Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School

Parent/Student Handbook

2026-2027

1303 W Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard

San Antonio, Texas 78207

Office: 210-978-7930

School Leadership: Marcus Franklin

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Dear Families:

Thank you for choosing Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School! The school's leadership team, faculty, and staff are eager to begin the important work of preparing your student for college and a Year 2035 workplace. We have been busily preparing for the months ahead and look forward to developing a collaborative relationship between home and school. The journey will begin August 4th followed by 185 days of high expectations and strong academics.

The Parent and Student Handbook and *Code of Conduct* are designed to guide you and your student through this exciting time. We encourage you to read both sections of this booklet thoroughly and discuss them with your Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School students.

The Parent and Student Handbook includes contact information and specific school policies of Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School. The *Code of Conduct* describes the behavior expectations that will be implemented to encourage appropriate conduct and ensure a positive learning environment.

Welcome to the school year!

Sincerely,

The Administration, Faculty, and Staff of
Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School

For each and every child that walks through our doors, preparation for the year 2035 workplace is an expectation. From day one at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School, students receive a tailored education to make this possible. It's an education that fits individual needs. We've established innovative partnerships, like tutoring and our personalized learning model, to build the skills and knowledge to be successful in life and learning.

The Mission

A team of dedicated teachers and leaders, working in a high performance and caring culture, maintains an intense focus on academic achievement and performance outcomes. Students find success and are engaged through personalized learning, which allows students to work at their own pace and learn in a way more suited to their strengths. We hold high expectations for students and staff and believe everyone can create their future.

The Vision

Third Future Schools prepares students for college and the modern workplace. Through personalized learning and a focus on critical thinking skills, our schools close achievement gaps and allow every student to reach her/his potential.

Our Core Beliefs

1. All students can learn and reach his or her potential.
2. Effective teachers make the most difference in student academic performance.
3. For every child to succeed, we must hold students and ourselves to high expectations.
4. We value parent engagement and community support.
5. We rely on clearly defined outcomes to guide our work and to which we hold ourselves accountable.
6. We value equity and commit to reducing inequities inherent in the education system.

Academic Goals

1. Students who spend two years at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will be at or above grade level in math and reading
2. All students will demonstrate proficiency in the core subjects before advancing to the next level (if attendance meets expectations).
3. All students will leave our school prepared for middle school, high school, college, and a year 2035 workplace.

School Description

Our instructional model is tailored to meet each student's individual needs through our personalized learning model. This instructional program utilizes direct instruction, blended learning, and customized support through the use of learning coaches to meet the needs of all students.

We utilize successful teaching methods and technology in a modern and student-friendly environment. This promotes learning tailored to each individual student. Using this approach, our students advance academically, socially, and personally, sometimes at a surprising pace. Each student is an adult in training and when our teachers, staff, and parents cooperate, great things happen.

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will make no excuses for their student population and will dedicate themselves to ensure that all students show growth in character, academics, life skills, the arts, and wellness using teaching skills tailored to meet the needs of each student.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, academic, artistic, or athletic ability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or the district the child would otherwise attend under state law or in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Social Promotion

Our goal is to grow student proficiency an average of 1.8 years in just one year and to set up our students for success at the next grade level.

At Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School, "seat time" is not a measure of success. At our school, students will no longer be "socially promoted." Students who are pushed to the next grade even when they cannot read or do math at grade level usually fall further behind and are prime candidates for dropping out of school in high school.

Students must demonstrate proficiency or near-proficiency before being promoted to the next grade. Students must show that they can read, write, and do math at grade level (or near grade level) on either the NWEA MAP tests or the state assessment (STAAR) taken in the spring.

We believe that with great instruction and parental support nearly all of our students will be successful and will be prepared to advance to the next grade.

School Schedule

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School's normal instructional operating hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The campus opens at 6:30 and remains open until 5:00 for students who need before-school or after-school care. A detailed school calendar can be found for our school on our website at or www.thirdfutureschools.org.

Family Involvement

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School is a cooperative enterprise and inclusive school; our families, teachers, and staff share the responsibilities and rewards of operating and participating with our school. Parents play an essential role in and out of the classrooms. Our families experience firsthand the school environment, become advocates for their children, and enrich the school community with their ideas, interests, talents, and resources. Our goal is 100% participation from our administration, faculty and staff, students, parents, and greater community.

