



# **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **2019 – 2020**

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# Richard Milburn Academy Texas

## Charter Goals

**Student Performance** - RMA will provide academic programs which will ensure all students have the necessary skills to continue their educational training, begin a career, and be able to solve problems.

**Technology** - RMA will equip, training, and utilize 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology in all classrooms to prepare students for the challenges of the future.

**Communication** - RMA will cultivate an atmosphere where there is timely, open communication, with all of our communities, parents, staff and students.

**Fiscal Management** – RMA will allocate resources in the most effective and efficient manner to support a positive learning environment, thereby maximizing student achievement.

**Personnel** – RMA will recruit, develop, retain, and reward exceptional staff to maximize the learning of each student.

**Career and Technology Programs** – RMA will develop and implement a variety of career and technology educational programs that provide the graduate with specific skills needed in the workforce.

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year. Education is a team effort, and we know students, parents, teachers, and other staff members must work together to make this a wonderful successful year for our students.

The Richard Milburn Academy Texas (RMA TX) Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

- **Section I – PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** – with information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.
- **Section II - OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS** – organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware the term “parent”, unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the RMA Texas Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware the Student Handbook is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the *Student Code of Conduct*) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct* are to be followed.

Also, please be aware the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules affecting Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletter or other communications. RMA reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, the Student Handbook does not create any additional rights for students and parents. It does not, nor is it intended to create, contractual or legal rights between any students or parent and the charter.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the school counselor, or the Principal.

Please note that the references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of RMA Texas Board Policy Modules is available for review online at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org).

# ABOUT RICHARD MILBURN ACADEMY TEXAS

## MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering students to graduate, prepared to exceed all expectations.

## VISION STATEMENT

Every student will be empowered to make CHOICES for lifelong success.

## PHILOSOPHY

RMA Texas believes all students can achieve excellence in a positive, challenging educational environment that stimulates their interests, channels their energies, and develops their abilities. RMA Texas is committed to providing a nontraditional learning environment for students with district needs for these educational services. Recognizing the individual strengths and intrinsic worth of all students, RMA Texas modifies educational services to provide specific skills development opportunities for all students to achieve self-confidence, self-worth, self-discipline, and self-acceptance.

RMS Texas is committed to ensuring opportunities for all students to increase skills in both academic and employment environments. RMA Texas concentrates on increasing students' basic academic and career/life skills by offering opportunities for student to receive career counseling as they earn credits toward of high school diplomas. RMA Texas provides services to help students increase specific talents and self-worth, using instruction and weekly counseling and mentoring sessions focused on the individual student needs.

## UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the school's distinguishing characteristics include:

- Flexible scheduling to meet individual needs
- Small class size
- Blended Learning
- Focus on individual learning styles
- Variety of instructional approaches
- Emphasis on thinking and problem-solving skills
- Dedicated staff who recognize each student's special circumstances
- High expectations for all students
- Support system to assist student achievement and success

## SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the RMA Texas Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

#### **Working Together**

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered at RMA.
- Discussing with the school counselor or Principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or Principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer
- Participating in campus parent advisory committees.
- Serving as a parent representative on the campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information contact the Principal.
- Assisting RMA in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues.
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about RMA Texas school operations. A listing of board meetings may be found posted on the RMA Texas school website at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org).

#### **Obtaining information and Protecting Student Rights**

Your child 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:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family
- Sexual behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationship with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents'
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such program.

You 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**

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information.
- Any nonemergency, 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 student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. Please note, the physical fitness assessment and Type 2 diabetes risk assessment are among the exceptions since these are required by state law.
- Students may be asked to complete surveys concerning RMA TX operations without parent approval.

### **Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff**

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child’s teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction, whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

### **Reviewing Instructional Materials**

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

### **Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display a students’ work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, RMA will seek parental consent before displaying students’ artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on RMA’s Web site, on any campus or classroom Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. RMA will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

### **Accessing Student Records**

You may review your child’s student records. These records include:

- Attendance records
- Test scores
- Grades
- Disciplinary records
- Counseling records
- Application for admission
- Health and Immunization information
- Other medical records
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations
- Reports of behavioral patterns
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child
  - Teaching materials and tests used in your child’s classroom

### **Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student**

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from RMA to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school

### **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom**

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate, conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester, further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**]

### **Excusing a Student from reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence**

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3-12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused (2) RMA determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity.

### **Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media**

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by RMA to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up an instructional page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to view such a page. An employee described above may also contact a student individually through email to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee or if you have questions related to the use of electronic media by district employees, please contact the Principal.

### **Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct**

A non-custodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve expulsion.

### **Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment- spanking or paddling the student- will not be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **School Safety Transfers**

As a parent, you may request the transfer of your child to another neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, RMA will transfer the assailant in accordance with RMA Texas School Board Policy.

## **Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings**

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the enrollment of your children.

## **Parents of Students with Disabilities with Other School-Aged Children in the Home**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

## **Request for the Use of a Service Animal**

A parent of a student who uses a service animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the Principal at least ten (10) district business days before bringing the service animal on campus.

## **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, RMA 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 RMA 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 RMA, the school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, RMA 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 RMA agrees to evaluate the student, the school 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. RMA must comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluation children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require RMA to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If RMA decides to evaluate the student, the school 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 RMA 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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, RMA must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available 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 the campus principal or the Director of Special Education at (830) 557- 6181 or [astevenson@rma-tx.org](mailto:astevenson@rma-tx.org).

#### **Section 504 Referrals**

RMA must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in RMA's Section 504 program. RMA must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, and 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 the campus Principal or the Special Populations Coordinator at (210) 848-8004 or [jkirksey@rma-tx.org](mailto:jkirksey@rma-tx.org).

#### **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](#)

#### **Parents of Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English**

A student may be eligible to receive a specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments,

#### **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements:

- Immunization requirements
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement

- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation requirements

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for; is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the school. The school will permit no more than five (5) excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60<sup>th</sup> day before deployment or no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the parent's return from deployment. Additional information may be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

### **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the RMA must verify the identity of the person including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older of who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, include grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents – whether married, separated, or divorced – unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- School officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and Principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom RMA has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student, considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Various government agencies, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representative, in certain cases.
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release to any other person or agency - such as prospective employer or for a scholarship application – will occur only with parent or student permission as appropriate.

The Principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent are the custodians of all records for student who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, RMA will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the Superintendent's Office is:

1263 Terminal Loop Road  
McQueeney, Texas 78123

The addresses of the principal's offices can be found on our website at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org)

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the Principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If RMA denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in RMA Texas' School Board Policy Modules. A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the grading policy.

Additional information regarding RMA Texas student records policy may be found in the RMA School Board policy Modules and are available on our website at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org)

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records – such as teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher – do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

**Please note:** Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe RMA is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance  
U.S. Department of  
Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

### **Director Information**

The law permits RMA to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information". This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the Principal within ten (10) days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

### **Director Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

RMA uses student information for the following school-sponsored purposes:

Publicity in local newspapers, on the radio, local TV and cable access channels when students earn academics and extracurricular related awards; honor rolls, yearbook publication, printed student directories; etc.

