ensure those children sit or stand with the parent. Children should not be running around the gymnasium, hallway or athletic field.

Scholars must meet the standards for interscholastic eligibility as outlined by the University Interscholastic League (UIL). Copies of these rules and regulations may be obtained from the school athletic coordinator upon request. The expectations for being a participant in a school's athletic program, including specific eligibility requirements, training rules and team rules will be communicated to team members at the beginning of the season of participation. All program expectations and team rules will be in writing. Any athlete in a District-sponsored athletic activity who willfully performs any act that substantially interferes with or is detrimental to the orderly operation of Uplift's athletic programs shall be subject to discipline. As participants in athletic programs, scholars are faced with choices. If a scholar's choices interfere, impede, hinder their personal or group/team performance or render the individual as unfit to serve as a representative(s)



of Uplift's schools, they forfeit the privilege to participate. Misconduct by participants in the athletic program at any time, on or off campus, school related and/or non-school activities during the season of participation and between consecutive seasons of participation constitutes cause for discipline including denial of participation in and/or removal from the athletic program. Scholars who have had their UIL eligibility suspended at a previous non-Uplift school may be ineligible to participate in UIL activities until their eligibility has been reestablished in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

## OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

A scholar who is ineligible to compete or perform in extracurricular activities may continue to practice or rehearse with the team or troupe during the period of ineligibility. All ineligible scholars may be required to attend tutorials in failed classes and must be excused from rehearsal/practice without penalty. A scholar who fails a course in the 4th Quarter yet passes the course for the year will be ineligible for competition or performance until the sixth-week marking period of the next academic year. A scholar who fails a course for the year but makes up and passes the course in the summer will be eligible to compete and perform the next school year.

In the time period from 12:01 a.m. Monday through 4:00 p.m. on Friday no team or other activity may practice, rehearse, or meet for more than 8 hours. This time limitation is exclusive of games or performances or other competition events. The Academic Director is responsible for ensuring that grades of scholars in extracurricular activities are monitored carefully and that scholars, coaches, and advisors are held accountable. In disputed cases the decision of the Academic Director will be final.

## ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FEE

Fees for participation in academics vary by the sport or activity. Please contact the athletic department for information on these fees.

## CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in clubs and organizations is a privilege that allows scholars the opportunity to develop leadership skills, special talents, and new interests. Participation is a privilege, and therefore, scholars must meet all the requirements set forth in this Handbook. The school recognizes that the learning process is not confined to the classroom and that school life and social interchange are very important aspects of the educational process. We endeavor to provide a well-balanced extracurricular program. To supplement the basic educational programs and to provide opportunities for scholars to learn in various school settings, a comprehensive extracurricular activity program is available. Each school activity is organized to accomplish one or more of the following major goals:

- School service: perform various activities to enhance the school's academic function.
- Community service: support a community activity in line with the functions of the scholar group.
- Fundraising activities: raise money to carry out defined activities.
- Social activities: provide an opportunity for scholars to socialize through group activities.



Each extracurricular activity should complete at least one activity corresponding to the above stated goals each year. A list of available extra-curricular activities will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

### STUDENT COUNCIL

The student body elects the Student Council that is responsible for organizing social activities on behalf of the scholars and for determining scholar needs and opinions on matters affecting them. The Student Council meets regularly and works closely with both the student body and administration in an effort to build a stronger school community.

## **BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**

### COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Scholars are expected to participate in age-appropriate community service work for Grades 6 – 12, and scholars in grades 9-12 are expected to either complete the program requirements for their IB Diploma Programme Community, Service, and Action project, or 100 hours to meet the Uplift graduation requirement.

### FIELD TRIPS

Scheduled field trips are an important part of the school curriculum. Parents will be notified in writing when field trips are planned. Permission/Release forms must be signed by the parent and presented to the field trip organizer before a scholar is permitted to participate in a field trip activity.

### COLLEGE TRIPS

Uplift grants scholars the unique opportunity to take part in college trips which allows scholars the opportunity to visit colleges within Texas and outside of Texas. In order to attend, scholars must meet academic and behavioral expectations of the school. (See the RTCC Dean of College Prep on campus for the requirements.)

## **HOMEWORK AND TESTING GUIDELINES:**

### MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL HOMEWORK:

Diligent and consistent study is vital to academic success and college preparation at the school. Homework is a critical extension and review of learning. Because Uplift schools are preparing scholars for college, the courses often mirror the content, rigor, and expectations of the coursework required of scholars in honors, advanced placement, and or IB classes; therefore, scholars should expect more preparation time. Experience has shown that this amount of homework is necessary for success in a college preparatory school. Even when a formal assignment may not be given, a review of the material covered that day is still required. Scholars who fail to complete homework





assignments may be required to attend study hall period after regular school hours or at the teacher's discretion assigned the same day the work is due.

#### HOMework -PRIMARY

Homework in primary school is also important and the purpose of any home assignment is to reinforce and practice classroom instruction. Parents should review homework to ensure that the child has completed the homework. In addition to homework, scholars should spend 20 minutes of reading for enrichment every evening.

#### LATE WORK, REASSESSMENTS, AND GRADING:

Uplift's Grading Policy for Grades 6-12, (attached as Exhibit F), sets out Uplift's expectations for grading, academic dishonesty and reassessments. You can expect these guidelines to be discussed with your scholar and with you. If you have questions about these expectations, please review this policy or visit with the Academic Director.