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School encourages family involvement at all levels of education, and we realize that students are only successful when the team supports learning at every opportunity. Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will hold three teacher/parent conferences over the course of the year, and these will be advertised through multiple formats. We make every effort to provide communication in English and Spanish to ensure that our greater community has accurate and timely information. Our school is also open to families until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. We encourage parents and families to take advantage of our facility after hours and explore the wide-ranging opportunities we can provide. Families may also simply spend time with their student(s) enjoying television or other leisure activities.

Parents may also volunteer for a wide variety of roles, such as:

1. After school monitor
2. Support in cafeteria
3. Helper for after school activities
4. Classroom helper or monitor
5. Field trip helper
6. Front office helper
7. Event helper
8. Assembly coordinator

9. Organizer or support for monthly parent meetings
10. Translator
11. Lunch and/or recess supervision
12. School set up and care

Volunteers

At Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School, we welcome volunteers as a source of special skills and the much-needed extra hand in the greater school environment. Volunteers are very much appreciated for the support they extend to teachers and staff. We encourage all volunteers to contact our front office at (719) 313-7007 to get more information and what is required to volunteer at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School.

Bus Service

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will utilize the District Transportation Department. Please contact them directly for route information.

San Antonio ISD Transportation Policy

Transportation Registration

Once a student is enrolled in a San Antonio ISD school, he/she will automatically be assigned to a transportation route if they are eligible for service based on the student's primary address. Students will only be scheduled on one school bus to one primary residential address. Parents do not need to do anything other than to make sure District has the correct primary registered address.

A non-eligible student may ride on a school bus with a bus pass from the principal's office if there is room available. Once a bus becomes overcrowded, all non-eligible students will no longer be permitted to ride for the remainder of the school year. Students will receive a 3-day written notice prior to removal from an overcrowded bus.

All school buses allow room for no more than 3 students to a seat for elementary students and 2 students to a seat for middle & high school students.

Behavior Rules: Respect Self, Others and Property

- For the safety of everyone, behave appropriately with no loud noises.

- Cooperate with the bus driver and others.
- Enter and exit the bus in an orderly fashion.
- Transportation employees have the authority to assign seats at any time.
- Stay in your assigned seat, facing forward.
- Keep hands, head and feet inside the bus.
- Do not drop or throw objects inside or outside the bus.
- Do not eat or drink, except water, while on the bus.
- Do not litter on the bus.
- No inappropriate language.
- No weapons, alcohol or drugs, including tobacco.
- No physical or verbal altercations.
- No skateboards
- Buckle up at all times

Consequences for Violations

If any of the above student behavior rules are broken, the bus driver will make a referral of the violation to the principal and the following disciplinary action will be taken.

1. First violation: Principal or assistant principal will conference with student. Suspension from the bus may occur with this violation. Parents or guardians will be notified.
2. Second violation: Student will be suspended from the bus for three school days. Parents or guardian will be notified.
3. Third violation: Student will be suspended from the bus for an extended period of time until agreement can be reached between parents, guardians, administrator, bus driver, transportation supervisor and student.

Serious offenses will receive disciplinary measures, up to and including removal to an alternative education program and/or expulsion from school. Each case, however, will be judged separately and may warrant discipline of a type different from another case.

For more information about San Antonio ISD transportation policies and procedures, please visit www.thirdfutureschools.org.

Breakfast and Lunch

Child Nutrition, including breakfast and lunch, is managed by the district and follows all district guidelines regarding pricing and free and reduced meals.

Students are advised to refrain from sharing food with other students to minimize the spread of viruses and the risk of allergic reaction. Students will practice etiquette and clean-up skills during mealtimes. A peanut free table/location will be provided for students with allergies when requested.

Emergency Information

Parents and guardians must complete an Emergency Card for each student upon enrolling. This information is used in conjunction with our Student Information System to ensure we have the most accurate contact information for all students at all times. Please notify the office when information changes so that we can update the card and our Student Information System.

Withdrawal or Transfer of Students

When a student leaves Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School, the original and complete cumulative education records will be sent as requested to the new school of attendance. In order to release these records, the office will need a withdrawal form filled out by the parent or guardian.