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, RMA would like to use your child's name, address, telephone listing, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, degrees, honors, and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at Directory Information.

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time RMA wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

**Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

RMA is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for student's names, addresses and telephone listings, unless parents have advised RMA not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form has been attached for you to complete if you do not want the RMA to provide this information to military recruiters or institution of higher education.

## SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the campus Principal.

### ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education – to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. There are two (20 state laws with attendance. The first law addresses Compulsory Attendance and the second law addresses Attendance for course credit (90% rule).

RMA also has attendance obligatory guidelines and procedures.

#### Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 years old and 18 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year must attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction programs, extended year programs, or tutorial sessions, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

#### 19-year-old or older

- A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday is required to attend school each day until the end of the school year.
- RMA may revoke the student’s enrollment if the student is 19 or older and has 5 or more unexcused absences in a semester.
- Once a student’s enrollment is revoked, the student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

#### Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance – State Definition

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences, if the student makes up all work.

#### Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance as Defined by State Law with approved documentation to verify absence.

**These absences will NOT count against the 90% rule (for course credit purposes) however, all make-up school work must be completed.**

The state exemptions include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days
- Required court appearance
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship
- Service as an election clerk
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s arrival or return to campus, and
- For students in the conservatorship9custody) of the state,
  - Mental health or therapy appointment; or

- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.
- A junior or senior student’s absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus Principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.
- Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the Principal prior to the absences.
- Maximum of five (5) days per year to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.
- Under TEC §25.086, the exemption from compulsory attendance for students who have been expelled applies only in a school district that does not participate in a mandatory juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP). **Notwithstanding the above-described exemption from compulsory attendance, RMA has a continuing obligation under federal and state special education law to provide a free appropriate public education to a student with a disability who has been removed for disciplinary reasons from his or her current educational placement, regardless of the population of the county in which the school district is located.**
- 17 year-old in Preparation Course for High School Equivalency Examination.
- 16 year-old in Preparation Course for High School equivalency Examination
- Under new TEC §25.087 (b-5), a school must excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. RMA may not excuse for this purpose more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school. RMA must verify the student’s activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services or Texas National Guard. RMA must adopt procedures to verify a student’s activities as described by Subsection (b-5).
- Under TEC §25.087©, a school may excuse a student in grades 6 through 12 for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran.

**Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance- RMA Guidelines**

RMA allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements with proper documentation validating the absence for several types of absences. The student is still required to make up all the school work missed during the absence, however, some absences will required that the student make up both the missed school work and make up the missed time because of the 90% rule. (*See the Attendance for Course Credit – (The 90 percent rule) – State Definition section of this handbook.*)

**Acceptable Reasons for an “Excused Absence” (that will not count against the 90% Rule) as Defined by RMA with approved documentation to verify the absence.**

- These absences will NOT count against the 90% rule (for course credit purposes)
- Missed school work must be completed but missed time does not need to be recovered.
- Pre-approval of these absences may be required and signed documentation verifying the absences must be turned in with-in 2 days of returning to school.

The exemptions include the following activities and events:

- Hospitalization
- Death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent),
- Natural disasters, weather or road conditions as declared by RMA making travel dangerous.
- Olympic try-outs. (Must be pre-approved by the school Principal)
- Visa renewals – up to three (3) days only if necessary for the travel (one day to, day of renewal, and one day return.)

**Acceptable Reasons for an “Excused Absence” (that does count against the 90% rule) as Defined by RMA with approved documentation to verify absence.**

- These absences WILL count against the 90% rule (for course credit purposes).
- The school work must be completed, and the missed time must be recovered.
- Pre-approval of these absences may be required and signed documentation verifying the absences must be turned in with-in two (2) days of returning to school.
  - Death outside the immediate family
  - Emergencies recognized and approved by the school Principal.

**Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If a student age 12 through age 17 violates the compulsory attendance law, the parent could be charged with an offense.

**Violations to Compulsory Attendance- Defined by RMA**

A few examples of unacceptable, unexcused, absences as defined by RMA are listed below:

**Unacceptable Reasons for an Absence as Defined by RMA.**

These events will be documented as an “Unexcused Absence” and WILL count against the 90% rule (for course credit purposes). The school work must be completed, the missed time must be recovered, and disciplinary action may be taken.

- Truancy.
- Parent/guardian notes for personal or family illnesses in excess of eight (8) days in a school year.
- Any absence not listed in the Exceptions to Compulsory Attendance - State Defined or Exceptions to Compulsory Attendance - RMA Guidelines as listed in this Handbook.

Examples of a common unexcused absences are:

- Vacations/pleasure trips
- Missing the bus
- Car problems
- Traffic and railroad crossing delays
- Over slept
- Babysitting
- Birthday or other personal celebrations
- Jobs
- Rare special circumstances not approved by the Principal in advance

- Youth programs not associated with RMA, including but not limited to athletics, cheerleading, dance, theater, fine arts, and other similar programs.

### **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

To receive credit or a final grade in class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan approved by the Principal and campus Attendance Review Committee that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

If a student attends less than 7 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the Principal, then the student will be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, or a final grade lost because of absences.

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the Attendance Review Committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reason listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled at RMA.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the Attendance Review Committee's decision to the board of trustees by filling a written request with the Superintendent in accordance with RMA School Board Policy. The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive a credit or a final grade, will depend on whether the class is for a full-semester or for a full year.

### **Official Attendance-Taking Time**

RMA must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day. A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below.

### **Documentation after an Absence**

When a student is absent from school, the student – upon arrival or return to school – must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but RMA reserves the right to require a written note. Any note received after 72 hours must be reviewed and approved by the Principal prior to final acceptance of the absence change of status.

Students that are 17 or younger are also expected to follow the same rules as a student who is 18 or older. Parents are expected to contact the respective campus in order to ensure that everyone is aware of the absence.

Please note that, unless the absence is for statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, RMA is not required to excuse any absence.

#### **Parent Notes – After an Absence**

When a student is absent from school, the student must turn in a note, describing the reason for the absence, signed by the parent, within two (2) days of returning to school. The signed note must be given to the Administrative secretary.

**A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 years of age or older and living separate and apart from the parent/guardian.**

#### **Doctor/Medical Notes – After and Absence Due to an Illness**

When a student is absent from school for medical reasons, the student must turn in a note, describing the reason for the absence, signed by the doctor or health clinic, within (2) two days of returning to school.

- If a student is absent for more than four (4) consecutive days because of a personal illness, a note must be issued by a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. This note must be turned in within (2) two days of returning to school. If a parent/guardian works in a health care facility, in order for the absence to be excused as a physician’s note, the note must contain an original signature from someone other than parent/guardian.
- The signed note must be given to the Administrative Secretary

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the Principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that causes the student’s absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

#### **TARDINESS**

Arriving to school on time is critical to the academic success of students. Excessive tardiness without an excused note, can be considered an unexcused: part-day” absence which can affect the Attendance for Credit (the 90% rule) and may also be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law which is subject to disciplinary action.