#### STAAR TESTING AND REMEDIATION

Uplift is committed to scholar success on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and takes seriously its obligation to provide scholars the support and assistance they need to succeed. All scholars enrolled in STAAR tested grade levels (3 – 8) and STAAR EOC tested subjects (Algebra 1, English 1, Biology, English 2, and US History) will be assessed quarterly to ensure that they are making appropriate progress through the required STAAR and STAAR EOC curriculum. Scholars who are not making satisfactory progress will receive remedial help. Scholars who have failed a STAAR or STAAR EOC test in the previous year may be **required** to attend academic support classes /tutorials when the school offers them in the areas in which the standard was not met. In some cases, this may be an on-going, regularly scheduled class or may occur before/after school in small group tutoring sessions. In others, it may be an intense tutorial for a period prior to July and December for EOC tested courses.

#### COLLEGE TESTING - PSAT

Typically, scholars in grade 11 will take the PSAT in October during the school day and must sign up with the College Counselor. The PSAT tests have a fee, but fee waiver forms are also available for qualifying scholars for this test.

#### COLLEGE TESTING - SAT AND ACT

Applications for taking the SAT and ACT are available in the RTCC counselor's office. Fee waiver forms for these tests are also available in the RTCC counselor's office. Scholars in Grades 11 and 12 usually take these tests.

As of spring 2014, all juniors will take an official ACT test during the school day that does not require the scholars to register or pay for the test.



## **SCHOLARS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **SERVICE ASSISTANCE/ANIMAL USE BY SCHOLARS:**

A parent of a scholar or adult scholar who uses a service/assistance animal because of the scholar's disability must submit a request in writing to the Academic Director before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. Written requests will be reviewed and responded to in writing within ten school days.

Note: All service animals must meet the Service Animal Standards as outlined in the Section 504 Operating Guidelines and/or Special Education Policies and Procedures.

## **LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, SPECIAL EDUCATION OR SECTION 504 SERVICES**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a Special Education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for Special Education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS**

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for Special Education services to the Director of Special Education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a Special Education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.



If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

#### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person: Annette Enright, Senior Director of Special Populations

Phone Number: (469) 621-8500

#### **SECTION 504 REFERRALS:**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

#### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: Annette Enright, Senior Director of Special Populations

Phone Number: (469) 621-8500



#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

### **DISCIPLINE/CHOICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Uplift schools create safe and supportive learning environments for all scholars. Behavior management systems are used to teach scholars self-management, self-discipline, and conflict management so that scholars can meet Uplift’s high expectations and positively contribute to their communities. In addition to misconduct prohibited by the Scholar Code of Conduct, and discipline processes that are consistent across all schools, each Uplift school has a system for managing scholar behavior which may include merits/demerits, interventions, and/or appropriate consequences. The school-specific behavior management system will be shared with the scholars and parents at the beginning of each school year and will be added to the online Scholar Handbook. However, with respect to discipline consequences that may result in out of school suspension or expulsion, the Scholar Code of Conduct will govern. (See Appendix A for Scholar Code of Conduct.)

### **INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES**

School administration may search a scholar or scholar’s property with reasonable suspicion. Vehicles on school property are also subject to search. Academic Directors and teachers have the right to question scholars regarding their conduct or the conduct of others. When full interviews are required in connection with a Title IX investigation, prior written notice will be provided in accordance with the Title IX Grievance Process Policy included as Appendix K.

Searches of scholar’s outer clothing and pockets may be conducted if reasonable suspicion exists. If law enforcement authorities are involved in the search, the search shall be conducted according to the procedures followed by such authorities.

### **UNIFORM AND DRESS**

In accordance with the Dress Code Policy, each Uplift school has a uniform and dress code which requires scholars to wear certain prescribed uniform dress and maintain appropriate grooming and other standards for personal appearance. The school believes that the uniform and dress code contribute to a positive school culture and also foster a spirit of teamwork in the School community. The uniform and dress code also helps to establish a safe environment where outsiders are easily recognized.

Neat, clean grooming for school is expected at all times. Each scholar is responsible for his or her compliance with the dress and uniform code during school hours. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child complies with the dress code before their child comes to school. The specific dress and uniform requirements for the school will be provided to scholars and families prior to the start of the school year and the Dress Code Policy is included in the appendix to this Handbook. Violations of the dress code will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the school's behavior management plan.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Any parent who is in need of financial assistance to purchase school uniforms should contact the Community Engagement and Enrollment Coordinator or Academic Director.

## **PARENT LEGAL AND INFORMATION NOTICES**

### **Scholar Records Access and Privacy and Annual FERPA Notice**

#### **FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and “eligible scholars,” defined as scholars over 18 years of age, certain rights with respect to the scholar's educational records. These rights include the following:

- The right to inspect and review the scholar's education records;
- The right to seek amendment of the scholar's educational records that the parent or eligible scholar believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the scholar's privacy rights;
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the scholar's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and 34 C.F.R. 99.31 authorizes disclosure without consent;
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education under 34 C.F.R. 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA and 34 C.F.R. part 99. To file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education a parent or eligible scholar should contact the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington D.C. 20202-5920.

#### **CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS**

A school's Academic Director is the custodian of all records for currently enrolled scholars and former scholars for two years following their graduation or from the date of their withdrawal if the scholar has withdrawn. The Academic Director may designate a records custodian at the campus level for maintaining the records. The Superintendent (or designee) is the custodian of records for all subsequent years. The Uplift website, made available to all scholars and parents, shall contain



a listing of the addresses of all Uplift schools, as well as the business address for the Superintendent.