School Security

Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School implements sensible measures to provide an enhanced level of security for our students, staff, and visitors in compliance with all state and San Antonio ISD policies. We will strive to meet the following:

1. Completed background checks for all parent volunteers who either work directly with students or chaperone field trips
2. Buzz-in access to main building
3. Enhanced visitor check-in procedures requiring all visitors to sign-in with the office and prominently display a visitor's badge. Badges are numbered and must be turned in prior to leaving the building
4. Training for staff on proper safety/security practices and procedures
5. Training drills for staff and students that meet state requirements

Visitors

We welcome adult visitors at any time. **All visitors are required to sign in at the office.** Parents wishing to visit a classroom are requested to call or stop at the office to make arrangements. **When you are in a classroom observing or assisting, please do not hold a conference with the teacher about your child or other personal issues.** Please make an appointment to confer and conference on specific issues before or after school.

Quality Assurance – Handling Complaints

Experience has demonstrated that open communication between parents/guardians and the school's staff is the key to maintaining a stable business relationship.

What to do if you have a problem?

1. Discuss the problem with your child's teacher. Teachers will make themselves available to discuss parental concerns regarding your child.
2. Discuss the problem with the school's principal or assistant principal. Parental concerns or questions that cannot be resolved by the teacher should be redirected to the school's administration. The administration is fully qualified and possesses the requisite leadership and decision-making skills to solve most problems.
3. If the situation is not resolved, the parent may ask to speak with the Director of Schools.

Child Custody

In most cases, when parents are divorced, both continue to have equal rights concerning their child(ren) and their educational options. If you have a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please provide the office with a copy. Unless your court order is on file with us, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School receives a request for access.

   Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

   Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School staff to amend a record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the principal decides not to amend the record as requested by the

parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

   One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

   Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

   Family Policy Compliance Office
   U.S. Department of Education
   400 Maryland Avenue, SW
   Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(*1*) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(*2*) are met. (§99.31(a)(1))

- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2))

- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4))

- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to §99.38. (§99.31(a)(5))

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction. (§99.31(a)(6))

- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7))

- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8))

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9))

- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10)

- Information the school has designated as "directory information" under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11))

School Dress Code Policy

Students at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will follow the San Antonio ISD dress code. Please note, if the San Antonio ISD dress code permits jeans with holes, these will not be allowed at San Antonio ISD.

Parent and Staff Responsibilities

Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school in the in compliance with the dress code. Within the school, the dress code will be enforced by the classroom teachers, other staff members, and Tafolla administrators who will make final decisions regarding uniform issues. Cheerful, consistent compliance with our dress code policy by all is expected.

Dress Code Wear Guidance

Students are expected to be dressed neatly, be well groomed and give a general good appearance. Approved dress code clothing needs to be of appropriate size/fit, with no holes and in good repair and must be worn as intended by the policy. A student can be out of compliance for wearing non-approved items, or by wearing approved items in a manner that is sloppy, immodest, or otherwise inappropriate. All students are expected to be in dress code Monday through Friday unless administration has announced otherwise.

Use of Mobile Phones Prohibited for Students

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School unless specifically authorized and supervised by an adult for a specific instructional purpose.

The prohibition against student use of cell phones applies at all times while a student is on school grounds, including before school and after school. Students may also use the office phones to call parents or to make arrangements for pick-up.

The administration and teachers will take mobile phones that they see on campus. Students may pick up the phone from one of the administrators after school.

Please help students understand this regulation and help keep all of our students safe from social media bullying and from distractions in a rigorous academic environment.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Progress reports will be sent to parents during the school year to provide specific information about student progress in each subject. At the end of each quarter, parents will receive report cards with cumulative data on their child(ren)'s performance and progress.

Attendance

Tardiness

Instruction at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School begins **promptly** at **8:00:00 AM.** It is critical that all students be prepared to begin instruction on time. All students may enter the building beginning at 6:30am. A student who is late misses valuable instructional time.

All students must be signed in by a parent, guardian, or authorized adult into the Front Office if arriving late. The student will be considered tardy and the incident will be recorded. In addition, no child will be dismissed early, unless for special circumstances. Being at school on time in the morning and staying in school until the end of the school day is central to receiving a good education.

