

Student & Parent Handbook



Texas Serenity Academy
Charter School District
Houston, Texas 77037

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“The goal for this school year is 100% student attendance; students should not be absent or late for school the entire year...”

Texas Serenity Academy Student Handbook

Mission Statement: The mission of T.S.A. is to provide an Exemplary education for all students by creating a safe learning Environment in a way that students can learn, be challenged and feel valued, so that their success produces respect, responsibility and productive citizens of our community.

Motto: Building Bridges

School Colors: Black and Gold

Mascot: Fighting Gladiators

We are extending a hardy welcome to you from Texas Serenity Academy. T.S.A. continues to be one of the top performing charter schools in the greater Houston area.

We have great expectations from our students. Our students will excel and prosper when both the teachers and parents work together as a team. This handbook has been written as a working document containing information about our school policies and procedures. Please read this handbook. Review it with your child. If you have any questions regarding the content of this document, please give us a call at (281) 820-9540. Our goal is to be exceptional every day in the learning process throughout the entire school year.

Anti-Bully Policy:

We here at TSA value all of our students and stakeholders. Under no circumstances will our school district allow any student to be bullied and this includes cyberbullying by use of social media such as text messages, emails, FACEBOOK, etc. TSA encourages all students and staff to foster a climate of mutual respect in order to enhance the learning environment. In this sense, students should not engage in harassment conduct, which will result in disciplinary action. TSA prohibits bullying conduct which includes repeated, unwelcome and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical actions related to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, or disability that harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety. According to TSA's Code of Conduct, reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act so that the District's ability to investigate and address is not impaired. The Dean of Discipline will oversee all investigations related to bullying. Once the investigation is concluded, the parents of all students involved will be notified in writing and by a meeting with the Dean of Discipline as to the final conclusion of the investigation. If a student is found to have participated in any form of bullying, he or she will be disciplined accordingly. Depending on the severity and nature of the bullying incident, a student who participated in the bullying incident may face in school detention, suspension or expulsion from school. It is at the sole discretion of the Dean of Discipline to issue the appropriate consequence of the bullying action. If a parent disagrees with the consequence, they may appeal to the Superintendent within 48-hours of the consequence via an in-person meeting or a written appeal. The Superintendent will answer the appeal request within 24-hours and issue a final decision within 24-hours.

Open Door Policy

T.S.A. does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or disability in providing educational services. If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, we have a referral program in place for screening and evaluating to determine if support services are needed. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom may be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to students.

Your Involvement as a Parent

A child's education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school and a partnership that thrives on communication. You can reinforce the skills and objectives that have been introduced during the school day. Homework assignments are given during the regular school week. Homework assignments are given to reinforce the skills previously taught. You can help us by making sure that your child completes their homework. Behavior sheets go home regularly from your child's teacher for grades Kindergarten through Fifth grade. Please look at your child's take home folder and sign your initials at the bottom of the behavior sheet. Check over the work and make sure that the work is done neatly and ready for the teacher to review.

Attendance: Student

Regular school attendance is necessary for the student to make the most of his/her education. The school day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the child is attending school on a consistent daily basis.

Tardy:

Parents are responsible for making sure that their child arrives to school on time. Students who are tardy to school must get a permit from the Registrars' Office before entering the classroom. The principal or designee will schedule a conference with the parents of students who accumulate three (3) tardy marks.

A Texas Serenity Academy staff member will be calling daily to inquire as to why a student is absent for the day. Our school district will also file truancy paper work with the Harris County Court System on those students who accumulate excessive absences during the designated marking period. Students are expected to be in the classroom and in their assigned seats at the beginning of each school day.

Leaving Campus:

To leave campus early, students must have a note from their parent/guardian. Students must bring all such notes to the Registrar in the front office before leaving campus. Students who return the same day must report immediately to the office, sign- in and receive a permit to class. The principal and/or the Clinic Coordinator must excuse students who leave school because of illness. Students who leave campus without permission will be considered truant.

Absences:

After being absent, students must bring in a written statement from home, signed by the parent or guardian, stating the date and the reason for the absence. The main office will file the absence notices in the student's permanent folder each marking period.