## TYPES OF EDUCATION RECORDS

The records custodian shall be responsible for the education records of Uplift. These records may include:

- Admissions data, personal and family data, including certification of date of birth;
- Standardized test data, including intelligence, aptitude, interest, personality, and social adjustment ratings.
- All achievement records, as determined by tests, recorded grades, and teacher evaluations.
- All documentation regarding a scholar's testing history and any accelerated instruction he or she has received, including any documentation of discussion or action by a grade placement or accelerated learning committee convened for the scholar.
- Health services record, including:
  - The results of any tuberculin tests required by the Uplift.
  - The findings of screening or health appraisal programs Uplift conducts or provides.
  - Immunization records.
- Attendance records.
- Scholar questionnaires.
- Records of teacher, counselor, or administrative conferences with the scholar or pertaining to the scholar.
- Verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns.
- Copies of correspondence with parents and others concerned with the scholar.
- Records transferred from other local education agencies in which the scholar was enrolled.
- Records pertaining to participation in extracurricular activities.
- Information relating to scholar participation in special programs.
- Records of fees assessed and paid.
- Records pertaining to scholar and parent complaints.
- Other records that may contribute to an understanding of the scholar.

## ACCESS BY PARENTS

Uplift shall make a scholar's records available to the scholar's parents, or eligible scholar, as permitted by law. The records custodian or designee shall use reasonable procedures to verify the requestor's identity before disclosing scholar records containing personally identifiable information.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours without charge upon written request to the records custodian. For in-person viewing, the records custodian or designee shall be available to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the scholar's records shall be maintained at all times, and records to be viewed shall be restricted to use only in a reasonably restricted area.

Copies of records are available at a per copy cost, payable in advance, pursuant to law. Copies of records must be requested in writing. Parents or eligible scholars may be denied copies if they fail

to follow proper procedures or pay the copying charge. If the scholar qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of a parent, one copy of the record shall be provided at no charge. Records shall be provided within a reasonable time as allowed by law.

A parent may continue to have access to his or her scholar's records under specific circumstances after the scholar has attained 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

### ACCESS BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS

A school official shall be allowed access to scholar records *if he or she has a legitimate educational interest in the records*:

For the purposes of this policy, "school officials" shall include:

1. An employee, Governing Board member, or agent of Uplift, including an attorney, a consultant, a contractor, a volunteer, a school resource officer (if any), and any outside provider used by Uplift to perform institutional services.
2. An employee of a cooperative of which Uplift is a member or of a facility with which Uplift contracts for placement of scholars with disabilities.
3. A contractor retained by a cooperative of which Uplift is a member or by a facility with which the Uplift contracts for placement of scholars
4. A parent or scholar serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

All contractors provided with scholar records shall follow the same rules as employees concerning privacy of the records and shall return the records upon completion of the assignment.

A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" to a scholar's records when he or she is:

1. Working with the scholar;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the scholar's case, or an individualized education program for a scholar with disabilities;
3. Compiling statistical data;
4. Reviewing an education record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
5. Investigating or evaluating programs.

The scope of access to scholar records will be determined by the role of the school official and only to those records relevant to the official's interest.

### TRANSCRIPTS AND TRANSFERS OF RECORDS

Uplift may request transcripts from previously attended schools for scholars transferring or enrolling into Uplift schools; however, the ultimate responsibility for obtaining transcripts from sending schools rests with the parent or scholar, if 18 years of age or older.

For purposes of a scholar's enrollment or transfer, Uplift shall promptly forward in accordance with the timeline provided in law education records upon request to officials of other schools or school systems in which the scholar intends to enroll or enrolls. Uplift may return an education record to the school identified as the source of the record.



## RECORDS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOLARS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Senior Director of Special Populations, or designee, shall be responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information in records of scholars in special education.

A current listing of names and positions of persons who have access to records of scholars in special education is maintained at the office of the Director of Special Education or his/her designee. (See records and confidentiality procedure for special education – Uplift Education.)

## PARENT’S RIGHT TO REQUEST AMENDMENT OF RECORDS; PROCEDURE TO AMEND RECORDS

Within fifteen (15) Uplift business days of the record custodian’s receipt of a written request to amend records, Uplift shall notify the parents in writing of its decision on the request and, if the request is denied, of their right to a hearing. If a hearing is requested, it shall be held within ten (10) Uplift business days after the request is received.

Parents shall be notified in advance of the date, time, and place of the hearing. An administrator who is not responsible for the contested records and who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing shall conduct the hearing. The parents shall be given a full and fair opportunity to present evidence and, at their own expense, may be assisted or represented at the hearing.

The parents shall be notified of the decision in writing within ten (10) Uplift business days of the hearing. The decision shall be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and shall include a summary of the evidence and reasons for the decision. If the decision is to deny the request, the parents shall be informed that they have thirty (30) Uplift business days within which to exercise their right to place in the record a statement commenting on the contested information and/or stating any reason for disagreeing with Uplift’s decision.

## DIRECTORY INFORMATION

FERPA requires Uplift to maintain as confidential student identifying information, with limited exceptions. One such exception is for “Directory Information.” Directory Information is student identifying information that may be released to the public without parent permission should a request for such information be requested.

Uplift has designated the following information as “Directory Information”: scholar’s name, address, date of birth, grade level, photograph, dates of attendance, participation in recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.

Uplift shall only release directory information (1) to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, as required by law, and (2) for limited school/Uplift-sponsored purposes. For third-party requesters, “Directory Information” shall include scholar’s name only.

“Limited school/Uplift-sponsored purposes” is defined to include all official Uplift and campus publications, including yearbooks, newsletters, directories, graduation-related documents, as well as announcements related to school/Uplift activities, honors, and awards.

After the application for enrollment process has been completed and an applicant has entered the enrollment phase of the admissions process, parents and eligible scholars will have the opportunity



to OPT-OUT of “Directory Information.” If OPT-OUT is elected, the scholar’s student identifying information above will not be indicated as “Directory Information,” meaning the scholar’s information above WILL NOT be available to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, and will not be available for limited school/District-sponsored purposes, such as directories, yearbooks, and the like. If OPT-OUT is not elected, a scholar’s information that qualifies as “Directory Information” will automatically be subject to disclosure.