Absences

School achievement begins with regular attendance. Parents/guardians must ensure that all school-age children in their care are in school on time daily. Additionally, school personnel must communicate any attendance problems or concerns to parents/guardians in a timely manner. The most effective strategy to prevent unlawful and excessive absence is proactivity, with the school, family, and community working together. To this end, school personnel report to administrators their concerns about student behaviors which may be precursors to attendance problems. Emerging and continuing attendance issues may be addressed through targeted programs, individual parent and student meetings, and other appropriate interventions and referrals.

Parents must contact the school office by phone whenever a child is going to be absent, and send a written excuse to the teacher when the child returns to school.

In the event that extraordinary circumstances require that the student be absent from school, a Student Attendance Plan/Contract may be developed jointly by the teacher, an administrator, and the student's parent or legal guardian. The plan will define the length of the absence and the means by which the student will make-up the work he or she will miss. The plan must be approved and signed by the principal and the parent/guardian prior to the student's absence.

Following an absence, students are to turn in documentation (e.g. doctors note, parent note, etc.) so that the absence can be coded correctly.

All students, including students who have been suspended, are to be offered make-up work for the time during which they were lawfully absent.

Habitual Tardiness and Absences

Students who are habitually late and/or absent for part or all of the school day miss vital instructional time and will be held accountable. Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will adhere to the following guidelines:

Number of Absences	**Action by Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School**
5 or more absences (2 tardies/early check-out equivalent to 1 absence)	Conference with administration to develop an intervention plan which includes mandatory attendance workshop
7 or more unexcused absences	Attendance contract
10 or more unexcused absences	Possible referral to truancy court and/or denial of admission to Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School the following school year

Student Retention/ Social Promotion

Moving struggling students along from grade to grade has not worked well, and waiting until a student reaches high school makes less sense than intervening early. Our model provides more time and additional effective instruction to the students who struggle the most with reading and math. We give them “the gift of time” and also ensure that they are assigned to highly effective teachers and receive differentiated instruction.

Retaining students at specific grades is another strategy that will help some students build confidence and academic proficiency. It will help them graduate and be prepared for a Year 2035 world and workplace. While past research is mixed on the subject of retention, there is strong research indicating that a well-designed process can significantly improve students’ reading ability and overall academic proficiency. Of course, we will implement our program in a way that makes sense for our community and in a way that is the most beneficial to students.

Primarily, candidates for retention fall in two categories: 1) students who have poor attendance and therefore disrupt their own learning and fail to learn, or 2) students who do not put in the effort to learn and fall further behind their peers.

For the 2026-2027 school year, Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School will follow these guidelines on promotion:

	NOT PROMOTED	MUST ATTEND SUMMER SCHOOL
POOR ATTENDANCE	● Less than 85% attendance rate (regardless of reason); absent 28 days or more ● Some exceptions for unique medical situations	● Less than 90% attendance rate (regardless of reason); absent 19 days or more ● Must have 90% attendance rate during 5th Quarter
LOW ACADEMIC GROWTH	● Less than 0.7 years of academic growth in NWEA reading or math tests, excluding students who reach grade-level proficiency.	● Less than 0.9 years of academic growth in NWEA reading or math tests, excluding students who reach grade-level proficiency

Students who have to attend summer school (5th Quarter) in order to be promoted must: 1) attend at least 90% of the days of summer school, and 2) earn a "proficient" grade in summer school reading and math classes.

Some students will not be good candidates for retention. On a case-by-case basis, our school will consider excluding students who meet the following criteria:

- Student has a significant cognitive disability
    - In general, SPED students are not excluded from retention
- Student has a severe learning disability in reading
- Student is in the first two years of receiving ELD services
- Student has been retained previously
- Student has demonstrated grade-level proficiency in reading and math

All retention decisions will be made by the Principal or his/her designee.

Students must demonstrate proficiency or near-proficiency before being promoted to the next grade. Students must show that they can read, write, and do math at grade level (or near grade level) on either the NWEA MAP tests or the state assessments (STAAR) taken in the spring. Student attendance will also be taken

into consideration when recommending retention or promotion. Our 5th Quarter (Summer School) program will be required for students that have habitually poor attendance in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

We believe that with great instruction and parental support nearly all of our students will be successful and will be prepared to advance to the next grade.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is the school's foremost concern. If your child has any specific health, safety, or security needs, please inform the school so that appropriate accommodations can be made. The following information describes the precautions taken to protect the well-being of all students.