Make-up Work:

Only the work missed for excused absences may be made up. Students have (3) school days to complete the assigned make-up work. The work must be completed within the (3) consecutive school days.

Parents/guardians must sign the student out personally in the attendance office before leaving the building with the student. T.S.A. operates on a closed campus system. This means that all students will remain on campus at lunch. Also, once on campus students will need authorization to leave. Once bus riders report to school they will also need authorization to leave campus.

According to state policy on attendance, a student must attend school a required number of days in order to be promoted. If a student has more than the number of unexcused absences allowed by the State of Texas then the student is automatically retained in their present grade.

BELL SCHEDULE (The bell schedule may vary by TSA campuses)

1 st Period	8:00 - 8:55
2 nd Period	9:00 - 9:55
3 rd Period	10:00 - 10:55
4 th Period	11:00 - 11:55
5 th Period	12:30 - 2:00
6 th Period	2:00 - 2:55

NOTE: STUDENTS MUST DISMISS IN A SAFE AND ORDERLY MANNER

Dismissal	3:00
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Bell will ring at the beginning and ending of class periods.

Students have 5 minutes to change classes.

Tardy bell will ring between classes.

Note: Bell and class schedules may not be the same at all TSA campuses.

Lunch Schedules

Kindergarten and 1 st Grade	10:30 -11:00
2 nd -3 rd	11:00 -11:30
4 th -5 th	11:30 -12:00
Middle School	12:00 -12:30

Breakfast/Lunch Served in Cafeteria

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. All students receive free meals which include breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks.

School Hours:

The first bell rings promptly at 8:00 AM. Students should be in their classrooms ready to start the day at the start of each class period. School dismissal is at 3:30 PM.

Drop Off Procedures:

Students may be dropped off as early as 6:00 am. Students should never be dropped off before 6:00 am, as there is no supervision before that time. Students arriving by car are to be dropped off at the front door. All students arriving late are to use the main entrance and pick up a tardy slip at the Registrars' Office before proceeding to class.

Absence from school:

When a student is absent, he/she must give his/her teacher a written excuse from his/her parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence. Excused absences are only allowed for the following:

1. Illness of the student.
2. Illness or death in the student's immediate family.
3. Participation in legitimate school activities with the permission of the Principal.
4. Emergencies or extenuating circumstances as recognized by the Principal or his/her designee.

The student will be given three days to bring a written excuse from the parent/guardian for an absence. **After three days, the absence becomes unexcused. Eight or more unexcused absences in a year will cause the student to be retained.**

Make up work:

Students who have excused or unexcused absences will be given an opportunity to make up work missed within five consecutive schooldays upon returning to school. **It is the student's responsibility to see that the work is made up.**

Absenteeism and Tardiness:

Regular attendance cannot be stressed too greatly. Many studies prove there is a definite correlation between a student making good grades, his/her success in school and regular attendance. It is equally important that students begin their day on schedule. Tardiness breeds truancy and affects the student's progress in school. A student is counted tardy if he/she is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. The teacher keeps an accurate record of tardiness. **Students who are tardy may be assigned a consequence which could include in school suspension.**

Truancy:

Any student who is absent from school without the consent of his/her parent or the school officials is considered truant. Students may be assigned to detention or suspended from school for this offense.

Telephones:

The main office telephone is for school business. It may be used by students only in cases of emergency and with the permission of the receptionist in the main office.

Parent Conferences:

Parents may make appointments for conferences with teachers, counselors, or the principal by telephoning the school office. It is necessary that teachers confirm the date and time of the parent conference. Teachers have designated conference periods to meet with parents and cannot be pulled during instructional time to do so. **For security reasons all visitors must first report to the main office for a visitor's pass.**

Detention:

School-wide detention is held at the discretion of the Dean of Discipline. The student must bring paper, a pencil and something to study. Students causing problems or not following instructions in detention will be sent home and referred to the Dean of Discipline's office the following day for disciplinary action. Students must arrive to detention on time or they will not be allowed to enter. **Failure to attend an assigned detention without a legitimate excuse from the parent/guardian will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school. Students may be assigned school-wide detention by any teacher for being tardy. A teacher may**

assign detention in his/her classroom on any given day as a disciplinary consequence as long as they give the parent 24-hour notice.