Any parent or eligible scholar who elects OPT-IN may at any time revoke the election by notifying the school’s Operations Director in writing.

#### INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Scholars are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, or intended to harm others. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results or could result in a substantial disruption of the educational environment. Scholars are also prohibited from using cell phones to video any scholar or staff member without their knowledge or consent at any time during the school day or at school sponsored or authorized activities. Any person disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content will be disciplined according to the Scholar Code of Conduct and maybe reported to law enforcement. The Technology Acceptable Use Policy is included in the online registration form and will be posted to the school website and may be added to this Handbook as an appendix.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, scholars will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the Academic Director to excuse their scholar from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. During the one-minute period, each scholar may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that will not interfere with or distract others.

#### EQUAL ACCESS – FREE SPEECH

Uplift believes that it is important for scholars to learn the meaning and practice of freedom of speech while in school. However, the school administration retains the right to make decisions concerning free speech and equal access in the school to ensure an orderly and disciplined school environment that is conducive to learning.

#### PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (“PPRA”)

Scholars who are 18 or are emancipated minors and parents are afforded certain rights under the PPRA with respect to surveys, collection and use of information. Scholars will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concerns:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the scholar or the scholar’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the scholar or the scholar’s family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;

4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisal of individual with whom the scholar has a close family relationship;
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the scholar or parents; or
8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the scholar's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

#### **“OPTING OUT” OF SURVEYS AND ACTIVITIES**

Parents have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for their scholar's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning confidential personal identifying information protected by FERPA or other law, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from their scholar for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the scholars (exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screen, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law).

#### **MEDIA RELEASE AND USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Occasionally, Uplift may use scholar photographs for media purposes, such as marketing materials. After the application for enrollment process has been completed and an applicant has entered the “enrollment” phase of the admissions process, parents and eligible scholars will have the opportunity to consent, or not to consent, to use of scholar identifying information for media purposes.

Any parent or eligible scholar who consents to the use of scholar identifying information for media purposes may at any time revoke that consent by notifying the Operations Director in writing.

#### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR DELAY**

Cancellations and delays will be communicated to parents via phone call, text and email using an automated system. Additionally, this information will be posted on the school website, NBC (Channel 5), and TELEMUNDO (Channel 39).

#### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Uplift and the school have an emergency operation plan for addressing emergencies at the school and within the Uplift network. Regular drills are conducted throughout the school year. Questions about the school plans or drills are welcome and may be addressed to the Campus Operations Director.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY – NONDISCRIMINATION**

No administrative officer or employee of the school, acting on his/her official capacity, may discriminate on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin regarding personnel practices, including the assigning, hiring, promoting, compensating, and discharging of employees, and/or the use of facilities, awarding contracts, and participation in programs.

No scholar shall, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, sexual orientation or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity sponsored by Uplift except as specifically provided in the Title IX implementing regulations.

No qualified disabled person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by this school district except as specifically provided in the Section 504 implementing regulations.

Inquiries regarding any of these policies should be directed to the Academic Director or the Title IX Coordinator at the Uplift Central Management Office.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE SCHOOL**

The school is a drug-free and alcohol-free environment. All scholars are prohibited from the possession, use, sale, or distribution or attempt to possess, use, sell, or distribute; or from being under the influence of a controlled substance or dangerous drug (as defined by law) or alcohol or any alcoholic beverage, or any abusable or volatile chemical substance, or any intoxicant or behavior-altering drug on school premises or off school premises at a school-related activity, function, or event. Scholars who violate this provision will be subject to discipline consequences as outlined in the Code of Conduct and may also result in notice to the police.

### **NO TOBACCO USE**

No tobacco use is allowed on school premises or at school sponsored activities. This prohibition includes electronic or “vapor” cigarettes. Scholars may be disciplined for violation of this prohibition according to the Code of Conduct. Parents are expected to comply with this restriction whenever they are on the school campus.

## **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS – PARENT’S RIGHT TO KNOW**

All parents have the right to know the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher. Professional qualifications include whether the teacher is certified in the grade level or subject he or she is teaching, the baccalaureate and or graduate degree he or she holds, and the field of discipline of his or her degree or certification. Uplift prides itself on hiring qualified individuals



who are outstanding teachers for all our scholars. If you wish to know any of this information regarding your child's teacher, please make a written request to the Academic Director.

## **CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY NONDISCRIMINATION**

Uplift Education offers support to school district for career and technical education programs in Science, Technology, Engineering & Math; Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications; Health Science; and Information Technology. Admission to these programs is based on interest and aptitude, age appropriateness, academic achievement, state and local policy, class space available, and any course pre-requisites.

It is the policy of Uplift not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in its CTE programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of Uplift not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Uplift will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all education and CTE programs. For information about your rights or grievance procedures, please contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Director of 504 Services at the CMO (contact information below).

## **MILITARY RECRUITER ACCESS**

Uplift is required to provide upon a request made by military recruiters, access to secondary school scholars' names, addresses, and telephone listings.

A parent or eligible scholar may request on an annual basis that the scholar's name, address, and telephone listing not be released without prior written parental consent, or the consent of the eligible scholar, by OPTING-OUT of "Directory Information," described in the "Directory information" section above.

## **SCHOLAR OR PARENT COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Uplift encourages parents and scholars to seek prompt resolution of any complaints or concerns. Scholar and parent concerns can usually be resolved by an informal phone call or conference with the teacher or the Academic Director who is the subject of the complaint. If that process is not satisfactory, parents are encouraged to contact the Managing Director for the school. If satisfactory resolution is not achieved, parent may file a formal grievance pursuant to Uplift Board policy.. (See Uplift Parent Grievance Policy – Appendix H and posted on Uplift website.)



## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Uplift's Department of Student Support Services oversees wraparound programs, services and prevention efforts that directly benefit Uplift scholars. This includes delivery of services for homeless/foster populations, prevention programs, social-emotional learning, scholar discipline, Title IX supportive measures, crisis response efforts and social/behavioral counseling. Please contact the Academic Director or the school's Social/Behavioral Counselor if you have any questions about these services.

### **SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING SERVICES**

All scholars at Uplift Education have access to mental health counseling services provided by the Social/Behavioral Counselor assigned to their school. Uplift Education implements a comprehensive counseling program which includes direct counseling services, guidance curriculum and system support services. Guidance lessons occur multiple times throughout the year in all grade levels and promote the development of positive mental health habits and skills. Referrals for individual counseling may come from school leadership, staff, parents/guardians, or students may self-refer. Any parent/guardian may revoke their consent for their child to receive counseling services (with the exception of emergency situations) by submitting this request in writing to the Social/Behavioral Counselor or the campus Academic Director.

### **MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS SERVICES**

All scholars who meet criteria through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act are eligible to receive additional services and support through Uplift Education. Residency questionnaires are distributed annually to determine eligibility for the program. A family that is experiencing homelessness, or the possibility of homelessness, should contact the Social/Behavioral Counselor assigned to their school for more information.

### **SERVICES FOR SCHOLARS IN FOSTER CARE**

Families participating in foster care may be eligible to receive additional support and services through Uplift Education. Qualifying families should contact the Social/Behavioral Counselor assigned to their campus for additional information.

### **PREVENTION PROGRAMMING**

Uplift Education strives to serve as an industry leader in prevention programming for all scholars. The goal of this programming is to prevent dangerous or risky behaviors from developing or occurring. Depending on their grade level, staff and scholars receive annual trainings on topics including bullying prevention, substance use prevention, sexual harassment prevention, suicide prevention, and teen dating violence prevention.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING**

**AS EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF, UPLIFT EMPLOYEES ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT ANY SUSPICION OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD.** UPLIFT cooperates with child abuse or neglect investigators as required by law. Uplift provides training to its teachers and staff in preventing and addressing incidents of abuse or neglect of scholars, including

knowledge of likely warning signs indicating a scholar may be a victim of abuse or neglect. If a teacher or other staff member observes or suspects a scholar has been abused or neglected, the staff member is obligated by law to make a report to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and in appropriate circumstances, to the local police. The school may not interfere with an investigation of child abuse or neglect conducted by the DFPS. The school will permit the investigator to conduct the required interview with the scholar at any reasonable time at the school and without prior notice to the parent.

#### ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE BY A SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

Uplift takes very seriously any allegation of abuse of scholars by school staff. Any knowledge or suspicion of abuse of a scholar by a school employee should be reported immediately to the Academic Director, school counselor, or other administrative staff.

#### BULLYING

Uplift strives to provide a safe and caring environment for its scholars. Bullying of any kind is prohibited. Anyone with knowledge of or suspicion of bullying, including the alleged victim, should report such information to the Academic Director, Social/Behavioral Counselor, or other school or Uplift employee immediately. Investigations of bullying allegations will be conducted according to the Anti-Bullying Policy. (See Anti-Bullying Policy- Appendix B)

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of any kind is prohibited. Scholars shall not engage in unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another scholar or school employee. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors. All scholars are expected to treat other scholars, school employees, volunteers, and community members with courtesy and respect, to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. A substantiated complaint against a scholar will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense.

Reporting: Any scholar or staff member who observes, or has knowledge of any allegations of, sexual harassment should report such information immediately to the Title IX Coordinator, Academic Director, school counselor or other school or Uplift employee. Investigations of such allegations will be conducted by the Uplift according to established procedures.

**In connection with Title IX Rules and Regulations released by the Department of Education in 2020, Uplift will provide supportive measures to both complainants and respondents involved in a Title IX report. For additional information about Title IX, please refer to the Title IX Grievance Process Policy attached as Exhibit L.**



## CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

### SCHOOL MEALS

Uplift’s Child Nutrition Program (CNP) vision is to provide “excellence in food and service.” Uplift is committed to the responsibility and privilege of nutritiously educating our scholars. By offering an extensive variety of healthy menu choices, scholars learn and help establish the lifelong pattern of healthy eating. Uplift adheres to the standards of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.

**Meals are created by a Registered Dietitian to provide a variety of healthy options including vegetables, fruits, whole-grain rich items, protein-rich entrées and low-fat milk. Menus will be available to view at [www.uplifteducation.org/cnp](http://www.uplifteducation.org/cnp).**

### MEAL PRICING

Uplift Education Child Nutrition Program announced that this school year, healthy meals will be offered every school day to all students at no cost. Typically, a student’s household must meet income eligibility requirements to qualify for free or reduced-price meals. However, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued guidance that allows schools to offer meals to all students at no cost for the 2021-2022 school year.

### FREE & REDUCED-PRICED MEALS

Even with free meals for your school district in 2021-2022, it is still important to submit a free/reduced price meal application. Completing an application takes less than 10 minutes and application information remains private and confidential. Only one application per household is needed. If you are directly certified, you will receive a letter from Child Nutrition indicating that your household qualifies without applying. Applications will be available on July 12, 2021, on [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com).

### LUNCH VISITATIONS

Due to limited lunch periods, visitors are generally not permitted. Parents must obtain prior approval from the Academic Director for any lunch visitation. Scholars with pre-approved lunch visitors may be asked to eat in a designated area away from their normal lunch area. Parents may only bring lunch for their child.