A student who enters a classroom after the tardy bell rings without a properly signed admittance slip is counted as being tardy. The only excuse for being tardy is school related business. Unexcused tardiness may cause the student to be assigned to before and/or after school detention, or any other discipline the school deems appropriate. A tardy in excess of ten (10) minutes, without the proper documentation, will be counted as an absence during that class period. Excessive tardiness may be considered a violation of compulsory attendance.

Note: The only excuses for being tardy are documented medical appointments and school related business.

#### **Driver License Attendance Verification**

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student’s attendance records and, in

certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student's attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license. In order to be eligible for a VOE, a student must have been present on campus for a period of nine weeks (consistent attendance) in order to be able to request a VOE.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parent's information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

The Principal shall be responsible for setting forth criteria used in the presentation of student awards. Awards and honors may be presented for academics, citizenship, spirit, participation, or other qualities recognized by the Principal.

## BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or related activity, or in a school operated vehicle, and the behavior

- Results in harm to the student or the student's property
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying is prohibited by RMA and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying".

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, Principal, or another employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. For additional support and notification, an individual may report an incident via the "Say Not to Bullying" website: <https://www.rmaschools.org/students/services-and-resources/say-no-bullying/>

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct not rise to the level of bullying. RMA will also contact the parent of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well, as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited. All cases will be reviewed and are subject to further possible legal actions as stated in SB 179 as approved by State of Texas on June 13, 2017.

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. The

parent of a student who has been determined by the school to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom. [Also see **School Safety Transfers**]

A copy of RMA's policy is available on RMA's Web site. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on RMA's Web site.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal following RMA School Board Policy.

## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

RMA has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed from the RMA. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or Principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, See

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp)

The following web sites might help you become more aware of a child abuse and neglect:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/preventingcan/>

Report of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

## CLASS RANK/GPA/HIGHER RANKING STUDENT

The Rank in Class Average (RICA) will be calculated by the school counselor as outlined below. RICA is the cumulative weighted numerical average of the final semester grades earned in courses for high school credit for the core subjects of English, mathematics, social studies, science, languages other than English and advanced placement course offerings from other subjects.

To be eligible for top 10% admission, students must receive a distinguished level of achievement and an endorsement. Students in the freshman cohort must also have taken four credits of science and four credits of math, which must include Algebra II. Rank point averages must comprise the top ten percent of the graduating class as determined by RMA's procedure to qualify for automatic admission under Education Code 51.803. Please note: The University of Texas at Austin requires top 7%.

### Rank in Class Average Guidelines

- All grades earned in the core areas including languages other than English and Advanced Placement course offerings from other subjects shall be used to compute a student's RICA.
- Grades earned in the core areas including LOTE through credit by exam without prior instruction, correspondence courses, summer school courses, dual/concurrent enrollment courses, and online courses shall be included in the computation of the RICA.
- Grades earned in the core areas including LOTE on credit by examination with prior instruction to confirm transfer credits from non-accredited institutions and home schools, shall be calculated into the RICA.
- Grades earned in local credit or non-credit courses shall not be included in the computation of the GPA.
- Students repeating a course due to failure shall be awarded credit only once, but each grade shall be used to calculate the RICA.
- Courses taken at a Texas public middle school (for high school credit) are NOT included in calculating the RICA. However, they are included in the student's High School GPA.

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is the cumulative un-weighted numerical average of final semester grades earned in courses for high school including all courses for high school including all courses taken in middle school (for high school credit). The GPA provides a profile of a student's overall performance in high school. The GPA is not used to calculate class rank. The following guidelines govern the calculation of the GPA.

- All grades earned in all high school credit courses, including courses taken in middle school (for high school credit)
- Grades earned through credit by exam with or without prior instruction, correspondence courses, summer school, dual/concurrent credit, and online courses shall be included in the GPA calculation.
- Grades earned on credit by examination with prior instruction to confirm transfer credits from non-accredited institutions and home schools, shall be calculated into the GPA.
- Grades earned in local credit or non-credit courses shall NOT be included in the computation of the GPA
- Students repeating a course due to failure shall be awarded credit only once, but each grade shall be used to calculate the GPA.

### Highest Ranking Student

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian must have met graduation requirements (passed all state exams, have all required credits, and be on track to pass all classes at the end of the current semester) as a Recommended or Distinguished graduate in order to be considered for the positions listed under **Graduation**.

- **Regular Classes:** Actual recorded grade will be used when figuring student rankings.
- **Valedictorian Honor:** A student **must** be enrolled in RMA Texas before November 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year during their senior year and earn a minimum of 5 credits in order to be considered for graduation rankings. A minimum of 90% attendance during enrollment is required.
- *Student must graduate through the Recommended, Distinguished, Foundation with Endorsement, or Foundation with Endorsement and Distinguished in order to be eligible.*

- **Salutatorian Honor:** The student second in class rank – who was enrolled on or before November first (1<sup>st</sup>) of the current school year shall be designated as salutatorian. A minimum of 90% attendance during enrollment is required.
- *Student must graduate through the Recommended, Distinguished, Foundation with Endorsement, or Foundation with Endorsement and Distinguished graduation plans in order to be eligible.*

Grades taken through the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the fourth nine-week grading period will be used as the cut-off point to determine senior class GPA's and Class Rankings.

## CLASS SCHEDULES

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. **RMA offers all students a 4-hour day.**

## COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

For two school years following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent, of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the Foundation Plan with an Endorsement and a Distinguished Level of Achievement, including four credits in science and four credits in math to include Algebra II.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university.

The University of Texas at Austin Automatic Admission Policy (senate Bill 175), may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity designated for first time resident freshmen. The university will be admitting the top seven percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through an independent review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admission policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class. Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

## COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES

Students in grades 9-12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), or International Baccalaureate (IB);
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit courses through the Texas Virtual School Network;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnerships with the school and may be offered on or off campus;
- Enrollment in courses taught at institutions in RMA – Students may be eligible to enroll in dual enrollment courses at a college located in the individual school area; and
- Certain CTE courses

Not that if a student wishes to enroll in a community college courses at a college that does not include the high school within its service area, the student is limited by state law to enroll in no more than three courses of this type.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, and end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

## COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference call with the teacher or Principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, RMA has adopted a standard compliant policy located in the RMA Texas School Board Policy Modules. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the Principal's or Superintendent's Office, or online at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org).

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus Principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the Superintendent. If still unresolved, RMA provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

## CONDUCT

### Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior – both on and off campus as well as on transportation provided by RMA Texas – and consequences for violation of these standards. RMA has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless RMA amends either both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### Disruptions of School Operations

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a RMA building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building,
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to RMA property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on RMA property or on public property that is within 30 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by RMA.

## **Social Events**

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest. A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted. Please review the Student Code of Conduct located at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org) or at your child's campus.