School Bus Transportation

Good pupil behavior on the school bus is important for the safety and well-being of the entire passenger load. The administration reserves the right to administer disciplinary consequences including permanent expulsion from the bus to students who behave inappropriately while traveling to and from school on a private bus service.

The school schedules all buses to games or field trips and each bus is under the direction of a faculty member. All students are required to return to school on their assigned bus. Riding the school bus is a privilege that must be taken seriously.

Physical Education Classes:

For reasons of health and safety, each student will dress appropriately for physical education (PE class). Students must wear appropriate undergarments, a TSA PE uniform if requested by the PE Teacher and rubber-soled sports tennis shoes. PE uniforms may be purchased from the PE teachers. All parts of PE wear should be marked with the student's name for identification.

Backpacks:

Parents are encouraged to review the contents of student backpacks periodically. Students tend to over fill their backpacks with items that they do not need to carry around every day. We encourage students to plan wisely and only carry what they need. Overloaded backpacks become a safety hazard in the classrooms and on the stairs. They also create health hazards by putting undue stress on the student's spine.

We recommend that all backpacks are clear or mesh for security purposes.

Personal Property

Portable radios, CD players, mp3 players, iPods, cameras, Game Boys (or other electronic games), playing cards, markers, large sums of money, and other such personal property are not to be brought to school. Many problems arise concerning articles of this nature and the school will not assume responsibility for them. If such personal property is brought to the school, the property will be taken from the student and held in the Registrar's Office until the parent comes to collect them. After 90- days, the unclaimed items will be shipped to the TSA District Office for disposal.

Cell Phones:

Students are NOT permitted to bring cell phones to classrooms for any reason. If a student fails to abide by these guidelines, the cell phone will be confiscated by an administrator and held until a parent comes to collect it. **As per TSA policy as noted in the STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, a fee of \$25 will be charged prior to the return of a cell phone that has been confiscated.**

Bicycles:

Bicycles are to be parked immediately on arrival at school and left there for the remainder of the school day. If a student rides the bicycle in an unsafe manner, that student will be prohibited from riding the bike to school. All bicycles should be provided with a lock. The school is not responsible for loss, theft, or vandalism. Skateboards, scooters, and personal PE equipment such as balls, ropes, etc., are not allowed on campus.

Textbooks:

Each classroom teacher will have a class set of textbooks available for students use. **Textbooks are the property of the State of Texas and if lost, must be paid for by the student to whom the book was issued.**

Halls/Hallways

Students are not permitted in the halls during classes without a signed permit that has the time and date on it. Students are to conduct themselves in a quiet and orderly manner while in the hallways. **Furthermore, students should always stay to the right to facilitate the flow of traffic. Voice Level ZERO is required at all times in the hallways. This means students are not allowed to talk in hallways.**

Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol/Unauthorized Prescription Medication

Any of the listed contraband is not permitted at any time in the school building or on the school grounds. This applies to all school sponsored activities as well as the regular school day. Violation of this rule constitutes a serious offense and immediate expulsion from school. TSA will also notify the local police agency and request an investigation and/or have the student arrested. Parents have the right to request a hearing from the Superintendent within 3 days of the offense. The request must be in writing.

Selling

Any sales or fundraising at TSA must have written administrative approval. Selling goods of any kind that is initiated by individual students is prohibited.

Gum Chewing, Candy and Hot Chip/Hot Fries Is Not Allowed:

Careless disposal of gum in drinking fountains, furniture, and floors presents sanitation and cleaning problems and costly repair. Therefore, gum chewing is not permitted. The eating of candy and chewing of toothpicks, paper, etc. is also prohibited.

Discipline:

It is impossible for teaching or learning to take place in a classroom unless good order is maintained. Students are reminded that they must adhere to the TSA Student Handbook not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well.