## SCHOLAR HEALTH INFORMATION

Uplift has health services staff at each school location to serve the health needs of our scholars and meet state health requirements. All health services are under the direction of the Director of Health Services for Uplift. Any questions or concerns about the health needs of your child may be brought to the school health staff or to the Director of Health Services if necessary. The following information applies generally to all scholars.



## MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION:

Medications, nonprescription and prescription, may be administered at school by the health services staff or by a designated staff member who has been trained to administer medication. In general, medication should be administered at home whenever possible. For those medications which must be administered at school, the following procedures apply:

1. All medications: over the counter and prescription, must be in their original container, properly labeled, with a written request from the parent or legal guardian to administer the medication at school.
2. All medications, over-the-counter and prescription, must include the scholar's first and last name, date of birth, medication name, the amount requested to be given, the route, and time requested to administer the medication to the scholar. Over the counter medication administration will not exceed the dosage on the container label without written authorization from a licensed healthcare provider.
3. Prescriptive and/or over-the-counter medication(s) will not be administered for more than 3 days unless there is written authorization from a licensed healthcare provider.
4. All medication must be checked into the health office/clinic upon arrival on campus. No scholar is allowed to carry or possess any medication at school (except rescue inhalers and Epi-pens once approved by the campus nurse). Any scholar found taking medication or giving medication to another scholar will be subject to disciplinary action
5. No more than a 30-day supply of medication will be accepted at a time.
6. **Medication that has expired or is not picked up by the parent will be properly discarded after its expiration date or after the last day of school, which ever first occurs.**
7. Medication purchased in a foreign country will not be administered to scholars unless the pharmacy is a U.S. FDA approved pharmacy.
8. Medication packaged as a "sample" must be accompanied by a copy of the prescription written by a licensed healthcare provider and must include the scholar's first and last name, date of birth, medication name, the amount requested to be given, the route, and time requested to administer the medication to the scholar.
9. Aspirin or products containing aspirin will not be given without a physician's order.
10. Parents are responsible for advising the school clinic that a medication has been discontinued or if there are any changes to the medication(s).
11. Uplift does not provide any over-the-counter medications for scholars.
12. Authorized district employees may administer medication(s) when a nurse is not available.

## ASTHMA AND ANAPHYLAXIS MEDICATION

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life-threatening conditions. Scholars with asthma and/or severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are encouraged to provide an allergy action plan or asthma action plan provided by a licensed healthcare provider. Please contact the health office/clinic if you have any questions about these conditions or your scholar's treatment at school. Asthma Action Plans and Allergy Action Plans are available from the health office/clinic and will be available in the online enrollment as well as at [www.uplifteducation.org](http://www.uplifteducation.org), under the Uplift Health Services tab. If your scholar has any activity restrictions due to weather or exertion, provide the health office/clinic with a physician's signed and dated note specifying the restrictions.



Scholars with asthma or anaphylaxis are entitled to possess and self-administer prescriptions medications for asthma or anaphylaxis conditions while on school property or a school-related event, if certain conditions are met. Check with the health office/clinic to see if your scholar meets criteria to self-carry and administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication(s).

Scholar possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires written authorization from the scholar's parent and physician or other licensed health care provider to be on file in the school office/health clinic indicating that the medication has been prescribed for the scholar who will be carrying the medication while at school. The scholar must have demonstrated to the scholar's physician or other licensed health care provider and the school nurse, if available, the skill level necessary to self-administer the prescription medication, including the use of any device required to administer the medication. The scholar must be capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication and must be knowledgeable about the medication and how to administer it.

With these safeguards in place, the scholar may possess and self-administer his or her prescribed medication, in compliance with the prescription or written instructions from the scholar's physician or other licensed health care provider during school hours or at school related events. Written authorizations to self-administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication must be updated annually.

Medication in a scholar's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

## DIABETES MANAGEMENT

Scholars with diabetes may possess equipment and medication used in the treatment of diabetes during the school day and at school-related events given certain conditions. According to Texas Health and Safety Code, a diabetes management and treatment plan must be developed and implemented by the scholars' parent and the physician responsible for the scholar's diabetes treatment. This plan must evaluate the scholar's ability to manage diabetes and his or her level of understanding of diabetes and must be signed by the parent and physician responsible for the scholar diabetes treatment. An individual health plan ("IHP") must be implemented by the school and/or school nurse and incorporate components of the scholar's diabetes management and treatment plan. In accordance with the scholar's IHP, the school may permit a scholar to attend to management of his or her diabetes, which may include performing blood glucose level checks, administering insulin, treating hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, possessing necessary monitoring and treatment equipment designed for diabetes care and attending to the management of his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school grounds, or at any school-related activity. The IHP must be updated annually.

## ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

A scholar who becomes ill during school hours is to report to the teacher, who will then send him or her to the health clinic with a clinic pass. If the nurse or other health office provider determines that it is necessary for the scholar to go home, the parent will be contacted. No scholar is allowed to go home without the parent being notified. Scholars are not to call parents from cell phones

asking to go home. Such calls are to be made from the school office or health office/clinic by school staff.

Scholars should stay home from school due to illness if any of the following are present:

1. Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher (Scholars must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications , i.e. Tylenol, before returning to school);
2. Diarrhea in the past 24 hours;
3. Unknown rash;
4. Ringworm of the scalp (remain home until cleared by a physician); or
5. Tested positive for COVID-19

To protect scholars at school, scholars assessed with any of the signs or symptoms listed above may be sent home, upon the recommendation of the health care staff.

### IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIREMENTS

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized in accordance with an established immunization schedule in order to attend public school. To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your scholar, please read “2021-2022 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K-12.” This document and more information about school vaccine requirements are available at the Texas Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”) Immunization Branch website: [www.immunizeTexas.com](http://www.immunizeTexas.com) (click on the school/childcare requirements link.) Information on immunization requirements will also be on the School website.