Medication

The School Nurse and the student's teacher must be informed of any **prescription medication** that a student is required to take at school. To dispense prescription medication to students, the school must receive a written order from the student's doctor and a permission slip from the student's parent. All medication must be brought to the office by a parent or authorized adult in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the date of expiration, and the proper dosage. If medication needs to be administered to the child when the Nurse is not present, a staff member trained by the Nurse will administer the medication.

Non-prescription medications: If, during the course of the school day, it is necessary for a student to receive common, non-prescription medication (e.g., Tylenol), the parent/guardian must fill out a Medicine Administration Form. Parents/guardians must inform the school of any allergies to or restrictions on non-prescription medication that their children might have. Parents/guardians are required to notify the Nurse in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance at school.

Accidents

The principal, assistant principal, nurse, or a trained staff member will administer initial treatments of minor injuries. The student's emergency contact will be notified immediately by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student and an Incident Report will be kept in the student's permanent file. In such cases, it is especially crucial that the school has working phone numbers for students' parents and for alternate contacts in the event that a parent is unavailable. Please be vigilant in keeping the school's records for your child up-to-date.

Student Safety

In order to keep students safe, we have to ensure that students are accounted for while they are at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School and that they are properly released at the end of the school day. As our doors will be

open to students from 6:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. every day that school is in session, parents and students are expected to abide by the following procedures:

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

At Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School, student safety is of the highest priority. We ask that all parents, guardians, faculty, staff, and visitors follow the guidance below:

Drop-Off:

1. SLOW DOWN! Students can come out from between cars unexpectedly.
2. Please follow the instructions of any staff member on duty that is directing traffic.
3. Do not allow your students to cross over main streets outside of using the assigned crosswalks.
4. Stay in the crosswalk where there is support from a crosswalk guard.
5. Be prompt in picking up students after school if they are not staying for after school activities

Before school (all students):

- Any enrolled student may be dropped off at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School and enter the school starting at 6:30 a.m.
- Once a student enters the building, they must check in with the teacher or administrator on duty in the designated area.
- Students are not allowed to leave the building once they enter in the morning unless picked up by an authorized person.

During the school day:

- Students will only be released to an authorized parent, guardian, or other person designated on the student release form.

After school (6th, 7th, and 8th grade):

- Students will be released to an authorized parent, guardian, or other person designated on the student release form beginning at 4:00 pm each day. Please follow all safety rules and directions given by staff during the pick-up process.
- Parents and guardians may grant permission to release the student to walk home or to a location allowed by the parent or guardian. This permission will be given in writing and at the time of registration or enrollment.
- Students may stay at school until 5:00 pm.
- Students who stay after school will only be released to an authorized person, unless the parent or guardian has given permission to the school to release the student to walk home. Parents must sign out their child.

- Students who have permission to walk home are **not allowed** to reenter the building once they leave. Students must sign out before they leave.
- If a student **has not been picked up by 5:00 p.m** administration will begin calling parents, guardians, and emergency contacts to come pick up the student immediately unless we have received prior notice of a late pick up. Students who are habitually picked up late may have their after-school privileges revoked as determined through a parent conference with administration.

Solicitation

Solicitation of or by any student, parent, or staff member on school property for any cause except those authorized by the principal is strictly prohibited.

Money and Other Valuable Property

Students are encouraged to leave all money and other valuable property at home, especially cell phones and other technology. **Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.**

Character /Social-Emotional Goals

All students will be familiar with, and demonstrate, ***Habits of Success*** traits. Often success at a difficult task depends as much on our frame of success as it does on our skill. Our approach to a problem or our attitude influences the degree to which we may excel. In education, as in the workplace, ***Habits of Success*** enable us to reach our potential and meet the needs of a complex and challenging world. ***Habits of success*** speak to our strength of character, our approach to life, and our attitude toward learning.

Seven Habits of Success

1. **Be at school and be on time.**

   This includes getting to class on time. By requiring students to be on time, we send the message that school and the classes are important. We help develop the student's sense of responsibility, and we help break some students' habit of making weak excuses.