Weapons, narcotics and other inappropriate items that endanger lives, disrupt the educational process and are safety hazards are prohibited and students who have them in their possession will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. The Principal and the Dean of Discipline will oversee and handle any student discipline related matter and they have the discretion with approval of the Superintendent to immediately suspend or expel a student at their discretion regarding any discipline related matters.

Suspension:

Students who repeatedly fail to adhere to school or classroom rules or who commit acts that seriously disrupt the school process will be assigned to the In School Suspension Room for a designated period of time, depending on the infraction. Parents will be notified of the assignment by phone and/or in writing on the day of the assignment. The room is supervised by a staff member and the student will be provided with assignments from their classroom teacher so as not to fall behind in their academic studies. Students who are assigned to the room will be expected to follow the instructions of the instructor and comply with all rules and regulations of the room. Students may be given an extended assignment in the room by the Dean of Discipline if the Behavior Modification classroom rules are not adhered to. Continued failure to comply will result in the student being suspended from school. Students in In School Suspension may be provided with a sack lunch and may not join their peers in the cafeteria. This will be determined at the discretion of the Dean of Discipline.

Suspension from School:

It is the philosophy of the TSA School District that every student, Kindergarten through 8th grade, should be privileged to attend school every day during the school year in order to be given thorough instruction in all subject areas. Under certain circumstances it may become necessary to suspend a student from school attendance or assign him/her to an alternative program for misconduct. This is used when other means of correction fail or if the student is a disruptive force to the school environment.

Lost and Found:

Our lost and found is located inside the Dean of Discipline office. Frequent checks on lost articles should be made in the main office. Articles not claimed by the last day of school will be donated to a charitable organization.

Cafeteria:

Students may choose to eat in the cafeteria or bring a sack lunch. The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the school. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack is offered free to all students. The cafeteria staff and your fellow students will appreciate your cooperation in the following:

- Deposit all lunch litter in wastebaskets immediately after you are finished eating.
- Leave the tables and floors in a clean condition for others.
- Food or drink must not be taken from the cafeteria. Eating in the building or on the school grounds other than in the cafeteria is strictly prohibited.
- While in the lunch line, do not cut in front of others or allow others to cut in front of you.
- Remain on Voice Level ZERO while in the cafeteria.

Cafeteria Detention:

Students who fail to abide by the cafeteria guidelines or commit other minor discipline infractions may be required to sit at an isolated table under the supervision of a TSA teacher and/or staff member or eat with a teacher.

Grading System

The criteria for grading academic subjects are as follows:

A = 90-100 Excellent quality of work through mastery of subject matter.

B = 80-89 Good quality of work. Above average with consistent effort.

C = 75-79 Satisfactory quality of work, average achievement.

D = 70-74 Passing

F = 69 or Below; Unsatisfactory quality of work, failing

Homework:

Home study is a necessary part of each pupil's educational program. Each student must be expected to spend some time in addition to scheduled class instruction to achieve satisfactory work. Some assignments are long-range in nature and require planned study time for their completion. Planned study eliminates the necessity of spending too much time in completing an assignment the day before it is due.

Conduct Average:

Teachers assess student conduct as follows:

E = Excellent citizenship

S = Satisfactory behavior, cooperates readily

P = Poor behavior, below average

U = Unsatisfactory behavior, needs drastic improvement

Report Cards and Progress Reports:

Report cards to parents will be distributed shortly after the close of each six-week grading period. Progress reports are sent at three to four weeks of each marking period.

This will let students know if they are in danger of failing. These reports are sent home with the student and are to be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher. Parents are encouraged to schedule a parent/teacher conference when a progress report is received.

Student Agenda:

In an effort to strengthen the home-school connection and teach students to be responsible for their assignments, all students will be required to record the following information in their agenda for every academic class they attend each day: homework assignments, test dates, upcoming projects.

Student Work Folders:

Teachers maintain student work folders in which each student's work for that class is maintained. While most teachers will write the pertinent information on the board each day, the responsibility of accurately recording all necessary information is the student's, not the teacher's. Parents should review their student's homework daily to ensure that they are recording and completing their assignments.