## **COUNSELING**

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or Principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring students in will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the school counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The school counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should contact the school office. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

### **Psychological Exams, Tests or Treatments**

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

## **COURSE CREDIT**

A student in grades 9-12 will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed. RMA will review the records and work with the student to determine what steps will be taken to benefit the student. Every student is expected to be diligent and work towards their potential.

### **CREDIT BY EXAM – If a Student Has Taken the Course**

A student who has previously taken a course – but did not receive credit for it – may, in circumstances determined by the Principal and RTI committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example,

incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a non-accredited school.

The school counselor or Principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The RTI committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

### CREDIT BY EXAM – If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. Exams may be scheduled anytime during the school year.

A student in grade 9 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 70 on the exam or a score designated by the state for an exam that has alternate scoring standards. A student may take an exam to earn course credit no more than twice during any semester. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's course sequence, the student must complete the course. Credit earned through examination of this nature will be shown on the student's transcript at the end of the semester in which they take and pass the examination.

All exams for credit must be approved and coordinated through the local campus RTI committee.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student with parent approval must register with the Principal no later than 10 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The campus Principal's decision regarding when students may test for credit is final. If RMA agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by RMA, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam.

### DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of RMA's policy is available on RMA's website at [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org).

#### Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to harm, threaten intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational

program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment, or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

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

### **Discrimination**

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

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

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

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

### **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

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

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

Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender.

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not limited to,

offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Retaliation**

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

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, and unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation they should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, Principal, staff member, or the Superintendent. The report may be made by the student's parent, RMA Texas has designated a harassment officer to investigate and/or oversee complaints and other actions when a complaint is made. The harassment officer is the Superintendent.

### **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, RMA will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. RMA will promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with RMA. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, RMA will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law. If so, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

If RMA's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action, and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. RMA may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with the RMA Texas School Board Policy.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies, such as mail, satellite, internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

Distance learning is embedded in courses taught throughout RMA Texas Inc. Most often, this instruction is part of a "blended learning model" that entails a certified distance-learning teacher providing instruction in concert with local associate teachers, special education teachers, and other faculty.

Distance learning is provided on our campuses as additional support to provide our students more opportunities to be successful. In this setting, our Associate teachers play a vital role in facilitation of our distance classroom. The Associate teacher ensures that all of the students in the classroom are engaged and focused on the instructional delivery being provided by the Distance teacher. Since multiple campuses are receiving the same instruction it is imperative all classrooms are in sync with each other. Instruction is provided via Adobe Connect where both the Associate Teacher and individual students are able to log on with their individual laptops. Participation is key to success of the distance classroom.

The charter also utilizes a learning management system (Edgenuity) as part of the instructional program. This platform is aligned with Texas based curriculum (TEKS) and it is also used to promote credit recovery, afford students the opportunity to make up work lost due to attendance, and is also part of the foundation for preparing students to pass the state STAAR end of course tests.

## DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the Principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters brochures, flyers, etc. The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the Principal.

### **Non-school Materials- Students**

Students must obtain prior approval from the Principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than ten copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school materials must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

### **Non-school Materials-Others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by RMA or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any school premises by RMA employee or by persons or groups not associated with RMA, except as permitted by policy. To be considered for distribution, any non-school materials must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Principal for prior review. The Principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with RMA Texas School Board policy or a non-curriculum related student group meeting held in accordance with RMA Texas School Board policy.
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

## DRESS AND GROOMING

RMA's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards, instill discipline, and teach respect for authority. RMA Texas students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health and safety hazard to themselves or others. Clothing and grooming that in the Principal's judgement may be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operation is prohibited. RMA Texas prohibits pictures, emblems, or writing on clothing that:

- Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
- Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or that have (or suggest) vulgar or offensive language of any kind (this includes pictures and/or print deemed to be lewd, offensive, or obscene.)
- Refer to satanic, cult, or gang activities
- Substantially disrupts the learning environment

If the Principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to a separate location until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

### **Possession and Use of Personal telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones**

Campus Principals have been given permission to develop individual campus procedures that best suit their individual campus. Every campus may differ from each other. A student must have written approval from the campus Principal to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers. The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in any area that may invade the privacy of other individuals which could include, but are not limited to, locker rooms or restroom areas while at school, in a school related or school-sponsored event.

Should a student using an electronic device or technology resource disrupt the learning environment during the school day, the device may be confiscated by appropriate school staff. The student/parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the Principal's office for a fee of \$15. Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents may be disposed of after the notice required by law.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with the law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. RMA is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

### **Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices**

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, game, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior written permission has been obtained by campus Principal. Without such

permission, teachers may collect the items and turn them in to the Principal's office. The Principal will return items to the student's parents at the end of the day or contact parents to pick up items. In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. RMA is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and other Electronic Devices**

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, RMA has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include RMA's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Unacceptable and inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

While on campus or during school sponsored activities students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child <http://beforeyoutext.com>, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of RMA's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

### **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) District Policy**

RMA Texas has the following provisions in place for the protection of students and staff in the use of district-provided technology and services:

- All RMA Texas students will sign a Technology User Agreement for Student prior to using a school-operated computer. New students will be required to sign this agreement during the enrollment process prior to using any school-operated computers.
- All RMA Texas staff members will sign a Technology User Agreement for Employees prior to the first day of school.
- Filtering will be provided for all Internet-enabled computers used by students, patrons, and staff bona fide research or other lawful purposes only.
- Students will be educated with regard to safe and appropriate online activities.
- Safe and secure use by minors of direct electronic communications will be assured and monitored.
- Personal email and chat accounts for students are unauthorized and will be blocked.
- Unauthorized online access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities, is strictly prohibited.
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors is prohibited.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occurs off-campus. When RMA arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by RMA to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity’s coach or sponsor.

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) - a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. (See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information.)

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class – other than an Advanced Placement or international Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English – may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards I the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 18 (9 per semester) absences not related to post-district competition. The maximum of absences for post-district competition prior to state and the maximum of absences for state competition will be determined by the school. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities 32 approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### **Standards of Behavior**

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior.

### **Offices and Elections**

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers.

### **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on campus premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

### **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the Principal at least fifteen days before the event. The campus Principal must request permission from the Executive Director of Instructional Operations prior to beginning any project. Any monies accepted in support of these types of activities must be done by credit card, debit card or money order. **Cash is never accepted.**

## GANG-FREE ZONES

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the school, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district owned or leased property or campus playground.

## GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

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

## GRADE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Grade Level	Number of Credits Earned
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0 – 5.5 credits
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6 – 12.5 credits
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	13 – 18.5 credits
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	19+ credits

All credits must be earned and reported prior to the start of school to be included when determining classification.

## GRADING GUIDELINES

Standards for Mastery

Mastery shall be determined as follows:

- Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given **to determine student grades in** a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
- Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into unit, nine-week, and final exams, or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required.

### Grades 9-12

Grade-level advancement for students in ninth through twelfth grades shall be earned by course credits.