2. **Be respectful of others.**

   If we are to live in a civil society, all of us must understand the delicate balance between the rights of the individual and those of the group. Students in particular must **respect others' right to learn**. This habit of success also includes **respect for authority**.

3. **Take responsibility for your actions.**

   The overarching theme of this habit of success is that we have a great deal of control over our actions and must therefore expect the positive or negative consequences resulting from those actions. Similarly, it is the individual who is the most responsible and accountable for learning that which is being taught.

4. **Persevere.**
This habit of success describes one's ability to see a task through until the end. It is "stick-to-it-ness." We need to help students learn to keep trying and not to give up easily. This habit of success also helps students understand that failure is a part of life and that one can learn to move beyond the setbacks and still be successful.

5. **Strive for accuracy.**
With this habit of success we help develop an appreciation for exactness and craftsmanship. We help students avoid sloppy work and help them pay attention to detail. Adherence to this habit of success fosters a "check-it-again" or "get-it-done-right" mentality.

6. **Do your best work at all times.**
This habit of success is similar to striving for accuracy. More than that, it means continuing to work hard to improve proficiency and reach one's potential. We need to teach students that they do not have to settle for second best and that in some things average just is not good enough. Reaching high goals usually requires our best work and a habit of doing our best all the time.

7. **Engage positively.**
At the heart of this habit of mind is optimism – optimism that problems can be solved. Students need to learn that a civil society requires people to engage positively in order to solve problems. This means that they should not cast aspersions from the sidelines or simply complain. They need to engage, and that engagement or contribution toward solving the problem should be positive and constructive.

Code of Conduct

The faculty and staff at Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School is dedicated to providing students with skills necessary to reason, communicate, and live with dignity in a civil society. Central to this mission is the creation of a school community characterized by caring, discipline, order, and respect.

The school's *Code of Conduct* has been designed to guide the efforts of teachers and staff in creating a safe, orderly environment and to reinforce the primary mission of the school: rigorous academic learning. The *Code*, which states clearly all school-wide rules governing student behavior as well as the consequences for breaking the rules, will serve as a contract among parents, students, and staff. Our school-wide rules and approach to behavior is based on 3 non-negotiable expectations and the Seven Habits of Success previously mentioned.

Non-negotiable:

- Respect all teachers and staff members at all times
- Students will not take away from the education of other students

- No Bullying

Establishing systems of positive behavior support, structures that promote character education and discipline is an ongoing process. Alone, this *Code* will not ensure school discipline, nor will it develop an individual's character. However, as part of a comprehensive effort supported by all members of the school community, it will guide the process. Faculty and staff will work continuously to achieve as much consistency as possible with regard to disciplinary matters, and they will be prepared to revise and adapt disciplinary procedures as necessary.

Embracing the principles outlined herein is a first and vital step toward creating the type of environment in which all children can thrive. It will not only minimize physical harm and disruption among students, it will help establish among all members of the school community the habits that characterize a civil society. This is our *Code*, a blueprint for living and learning.

Consequences for Minor Misbehavior

It is expected that the majority of students at the school will strive to meet the expectations for responsibility and self-discipline outlined herein. It is also understood that no single set of procedures will be effective in helping every student develop the skills and attitudes necessary for success. Therefore, a series of interventions will be designed for students who have not been motivated by the school-wide procedures. As teachers and faculty adapt disciplinary procedures to meet individual needs, the focus will remain positive and an emphasis will be placed on the continuing need for calm and consistent consequences.

Students will learn that certain actions are unacceptable at the school and misbehavior has consequences that are neither amusing nor pleasant. Students who engage in any type of misbehavior, whether minor or severe, will be required to make amends and/or restore the situation. Restitution may involve an apology; community or school service; or fixing, replacing, and/or paying for damage caused. An administrator and/or teacher will determine the type of restitution required for a particular infraction. If possible, the restitution assignment will be communicated to the student's parents prior to his or her completion of the task. In all cases, parents will be informed of the child's inappropriate behavior and the restitution requirement.