School Organizations and Activities

There are a number of clubs and organizations at TSA. The purpose of these activities is to promote loyalty, school spirit, and sportsmanship. Each student is encouraged to become a part of the extracurricular life of the campus.

Counseling Services:

Counseling services are available to all students to assist the student in achieving success and coping within the limits of his/her abilities. Any student or parent may make an appointment with the Special Services Director to schedule a counseling session.

Health Care At School:

The goal of the Clinic Coordinator is to keep students informed about good health habits. Parents can help by making sure students go to bed at a decent time, eat a healthy breakfast, and by providing current phone numbers for emergency situations. The Clinic Coordinator will contact parents when a student has a fever, is vomiting or if after being assessed by the Clinic Coordinator thinks it is necessary for the student to return home or see a physician.

Immunizations:

All students are required to have current and updated immunizations on file in the Clinic Coordinators office as required by law. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to provide the school with an accurate immunization record. **A student may not be allowed to attend school without these STATE MANDATED immunizations.** Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical

contradictions or religious conflicts. Students falling into any of these two categories MUST submit affidavits as specified by law.

Delinquent Immunization Notices

Throughout the school year you may receive notices of delinquent immunizations. These will need to be updated as soon as possible and reported to the Clinic Coordinator. Notices will be sent home in writing via the student. A recommendation will be given to the Principal that the student is not allowed to return to school until the information is updated. If parents are not able to take time from work to have immunizations please contact the Clinic Coordinator for possible options for obtaining the immunization during the school day.

New Immunization Requirements

Students born after September 2, 1988 are required to receive a 3 shot series for Hepatitis B and the Varicella (chicken pox) vaccine. If the student has had the chicken pox, parents may write a note to the Clinic Coordinator stating how old they were or what year they had the chicken pox.

Medication at School:

Parents of students requiring medication during the school day MUST take the medication directly to the Clinic Coordinator in the school clinic. Medication can only be given if the TSA Medication Policy form is filled out by a physician and signed by a parent. This MUST be on file before any medication can be given at school. This includes ALL prescription medication, including inhalers for asthma and ALL prescription medication including, but not limited to cough medicine and pain relievers. Only employees designated by the principal shall administer medication. Please see the Clinic Coordinator or Principal for any questions or to receive the TSA Medication Policy form.

Withdrawals

Students who are withdrawing from TSA to go to another school need to report to the main office. A parent or guardian must accompany the student. Parents must provide information as to what school they will be enrolling their student in, once they leave TSA. The TSA PEIMS Coordinator will be given several business days to process the appropriate paperwork needed by the other school. It is NOT possible to process the necessary withdrawal paperwork in less than 2 business days.

Texas Serenity Academy:

The TSA dress code for students is a result of the efforts of a committee composed of students, parents, teachers, counselors and the administrative staff. It is our belief that school pride is developed not only by attaining honor in extracurricular activities and in scholastic accomplishments, but by the way students maintain high standards of behavior, which are reflected in dress and grooming.

Dress Code Violation Procedures

Violation of the student dress code may lead to immediate suspension or detention. It is the students and parent responsibility to make sure the dress code is followed. The administration of TSA School reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of clothing and/or accessories.

Boys & Girls Dress Code

Boys and girls must wear a navy-blue polo collard Texas Serenity Academy shirt. Contact the Registrar's Office for purchasing information. Boys and girls may wear khaki shorts or slacks; girls may wear khaki skirts. No other colors are permitted. Tennis shoes or dress shoes may be worn but no open toe shoes or sandals are allowed. TSA does not allow any type of blue jeans and there is not a blue jean day.

Boys May Not Wear

Sagging pants that hang below the belly button or over-sized baggy or flare leg pants.

Over-sized shirts that are longer than mid-thigh.

Muscle shirts, sleeveless shirts, or undershirts worn as outer clothing.

Any item identified as gang related by school officials.

Warm-ups or sweat pants of any kind.

Body piercing or clips and earrings are not allowed.

Cut-off, torn, or tattered jeans.

Bicycle pants or spandex tops.

Bandannas

Vests or overalls

See-through, mesh, or fishnet shirts.