### **Awarding Class Credit**

Grade-level advancement for students in ninth through twelfth grades shall be earned by course credits.

### Mastery of Objectives

- Student academic achievement shall be based upon the degree of mastery of the objectives which reflect the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- In order to be awarded credit in a course or subject, the yearly average must be a 70 or higher.

### Required Attendance

In accordance with state law, a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered.

Students may have two college visit days their junior year and two their senior year. It is recommended that students obtain prior approval from their grade level counselor/administrator and a letter from the college or university verifying the visit.

## Homework

Homework provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge, skills, and processes from previous learning to display their understanding. Homework should be considered extended learning opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of concepts taught. Homework can be a necessary part of the instructional process that begins in the classroom, extends into the home, and provides a way for parents/guardians to become aware of the instructional program and their student's educational program.

In order to ensure that homework practices are efficient and effective, consideration for the amount of time per night an average student should expect to spend on homework for all subjects combined, based on the research, should not exceed 5 hours per week.

### Grading Homework

Homework may be graded in a variety of ways. At times, checking for completion is appropriate. At other times, a complete analysis of procedure, content, and/or correct answers is appropriate. Graded assignments should be returned to the student in a timely manner. Peer grading is appropriate for revising and editing work.

## Calculation of Nine-week Averages

### Weight of Grades

All nine-week averages shall be calculated on a percentage system for each type (category) of assignment.

### Grade Weights

- Daily Work and Homework = 45%
- Projects, Tests, Quizzes and/or CBAs = 45%
- Participation = 10%

## Re-teaching and Reassessment for Mastery

Re-teaching is using assessment data to identify weak skills and providing additional instruction time to help students master concepts. It provides varied scaffolding tools to accelerate achievement, such as graphic organizers or mind maps. Re-teaching examples include small group instruction within class time or tutoring sessions outside of class time. Scaffolding tools that break up materials into chunks and include rich discussions or "think-alouds" are good examples of re-teaching. Completion of new work after additional instruction, whether as a class or individually, is also a best practice in re-teaching.

Reassessments should use a new or different evaluation at the same level of rigor as the original test. Reassessments must occur after re-teaching, may focus on reassessing only the low performing skills, and do not have to be a lengthy evaluation tool. Reassessment examples include oral tests, short written tests, such as open-ended response questions or short answer, and performance-based assessments.

### High School On-Level

Teachers will identify and progress monitor students' level of mastery. If 25% or more of the students in a single class period do not demonstrate mastery of the TEKS, the teacher will provide the opportunity for re-teaching within the instructional time. Additional tutorials may be used for re-teaching when it is permissible to reteach outside of the instructional time.

Students earn the opportunity to retest by working with the teacher to prove that new learning has taken place and that they have a better understanding of that content. Examples of this process include attending tutorial sessions, completing new work or previously assigned work, and discussing with the teacher the necessary improvements to achieve content mastery. For an assessment given during the last week of the grading period, re-teaching and reassessment must be completed no later than one week after the end of the grading period.

**If a student passes the retest, at least a 70** shall be recorded to designate the student's mastery of the TEKS on independent assessments, **excluding district CBA's**. In the event the student fails both assessments, the higher of the two tests shall be recorded.

### Mastery of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

RMA has provided a rigorous vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum based on state prescribed Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students who participate in this tiered curriculum will have the opportunity to master the knowledge, skills and competencies established by RMA curriculum and the state standards.

RMA teachers will utilize ongoing mastery assessment to determine which students need intervention. The use of teacher-made tests, performance assessments, common assessments, and teacher observations will help determine which students are mastering instructional objectives and which students need support.

### Acceleration (Intervention)

Frequent evaluation, both formative and summative, will determine the need for acceleration.

Acceleration (intervention) is an integrated part of the instructional program and is embedded within core instruction. Acceleration (intervention) provides:

- Frequent reinforcement and review to reduce the achievement gap between the student and his/her same age peers.
- Daily, ongoing targeted instruction based on student need as identified by progress monitoring data.
- Opportunity for the student to progress systematically through content without experiencing extended, frustrating periods of non-achievement.
- A variation in instructional approaches – uses new techniques, strategies, materials, practice small group instruction, and opportunity for review.

### Major Grades

Major grades include alternative assessments, examination/tests, projects, labs, term papers, compositions, nine-week tests, and other similar assignments. For English Language Arts only, one major grade per grading period must be a writing piece that will be included in the student's writing portfolio.

- Common assessments in core content areas will be given during a grading period. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will provide district-created common assessments.

#### Quizzes

Quizzes are short formative assessments assigned to measure a student's progress toward the learning standard. Assignments that can fall under this category may include science labs, reading responses, minor projects or short assessments. Quizzes do not have to be scheduled in advance.

#### Daily Grades

Daily grades include class work, notebooks, labs, homework and other similar assignments.

#### Missing Assignments

When students are absent, an "M" may be recorded by the teacher until the student completes their makeup assignments. An "M" is averaged by as a 0 until the teacher updates the electronic gradebook after the student submits makeup assignments. Please note that RMA's late-work policy applies to make up assignments.

#### Science Labs

Laboratory work varies greatly based on the student learning objectives from simple discovery activities to full inquiry projects. Accordingly, labs will be graded under the category (daily, quiz, major) that is most appropriate for the level of rigor required.

#### Curriculum Based Assessments

Curriculum Based assessments are developed to inform instruction by measuring students' level of mastery and identifying concepts or skills which require re-teaching.

- The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will provide curriculum-based assessments
- Testing windows for common assessments will be provided by RMA and posted
- For grade reporting purposes on curriculum-based assessments (CBA), CMA conversion scales shall be used when entering grades into the gradebook.

#### Extra Credit

- All extra credit is to be academic and relevant to the course.
- The intent of extra credit is for enrichment in a class, not to gain mastery of the TEKS.
- Extra credit may be offered at the discretion of the teacher.
- If extra credit is offered, it must be offered to all students in the class.
- Extra credit will not cause an excessive financial burden on the student or be given for bringing in basic school supplies.

#### Maximum Weight of a Grade

When calculating a nine-week average, no single assessment grade may count more than 23% of the total average regardless of the grade category. It should be noted, however, that some major projects, may comprise more than one assignment. Calculated averages reported on progress reports or report cards may not exceed 100%.

#### Minimum/Maximum Grade Reported

Grades for assignments will be based on relative mastery. Teachers are not required to give a minimum grade on an assignment that does not reflect the quality of the student's work. The teacher will record in

their grade book actual grades earned by the student. The actual grade earned on any assignment may exceed 100%; however, the calculated average on a progress report and/or report card may not exceed 100%

### Incomplete Grades

A student receiving an incomplete and/or zero for incomplete work has one week to convert the incomplete grade to an earned grade. In unusual cases, where the student has missed a large quantity of work, the time may be extended. The teacher must communicate to the student and parent/guardian the nature of the outstanding work and the time limitation for completing the work (UIL required).