Consequences for Severe Misbehavior

Most misbehavior will be handled with a conference or the use of mild consequences. However, severe misbehavior will be met swiftly with equally severe consequences. Such behavior is defined per our 3 non-negotiables:

- **Students will respect all teachers and staff members at all times**
- **Students will not take away from the education of other students**
- **No Bullying**

Insubordinate behavior is the direct refusal to comply with a reasonable staff instruction within a specified period of time. In such cases, the staff member involved will first explain to the student why his or her actions are inappropriate and will issue a mild consequence for the offense. If the student continues to disregard the staff member's instruction, he or she will be sent to the office and the incident will be reported to the appropriate staff member.

Insubordination is a breakdown in communication. When a student has been referred to the office for this offense, the principal or designee may arrange a conference between the student, the staff member involved, and possibly the student's parent or guardian. The purpose of the conference will be to establish a plan that will help the student communicate more responsibly in the future.

In cases of physically dangerous behavior—fighting, assault, verbal assault, physical intimidation, sexual intimidation—staff will firmly inform the students to stop the physical altercation. If the students do not respond, staff will use professional judgment to determine whether or not to intervene physically. Staff will not be required to take action that could be physically dangerous; in such cases, another student will be sent immediately for assistance. The principal or designee will notify parents and make all decisions regarding whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

If a staff member is aware that a student has been or is engaged in illegal activity, the staff member will refer the case to the office. The principal or designee will notify the student's parent or guardian and make all decisions regarding whether to contact the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Any student who brings a weapon to school or who uses a dangerous item in a way that makes another person feel threatened is subject to immediate expulsion. All incidents involving weapons will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

The following consequences may be applied in cases of severe misbehavior.

- *Office Referral*

  Referrals to the office will be made only in response to severe or recurring behavior problems. Reserving office referrals for such cases will help combat the notion that being sent to the office is "no big deal."

  When making an office referral, the referring staff member will notify an administrator as soon as possible after the infraction. Administrators and office staff will keep records on all office referrals, and the records will be reviewed by the school's leadership team frequently. Using these records, the

leadership team will determine whether it is necessary to revise school policies, or whether there is a need for further staff development to ensure the consistent implementation of current policies.

- *Exclusionary Timeout from Reinforcement*

  Students may need a neutral environment to help manage their own behavior, or to cool down or reflect on inappropriate behavior. Such timeouts involve removing the student from the instructional setting to a supervised area, such as the back of a classroom or the office. An exclusionary timeout from reinforcement may also be imposed as a consequence of misbehavior.

  Faculty, staff, and school leaders will adhere to the following procedures when imposing an exclusionary timeout from reinforcement. No student shall ever be unsupervised during a timeout situation.

  1. Upon the behavioral infraction, the student will be told in a firm, non-emotional voice, that he or she has made the choice to continue the inappropriate behavior, and that a timeout is the consequence.
  2. The student will be required to complete a simple task in order to show that he or she is ready to transition back to the learning setting.

  Records of the number of exclusionary timeouts from reinforcement imposed and the students involved will be maintained and reviewed by the leadership team frequently. These records will be used to make judgments about the efficacy of the school's timeout procedures for helping students learn to be responsible.

- *Suspension*

  In response to cases of severe misbehavior in which a student violates school policies, rules or regulations, or otherwise interferes with the orderly operation of the school, the principal or a designee may suspend or temporarily remove the student from school. Suspension will be regarded as a serious consequence and students will be removed immediately. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing immediate removal from the school grounds, the principal or designee will assume full responsibility for the student until he or she is removed. The student's parents will be required to meet with the principal or designee and any staff members involved in the suspension prior to the student's return to the school. A suspended student must make up missed work, and will not be allowed to be on the school grounds or to attend any school-related functions at any time during the suspension.

- Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the removal of the right and obligation of a scholar to attend the school under the conditions set by the school's Board of Directors. A student can be recommended for expulsion if the student has had three or more suspensions for chronic disruption of the learning environment (as defined in the section on suspension). The principal or designee will make a recommendation to expel a student to the School Board.