Clothing which reveals bare midriff or navel.

Suggestive jewelry, drawings, patches, and/or writing relating to drugs, sex, alcohol, Satanism, tobacco, gangs, weapons, or illegal activities.

Combs or rakes (Rakes are considered weapons).

Thongs, house shoes, slides, slippers, swim shoes, steel-toed shoes, or sandals without straps.

Hats or caps inside the building.

Sun glasses or visors unless prescribed.

Key chains, pocket chains, or chains of any kind longer than 6 inches, spiked straps or rings.

Girls May Not Wear

Over-sized, baggy or flare led pants

Sleeveless shirts

Any item identified as gang related by school officials.

Warm-ups or sweat pants of any kind.

Body piercing or clips, except for the ears.

Cut-off, torn, or tattered jeans.

Bicycle pants, spandex tops or pants.

Bandannas

Vests or overalls

Tops which expose undergarments such as chiffon, mesh, fishnet, or other see-through clothing

Clothing that reveals bare midriff or navel

Suggestive jewelry, drawings, patches, and/or writing relating to drugs, sex, alcohol, Satanism, tobacco, gangs, weapons, or illegal activities.

Hair curlers, combs, or rakes (Rakes are considered weapons.).

Thongs, house shoes, slides, slippers, swim shoes, steel-toed shoes, or sandals without straps.

Heels that are over 1 1/2" in height

Hats, headscarves or gloves inside the building.

Sun glasses or visors unless prescribed.

Key chains/pocket chains, chains longer than 6 inches, spiked straps or rings.

Spaghetti straps or strapless tops; excessively tight clothing or lowcut tops

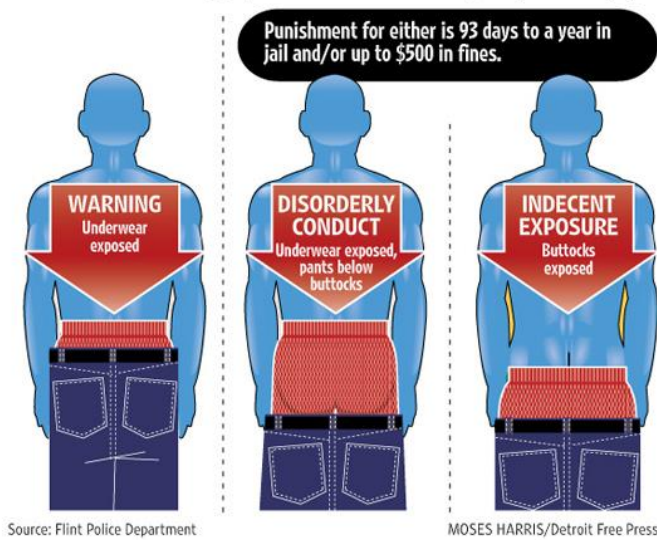
Mini-skirts, mini-skirts and denim jumpers

Excessively gaudy jewelry and/or make-up.

*****SPECIAL NOTE & REMINDER: At the start of the 2018-2019 school year the Texas Serenity Academy Charter School District entered into a contract with an outside clothing vendor that parents can purchase school uniforms for the entire year. This includes gym uniforms for PE class, sweatshirt hoodies for the fall and winter seasons, dresses for the girls and all of the standard uniform shirts and pants for boys and girls. The company will deliver the uniforms to the parent's homes and the parents pay for the uniforms directly to the company. Here is the name of the company, their website and their telephone number: (800) 249-5275 <http://tsa.epluno.com/>**

Crackdown on indecency

It's a crime to wear saggy pants in Flint. Here's the price you could pay:



The above photos show that some cities in the United States have made it a crime to wear sagging pants in public because it has gang affiliations. At TSA, we expect our parents to help us enforce the dress code and during the school year we will **NOT TOLERATE** students violating the dress code by sagging pants during the school day. Our school district considers it offensive to other people and disrespectful. If a child chooses to sag his or her pants they will immediately be sent home for the day. It is rude and unacceptable for a child to show his or her underwear to the general public. We hope for and expect the support of each parent in making sure students comply with the dress code.