### Transfer Students

Grade averages for any student transferring into RMA Texas will be used in place of assignments, quizzes, and major grades that the student has missed during the current grading period. Students will be permitted to submit alternate assignments, quizzes, and major grades for any transferred grade. Teachers will use the grade that most benefits the student.

### **Late Work**

Late will be accepted within the grading period. All late work will be graded and added to the grade book. An action plan to complete all missed assignments will be created by the teacher. Five points per week will be deducted from each assignment.

### **Makeup Work**

In order to provide the total assessment “picture” of a student’s academic progress for a course any student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to make up the missing assigned work. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance upon consistent attendance and daily study. Students shall be permitted to make up assignments and tests following any absence.

### Makeup Work Guidelines

- Makeup work is available to all students. Students are responsible for asking teachers for the makeup work upon returning to class. Students shall receive credit for satisfactory makeup work after an absence but may receive a zero for any test not made up within the allotted time. Any assignment not turned in within the allotted time falls within the late work guidelines.
- Exceptions may be granted by the campus Principal in extenuating circumstances.
- The number of class days allowed for makeup work to be completed for full credit will be equal to the number of times a class was missed. Extra time may be given at the teacher’s discretion.
- A student should not, on the day of returning to school, be required to take a quiz or tests that was announced during his/her absence.
- Makeup work, including tests, may be an alternate version to assess what the student has learned.
- Teachers may assign additional work to ensure that students who have been absent sufficient opportunity to master the TEKS or to meet subject or course requirements. The assignments shall be based on the instructional objectives for the subject our course and may provide greater depth of subject matter than routine makeup work.

### Suspension

A student suspended from his/her regular classes is to request makeup work when he/she returns to school. The student is expected to satisfactorily complete the assignments for the period of suspension within the times designated by the makeup work policy.

## CALCULATION OF TERM, SEMESTER, AND FINAL GRADES

### Calculation of Semester Average

All secondary courses will calculate and report a semester average. Calculated averages reported on progress reports or report cards may not exceed 100%. Grades recorded in a grade-book represent a confidential record for assessment of student performance.

### **High School Credit Courses**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Grade

The semester average is determined using the nine-week averages.

1 <sup>st</sup> Nine-Week Average	50%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nine-Week Average	50%

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Grade

The semester average is determined using the nine-week averages.

1 <sup>st</sup> Nine-Week Average	50%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Nine-Week Average	50%

### Reporting Modifications

If modifications to rigor and/or standards cause course work to be altered, the assessment and reporting system shall reflect modifications.

## GRADING SCALE AND SYMBOL DEFINITIONS

In order to calculate grades, the following scale is used to assign grades. In turn, the letter symbols give a description of the student's academic achievement.

- 100-97 = A+
- 96-93 = A Exemplary work (90-100% Master a/ Subject Goals)
- 92-90 = A-
- 89-87 = B+
- 86-83 = B Proficient/ Thorough work ( 80-89% Master a/Subject Goals)
- 82-80 = B-
- 79-77 = C+
- 76-73 = C Acceptable Work (70-79% Mastery a/Subject Goals)
- 72-70 = C
- 69-0 = F (less than 70% Mastery a/ Subject Goals)

### Averaging Semester Grades

It is acceptable and will be allowed to average semester grades to reach a final grade for a specific course within the same school year.

The above also applies to grades averaged from another Texas school with grades earned at RMA Texas. RMA Texas will accept any semester averaging policy used on an official transcript from a student's prior school(s).

## GRADUATION

### Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma, a student must successfully;

- Complete the required number of credits
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Depending on the year in which the student is scheduled to graduate, pass a statewide exit-level exam or achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments.
- Student must meet all state attendance requirements.

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History.

A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, we will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

### Graduation Programs

Students who entered high school before the 2014-2015 school year have the option to graduate under the new Foundation High School Program or the existing Minimum High School Program (MHSP), Recommended High School Program (RHSP), or Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP). Additional information can be found on the TEA website: <https://tea.texas.gov/graduation.aspx>

### Minimum, Recommended and Distinguished Programs

Courses	Number of credits Minimum Program	Number of credits Recommended Program	Number of credits Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program
English/Language Arts	4	4	4
Mathematics	3	4	4
Science	2 OR 3	4	4
Social Studies, including Economics	3 OR 4	4	4
Physical Education	1	1	1
Speech	0.5	0.5	0.5
Language other than English		2	3
Fine Arts	1 (effective for grade 9 in 2010-2011 school year and thereafter)	1	1
Electives**	7.5 credits (prior to 2010-2011) 6.5 credits 2010-2011 and thereafter)	5.5 credits	4.5 credits
Miscellaneous			Completion of 4 Advanced Measures ****
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>

\*A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

\*\* State rules prohibit a student from combining a half-credit of a course for which there is an EOC assessment with another half-credit of an elective credit course to satisfy an elective credit requirement. However, RMA will allow a student to satisfy a graduation requirement for which there are multiple options with one-half credit of one allowable option and one-half credit of another allowable option, if neither course has an EOC assessment.

\*\*\* A student graduation under the Advanced/ Distinguished Achievement Program must also achieve a combination of four of the following advanced measures:

1. An original research project or other project that is related to the required curriculum. These projects must be judged by a panel of professionals or conducted under the direction of a mentor and reported to an appropriate audience. Please note that no more than two of the four advanced measures may be received from this option.
2. Test data where a student receives
  - a. A score of three or above on an Advanced Placement (AP) exams;
  - b. A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam; or
  - c. A score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that qualifies the student for recognition as a commended scholar or higher by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, as part of the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) of the College Board, or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT/NMSQT score will count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.
3. College academic courses, including those taken for dual credit, and advanced technical courses, including locally articulated courses, provided the student scores the equivalent of a 3.0 or higher.

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area, along with a description of advanced measures available to students in the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program from the options listed above, will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in RMA. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or CTE, RMA will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school form which the transfers were requested.

### **Foundation High School Program**

- The Commissioner has adopted a transition plan to replace the MHSP, RHSP, and DAP with the Foundation High School Program **beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.**
- Students who were in grade 9,10, or 11 in 2013-2014 school year must be given a choice to graduate on the MHSP, RHSP, DAP, or Foundation High School Program.
- A school must ensure that each student, entering ninth grade, indicates in writing an endorsement that the student intends to earn.
- A district must permit a student to choose, at any time, to earn an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated.

## Foundation- Statutory Requirements

A student may graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement if, after the student's sophomore year:

- (1) The student and the student's parent or person standing in parental relation are advised by a school counselor of the specific benefits of graduating from high school with one or more endorsements; and
- (2) The student's parent or person standing in parental relation files with a school counselor written permission, on a form adopted by the agency, allowing the students to graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement.