Validation of immunization records by a physician or public health clinic is required for entering school. All scholars enrolling must submit an immunization record to the health office/clinic for approval. Documents signed by a physician or public health clinic listing each immunization and month, day, and year in which it was given will be accepted.

If a scholar is not current on immunizations or has not provided a record showing the scholar is current, the scholar will be excluded from school until evidence of compliance is provided, unless the scholar meets the requirements for provisional enrollment, or the parent submits to the school an affidavit in the form prescribed by law (and as described in Section 38.001 (c) of the Texas Education Code) or has a contraindication, signed by a licensed health care provider, stating the scholar is medically exempt due to an allergy or a health condition.

**Provisional Enrollment:** Provisional enrollment allows a scholar who meets certain specific criteria to be admitted to school on a temporary basis for up to 30 days. During this 30 day period, the parent is responsible for ensuring the scholar receives the necessary vaccines as fast as is medically feasible and/or providing a complete and current immunization records to the school. Provisional enrollment allows a scholar to enroll in school in the following situations:

- A scholar is transferring from one Texas public school to another and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record. The record must be received within the 30-day period or the scholar will be excluded from school.
- A scholar has an immunization record that indicates the scholar has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate required vaccine. To remain enrolled, the scholar must complete the required subsequent dose in each vaccine series on schedule and as

rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

- Homeless scholars (as defined under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001) may be enrolled pending receipt of immunization record or, if not received within the 30-day period, to remain enrolled, the scholar begins receiving the required vaccines.
- A dependent of a person who is on active duty with the armed forces of the United States can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he/she transfers from one school to another and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record.

**Immunization Records Reporting:** The school’s record of a scholar’s immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and the Texas department of state health services (“DSHS”) and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of the scholar to those schools.

## INJURIES/ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The school does not carry insurance to cover medical treatment for scholar injuries at school and the school is not responsible for medical costs associated with a scholar’s injury.

## STATE MANDATED HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR SCHOLARS

**Spinal Screening (scoliosis):** The annual, state-required, spinal screening will be conducted for all children, who are attending public or private school must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature in accordance with the following schedule.

- Girls will be screened two times, once at age 10 (or fall semester of grade 5) and again at age 12 (or fall semester of grade 7).
- Boys will be screened one time at age 13 or 14 (or fall semester of grade 8).

The purpose of this program is to identify the scholars who may have spinal problems and to inform their parents, so the scholar may have a complete examination by their own physician. Scholars are checked individually by the school nurse or screening assistant. Scholars must remove their shirt for this exam. For this reason, we request that girls wear a sports bra or two-piece swimsuit top underneath their shirt on exam day. Parents will be notified of the results of the screening only if professional follow-up is necessary.

A student may be exempt from scoliosis screening if:

- The scholar is already actively under medical care by an appropriately licensed professional for one or more of the spinal problems for which spinal screening is performed. To claim this exception, the student must submit signed and dated documentation from the licensed professional to the school. The documentation must state that the student is under active, ongoing medical care for specific spinal problems.
- A scholar’s parent or legal guardian executes an affidavit stating that spinal screening will be conducted by an individual other than the screener used by the school. The school may admit the scholar on a provisional basis for up to 60 days. The school may deny admission until the screening record of the scholar is provided.
- The screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is a member. The parent or legal guardian must

submit to the school an affidavit in lieu of the screening record stating the conflict. The affidavit must be submitted on or before the date spinal screening is scheduled.

**Acanthosis Nigricans Screening:** Acanthosis Nigricans (AN) is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body. AN screening can help identify scholars who may run the risk of developing diabetes in the future. AN screening is done during the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade vision and hearing screening. Parents will be notified if their child is found to have this skin marker for professional follow-up.

**Vision and Hearing Screening:** Vision and hearing screenings are conducted in preK – 4 years, kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> grades and for any other first-time enrollees, for the purpose of identifying scholars with vision and hearing disorders. Parents will be notified of failed vision and/or hearing screenings for professional follow-up, as necessary.

## UPDATED HEALTH INFORMATION

Parents are asked to keep the School Nurse and the Academic Director advised of any changes or concerns about their child’s health or medical condition. The school will be best prepared to assist your child if you keep the school nurse aware of any changes or concerns. **It is also important that you keep your contact information current so in the event of an emergency there is no delay in contacting you.** Please contact the school nurse or the Director of Health Services at the Central Management Office (469-621-8500) if you have any questions or concerns about the child’s health.

## SCHOOL-BASED TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

The Children’s Health School-Based TeleHealth Program, provided by Children’s Health in partnership with Uplift, provides in-school virtual consultations with physicians through the use of mobile telehealth carts located in some of our health clinics, throughout the district. The carts connect a Children’s Health Pediatric Group physician, or Pediatric Nurse Practitioner to a child who visits the school nurse’s office with a complaint that may need to be seen by a doctor. During the school day, scholars can be evaluated for various complaints such as; skin rashes, respiratory issues, ear complaints, nose complaints, eye complaints, etc. Scholars who present with flu and strep like symptoms can also be evaluated by a physician via the telehealth program. Once a scholar has been evaluated by a licensed health care provider, an electronic prescription can be sent to the family’s preferred pharmacy, when necessary. Currently, the School-Based TeleHealth Program is located in most Uplift schools. Please check with the health clinic staff at the school to determine if your school is a participant.