A student who brings a dangerous weapon to school or uses an implement in school in any way that makes another student, staff member, or volunteer feel threatened will be subject to an expulsion hearing before the School Board. If a student brings a firearm to school, the student will be expelled for at least one year. If a student commits a physical or verbal assault at school against a person employed by or engaged as a volunteer or contractor by the school board, and if the physical or verbal assault is reported to the School Board, building principal, victim or if the victim is unable to report the assault, by another person on the victim's behalf, then the School Board may expel the student from the school permanently. In addition, if a student makes a bomb threat or similar threat directed at a school building, other property, or at a school-related event, then the School Board, or designee on behalf of the School Board, may expel the scholar from the school for up to 180 school days. If the principal receives a report of physical or verbal assault, he or she shall forward the report to the School Board with the recommendation to expel. If an individual is permanently expelled, the school shall enter on the individual's permanent record that he or she has been permanently expelled pursuant to state law.

An expelled student will not be permitted on school grounds or at any school-related functions for the duration of his or her expulsion. If an individual is expelled, it is the responsibility of that individual and of his or her parent or legal guardian to locate a suitable educational program and to enroll the individual in such program during the expulsion. If the expulsion is for a limited time, such as one year, the expelled student may choose to attend another school during this period. Students under the age of fourteen may be expelled for the duration of the existing school year.

Procedures

Procedures are a set way of doing things (often related to a transition). By defining and utilizing procedures throughout the entire school, students know the expected behavior in most situations and are able to succeed at a higher rate than without the procedures in place and gain a deeper sense of safety and acceptance due to student expectation and an increase in the "climate of competence". Additionally, teachers and staff are able to provide specific positive feedback to all members of the community when they have met the expectation.

The school's common areas include the hallways, restrooms, and the multipurpose room. As students from every grade and class will be using these areas under the supervision of various faculty and staff, it is important

to establish rules and expectations that are commonly understood and consistently applied. With such rules in place, staff can focus on encouraging good character among students rather than correcting misbehavior.

Staff will continuously encourage appropriate behavior in the school's common areas through positive and friendly interactions with students. Verbal praise and Habits of Success tickets will be used to recognize students who exercise courtesy, safety, and respect in common areas.

Example of Student Expectation:

In the lunchroom:

1. Sit in your assigned area
2. Follow directions
3. Stay in your seat
4. Use quiet voices

School Celebrations/Incentives

Students will have the opportunity to earn privileges and rewards based on their progress in Habits of Success. Recognition of their progress will occur during assemblies at the end of each quarter. We also recognize growth in learning as measured by NWEA Map testing twice a year during an evening awards ceremony.

Parent/Guardian Agreement

I want my child to develop to his/her fullest potential. I will encourage him/her by doing the following:

1. Ensure that my child attends school on time and is prepared to learn.
2. Be aware of my child's progress and talk about school with him/her.
3. Communicate with teachers and school staff to support and challenge my child.
4. Read with, or provide independent reading opportunities for, my child for at least 20 minutes per day.
5. Encourage my child to complete their homework to the best of their abilities.
6. Expect the school to maintain proper discipline.
7. Participate in activities that support the school.
8. Be responsible for my child wearing their uniform.

Student Agreement

It is important that I do my best and I will try to always do the following:

1. Make sure that I arrive at school on time and ready to listen, learn and participate.
2. Finish my work and complete and return homework and other projects as assigned.
3. Be respectful to others at all times.
4. I will make good choices.
5. I will help others to learn in a positive manner.

6. I will tell the teachers and my parents when I have a problem at school.

Teacher Agreement

It is important that each student performs to his/her fullest academic potential. To ensure that this happens I will do the following:

1. Provide the academic instruction necessary for all students to excel with a student-focused attitude.
2. Provide a caring and safe environment that allows for positive and regular communication with students and parents.
3. Determine how each student learns best and use this methodology daily in a positive manner that focuses on student outcomes.
4. Provide meaningful homework assignments to students.
5. Hold myself accountable for my actions and strive to perform at the highest level at all times with student success my primary driving force.

Statement of Understanding and Acknowledgment

Attending Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School indicates that each parent/guardian and student has read, understands, and agrees to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook.

We hereby acknowledge that we have received and read a copy of the Fidel L. Tafolla Middle School Student/Parent Handbook and understand the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. I understand that if I ever have any questions regarding school policies, I can always ask a school administrator, teacher, or other staff member for further explanation.

We agree that we will be held accountable for the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

* Policies and procedures are subject to change following the printing of this document.

_____ _____

Student Name Student Signature

_____ _____

Parent Name

Parent Signature

_____

Date