## Foundation - Statutory Requirements (Side by Side Graduation Requirements)

Discipline	Foundation	*MHSP	*RHSP	*DAP
English Language Arts	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• English III</li> <li>• An advanced English course</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• English III</li> <li>• English IV or approved alternate course</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• English III</li> <li>• English IV</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I</li> <li>• English II</li> <li>• English III</li> <li>• English IV</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<b>Three Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• An advanced math course</li> </ul>	<b>Three Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• SBOE approved math course</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• An additional math</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• An additional math</li> </ul>
Science	<b>Three Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• IPC or an advanced science course</li> <li>• An advanced science course</li> </ul>	<b>Two Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• IPC or Chemistry and Physics (one of the two serves as an academic elective)</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> <li>• Physics</li> <li>• An additional science credit</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> <li>• Physics</li> <li>• An additional science credit</li> </ul>
Social Studies	<b>Three Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History</li> <li>• U.S Government (one-half credit)</li> <li>• Economics (one-half credit)</li> <li>• World History or World Geography</li> </ul>	<b>Three Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History (one credit)</li> <li>• U.S Government (one-half credit)</li> <li>• Economics (one-half credit)</li> <li>• World History (one credit) or World Geography (one credit)</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History (one credit)</li> <li>• U.S Government (one-half credit)</li> <li>• Economics (one-half credit)</li> <li>• World History (one credit)</li> <li>• World Geography (one credit)</li> </ul>	<b>Four Credits:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History (one credit)</li> <li>• U.S Government (one-half credit)</li> <li>• Economics (one-half credit)</li> <li>• World History (one credit)</li> <li>• World Geography (one credit)</li> </ul>
Physical	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>
Languages Other Than English	<b>Two credits in the same language</b> Two credits form Computer Science I, II, and III (other substitutions)	<b>None</b>	<b>Two credits in the same language</b>	<b>Three credits in the same language</b>
Fine Arts	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>	<b>One credit</b>
Speech	<u><a href="#">Demonstrated proficiency in speech skills</a></u>	<b>One-half credit from either of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Applications</li> <li>• Professional Communications (CTE)</li> </ul>	<b>One-half credit from either of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Applications</li> <li>• Professional Communications (CTE)</li> </ul>	<b>One-half credit from either of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Applications</li> <li>• Professional Communications (CTE)</li> </ul>
Electives	<b>Five Credits</b>	<b>Seven- and one-half credits (one must be an academic electives)</b>	<b>Five and one-half credits</b>	<b>Four and one-half credits</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

### **Endorsements- Statutory Requirements**

- A student may earn an endorsement by successfully completing:
- Curriculum requirements for the endorsement
- Four credits in mathematics
- Four credits in science
- Two additional elective credits
- Each school must make available to high school students' courses that allow a student to complete the curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement.
- A school that offers only one endorsement curriculum must offer the multidisciplinary studies endorsement curriculum.
- A school district defines advanced courses and determines a coherent sequence of courses for an endorsement area, provided that prerequisites are followed.
- A course completed as part of the set of four courses needed to satisfy an endorsement requirement may also satisfy a requirement under the foundation high school program, including an elective requirement.

### **Multidisciplinary Studies – SBOE Rule**

A student may earn a multidisciplinary studies endorsement by completing foundation and general endorsement requirements and:

- Four advanced courses that prepare a student to enter the workforce successfully or postsecondary education without remediation from within one endorsement area or among endorsement areas that are not in a coherent sequence.
- Four credits in each of the four foundation subject areas to include English IV and chemistry and/or physics.
- Four credits in advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit selected from English, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, languages other than English, or fine arts.

<b>Endorsements</b>	<p>A student may earn an endorsement by successfully completing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum requirements for the endorsement</li> <li>• A total of four credits in mathematics</li> <li>• A total of four credits in science</li> <li>• Two additional elective credits</li> </ul>
<b>STEM</b>	<p>A coherent sequence or series of courses selected from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE courses with a final course from the STEM career cluster</li> <li>• Computer science</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• A combination of no more than two of the categories listed above</li> </ul>
<b>Business and Industry</b>	<p>A coherent sequence or series of courses selected from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE courses with a final course from the Agriculture, Food, &amp; Natural Resources; Architecture &amp; Construction; Arts, Audio/Video, Technology &amp; Communications; Business Management &amp; Administration, ; Finance; Hospitality &amp; Tourism; Information Technology; Manufacturing, Marketing; Transportation, or Distribution &amp; Logistics CTE career cluster</li> <li>• The following English electives: public speaking, debate, advanced broadcast journalism including newspaper and yearbook.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Services</b>	<p>A coherent sequence or series of courses selected from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE courses with a final course from the Education &amp; training; Government &amp; Public Administration; Health Science, Human Services; or Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security career cluster.</li> </ul>
<b>Arts and Humanities</b>	<p>A coherent sequence or series of courses selected from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• The same language in Languages Other Than English</li> <li>• Two levels in each of two language in Languages Other Than English</li> <li>• American Sign Language (ASL)</li> </ul>
<b>Multidisciplinary Studies</b>	<p>A coherent sequence or series of courses selected from one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four advanced courses that prepare a student to enter the workforce successfully or postsecondary education without remediation from within one endorsement area or among endorsement areas that are not in a coherent sequence</li> <li>• Four credits in each of the four foundation subject areas to include English IV and chemistry and/or physics</li> </ul>
<b>Total Credits w/ endorsement- 26</b>	
<b>Distinguished Level of Achievement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of four credits in math, including credit in Algebra II</li> <li>• A total of four credits in science</li> <li>• Completion of curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Acknowledgements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For outstanding performance</li> <li>• In a dual credit course</li> <li>• In bilingualism and bi-literacy</li> <li>• an AP test or IB exam</li> <li>• On the PSAT, the ACT-Plan, the SAT, or the ACT</li> <li>• For earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license</li> </ul>

### Languages Other Than English (LOTE) SBOE Rule

- Any two levels in the same language
- Two credits in computer programming languages selected from Computer Science I, II, and III (allowable through the 2015-2016 school year)
- If a student, in completing the first credit of LOTE, demonstrates that the student is unlikely to be able to complete the second credit, the student may substitute another appropriate course as follows:
- Special Topics in Language and Culture
- World History Studies or World Geography Studies who is not required to complete both by the local district.
- Computer programming languages A different language course.

A student, who due to a disability, is unable to complete two credits in the same language in LOTE, may substitute:

- A combination of two credits from English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies
- Two credits in career and technical education or technology applications

The determination regarding a student's ability to complete the LOTE credit requirements will be made by:

- The student's ARD committee if the student receives special education services under the TEC Chapter 29, Subchapter A or
- The committee established for the student under section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 United States Code (USC), §794)

### **Certificate of Coursework Completion**

A certificate of coursework completion will not be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on exit-level tests or achieved passing scores on certain end-of-course assessments will **not** be allowed to participate in graduation activities. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provision of his or her IEP.

A student who receives special education services and has completed for years of high school but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony. Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed in the Minimum Program, in accordance with state rules.

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student's achievement and progress, and, if so, whether successful performance is required for graduation, or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate are the alternative assessments currently allowed by the state.

### **Graduation Activities**

Graduation activities will include: practice graduation, commencement exercises and project graduation.