**Parents are required to register to take advantage of this program. Once registered, enrolled scholars can take advantage of the program throughout the school year. Registration forms must be updated each school year and can be found on our website [www.uplifteducation.org](http://www.uplifteducation.org) and in the health clinics currently participating in the program.**

## ENGAGING FAMILIES

Uplift believes that parents are essential partners in the education of their children and research supports this belief. A parent is a child’s first and most important teacher, and parents are a

valuable support to their learning after they begin school. We rely on the guidance parents provide their children and the insights they provide to us as educators. The following information should be helpful for parents to engage with the school:

## COMMUNICATION

A healthy school environment provides ample and appropriate communication between all members of the school community. Communication requires regularly scheduled progress conferences and reports and timely responses to other issues that arise. If you feel this is not occurring, please contact your scholar's teacher first, then the appropriate Academic Director. Appropriate communication is respectful of the time, opinion, and feelings of others. It is directed toward the person charged with solving the problem or knowing the answer to the question. To help you determine who the appropriate individual is to address an issue, please consult the school's directory or contact the Family Engagement Coordinator at the school.

## INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Each school website contains a Families and Scholars section which contains important information for families, such as handbooks, uniform policies, carline information, school supply lists, and other important information and links.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents will be actively involved in their child's education. They will have scheduled meetings with their child and teacher periodically during the year to review goals and progress. Methods in which the child can be supported outside of school in order to expand on the learning occurring at school will be discussed. Parents will want to participate in the demonstration and presentation nights. They are encouraged to share their knowledge, talents and interests/expertise with scholars in large and small groups or with scholars working on individual projects.

**Translation Support: If you need a translator to facilitate communication with the school, please contact the Family Engagement Coordinator at the school.**

## PARENT VOLUNTEERS IN PARTNERSHIP

Strong parental involvement is a key component of any successful school. Parents, as well as relatives and friends, are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of volunteer opportunities if they are able. All potential parent volunteer opportunities will solely be posted on VOLY, our online volunteer management tool (<https://uplift.voly.org/>). All Uplift parents are encouraged to visit the Uplift VOLY website and sign up for an account. Once an account is created and a background check is passed, parents are welcome to browse the volunteer directory in VOLY and find opportunities to sign up as a volunteer.

In addition to staying engaged through VOLY, parents are also encouraged to join Volunteers in Partnership (VIP), an organized group of parents at the school. The Volunteer in Partnership (VIP) aims to:

- Facilitate communication between the school and parents as well as among parents;
- Provide essential support to the school and its staff;



- Promote age appropriate social activities for scholars; and
- Foster a sense of inclusion and community within our school family.

Please contact the Family Engagement Coordinator or the Academic Director at your school if you want more information about the VIP or volunteer opportunities.

#### VIP –FUNDRAISING

The VIP may be engaged in fundraising, but all fundraising events are to be approved by the Academic Director, and if using the name of Uplift Education in the fundraising, also by the Chief Development Officer of Uplift. The purpose of requiring this approval is to ensure such activities are consistent with the educational mission and programs and are not in conflict with any other plans of the school. All funds raised by the VIP will be deposited into a bank account under Uplift’s tax identification number and managed by Uplift’s finance department I, but the account will be identified as the school’s enrichment or VIP account. Specific financial procedures for managing VIP funds are available from the Uplift CMO finance office.

#### ADVOCACY

Parents are an important voice in the effort to improve public schools and public charter schools in particular. Parents have the opportunity to participate in advocating for public schools and are encouraged to take an active part in the political process which affects our scholars and our schools. Please contact the Director of Government Affairs at the Central Management Office if you want to know more about Uplift’s advocacy and how you can be a part of those efforts.

#### VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS

All volunteers who will be working at the school or will have contact with scholars must consent to a background check conducted by the school. If you did not complete the Volunteer Background Consent form at the time of enrollment, please request a form from the school office to complete and return to the front office.

#### VISITORS

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit the school campus. However, visitors must first obtain approval from the school office before entering the school building beyond the front lobby. Uplift uses Raptor Technologies V-Soft visitor program to screen and identify those individuals who are listed as registered sexual offenders. Upon entering the school, a visitor will be required to present a valid state or government issued photo identification card (usually a driver’s license) to the front desk attendant and it will be scanned into the Raptor system. Once completed, a visitor’s badge will be issued to the visitor and must be worn conspicuously during the visit. When the visitor leaves the building, the badge should be returned to the front desk so that an entry can be made that the visitor has left the building. If you have any questions about the screening system, please contact the Academic Director.

With few exceptions, the delivery of private services to Uplift scholars by providers who are not formally contracted or employed by Uplift is prohibited on Uplift property.



## CLASSROOM VISITS

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with the approval of the Academic Director. Requests for such visits should be submitted to the Academic Director who will consider the benefit of such a visit against the potential disruption to the class and instruction.

## WAIVER OF FEES

Any family in need of financial assistance with any authorized school fees should contact the Academic Director of the school.





## PARENT/SCHOLAR HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

To ensure that parents and scholars have had the opportunity to receive this Handbook and agree to review the Handbook, the school asks parents to sign the following acknowledgement form. The Academic Director or advisory teacher will collect the signed forms when returned to the school. The date for returning the forms will be communicated at the start of school.

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that the parent/scholar Handbook is available online or in print at the school office and have read the parent/scholar Handbook and we agree to follow the policies and procedures contained within it. As members of the school, we understand that failure to follow the expected policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action, loss of privileges, and possibly result in our scholar's expulsion from the school.

<b>Scholar Name:</b>	
<b>Scholar Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>	
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**APPENDIX**

- (A) –CODE OF CONDUCT
- (B) - ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
- (C) – FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION –  
SCHOLAR POLICY
- (D) - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (TECHNOLOGY)
- (E) – ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY
- (F) - CREDIT AND ACADEMIC POLICY
- (G) GRADING POLICY – GRADES 6-12
- (H) – PARENT GRIEVANCE POLICY
- (I) - DRESS AND UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS
- (J) CULTURE MANAGENT PLAN
- (K) TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCESS POLICY