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on exit-level tests or end-of-course assessments will **not** be allowed to participate in graduation activities. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

### **Graduation Speakers**

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies. A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the Principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. All speeches will be reviewed and approved by the school Principal.

### **Graduation Expenses**

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation – such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture – both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year.

### **Grants and Scholarships**

- Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.
- Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

**Grievance Policy and Process** (located on the RMA District Website, [www.rmaschools.org](http://www.rmaschools.org) under Documents, Module 300)

The Charter Holder Board of Directors designates the Executive Director of Instructional Operations to coordinate compliance with the following federal laws:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504): The Charter Holder Board of Directors designates the Executive Director of Instructional Operations to coordinate compliance with the grievance procedures that incorporate appropriate due process standards and that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging conduct prohibited by Section 504.
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA): the Charter Holder Board of Directors designates the Executive Director of Instructional Operations to coordinate compliance with the grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging conduct prohibited by the ADA.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX): the Charter Holder Board of Directors designates the Executive Director of Instructional Operations to coordinate investigations of complaints alleging violations of Title IX. The charter holder will notify all of its students and employees of the name, office address, and telephone number of the designated employee. The Charter Holder Board of Directors designates the Executive Director of Instructional Operations to coordinate compliance with the grievance procedures that provide for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging violations of Title IX.
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”): RMA Texas will prominently display posters which state that the recipient is subject to Title VI (if applicable) and will briefly explain the procedures for filing complaints alleging violations of Title VI.

The Grievance policy governs student and parent complaints, employee grievances, and citizen complaints. For purposes of this policy, “days” means school calendar days. With the exception of a complaint against the Superintendent, each complaint must initially be brought at the lowest level of review, at the Campus Principal Review level. The Board encourages all complaints to be resolved at the lowest level possible.

### **Campus Principal Review of Complaint**

Where a RMA Texas employee, student, guardian of a student, or a member of the public has a complaint or concern regarding RMA Texas, the individual will first bring their complaint or concern in writing to the appropriate campus principal. The complaint must be brought within 15 school days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The principal must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The principal must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision in writing within 10 days of the principal's receipt of the complaint.

### **Superintendent Review of Complaint**

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the campus principal's final decision, then the individual may file a written appeal to the Superintendent of RMA Texas. This written appeal will be filed with the Superintendent's office within 10 days of the individual's receipt of the campus principal's final decision. The complaint will include a copy of the written complaint to the campus principal along with a copy of the campus principal's final decision. A copy of the appeal will also be delivered to the campus principal.

The appeal must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The complaint will not include any new issues or complaints unrelated in the original complaint expressed to the campus principal.

The Superintendent, or Superintendent's designee, will respond to the complaint and issue a final decision in writing within 15 days of receipt of the written appeal.

### **Board of Directors Review of Complaint**

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the Superintendent's final decision, then the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to RMA Texas' Board of Directors within 10 days of receiving the Superintendent's final decision. The complaint will be directed to the President of the Board and will include a copy of the written complaint to the Superintendent along with a copy of the Superintendent's final decision. A copy of this appeal will also be delivered to the Superintendent.

The President of the Board, at the next regular meeting of the Board, will provide a copy of the complaint record to all board members. The Board's decision will be decided on a review of the record developed at the Superintendent's level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint will be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meeting Act.

The governing body of a charter holder or charter school may conduct a closed meeting to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee of the charter holder or charter school. However, the governing body will conduct an open meeting if the officer or employee who is the subject of the deliberation or hearing requests a public hearing. [Tex. Gov't Code §551.074](#)

The closed meeting exception for personnel matters does not apply when a board discusses an independent contractor who is not a school employee or when a board discusses a class or group of employees, not a particular employee. [Att.Gen.Op. MW-129 \(1980\); Atty. Gen.Op. H-496 \(1975\)](#)

The governing body of a charter holder or charter school may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate a matter regarding a student if personally identifiable information about the student will be revealed by the deliberation. [Tex. Gov't Code §551.0821\(a\)](#).

The closed meeting exception for personally identifiable student information does not apply if an open meeting about the matter is required in writing by a parent or guardian of the student or by the student if the student has attained 18 years of age. [Tex. Gov't Code §551.0821\(c\)](#)

A complaint against Superintendent will begin at this level of review and will follow the complaint process in accordance with this policy section and the Texas Open Meetings Act.

The failure of the Board to act on a complaint has the effect of upholding the Superintendent's decision.

## HAZING

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

Hazing will not be tolerated by RMA. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the Principal or superintendent. [Also see **BULLYING**]

## HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

### **Student Illness**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the Principal.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the office. If the Principal determine that the child should go home, the Principal will contact the parent.

RMA is required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The Principal can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the Principal if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

### Bacterial Meningitis

State law requires RMA to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

- [What is meningitis?](#)

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common, and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

- What are the symptoms?  
Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms. Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.
- How serious is bacterial meningitis?  
If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal, or a person may be left with a permanent disability.
- How is bacterial meningitis spread?  
Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as kissing, coughing, or sneezing). The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.
- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?  
Maintaining health habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. \* The vaccines are safe and effective (85-90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.
- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?  
You should seek prompt medical attention.
- Where can you get more information?  
Your Principal, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov> , and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us> .

\*Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination to be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college student must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the Principal for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

## **Food Allergies**

RMA requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy. Especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic-reaction. Please contact the Principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

RMA has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When RMA receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. RMA's food allergy management plan can be accessed from the Principal.

## **Head Lice**

Head lice, although not an illness or disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the Principal will contact the student's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinses that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the Principal to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>

## **Other Health-Related Matters**

### ***Physical Fitness Assessment***

Annually, RMA will conduct a physical fitness assessment of student in grades 3-12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the Principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

### ***Vending Machines***

RMA has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the Principal.

### ***Tobacco Prohibited***

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, while on school property at any time or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

RMA and staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct].

### ***Asbestos Management Plan***

RMA works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of RMA's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine RMA's plan in more detail, please contact the Executive Director of

Instructional Technology, Facilities and Expansion, RMA's designated asbestos coordinator, at (830) 557-6181 for the Pest Management Plan.

RMA is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although RMA strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the school Principal, RMA's IPM coordinator, at the school.

## HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact RMA's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, at (830) 557-6181.

## IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain disease or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by RMA. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P. O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the Principal within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis; measles, mumps, and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcal. The Principal can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present certification signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies life-long condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis**, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement. [For further information, see the TDSHS website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>]

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

### Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the Principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The Principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The Principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The Principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.

### Students Taken Into Custody

**State law requires RMA to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:**

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court
- To comply with the laws of arrest
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the Principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The Principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the Principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact. Campus Principal will further notify the superintendent of a student being taken into custody by law enforcement.

### Notification of Law Violations

**Principal is required by state law to notify:**

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offenses or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel in regard to a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

## LEAVING CAMPUS

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also, not that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the Principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The Principal has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

- For students in high school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reasons for the absence will be required.
- If the student's parent will authorize the student leave a campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may product a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the Principal. The Principal will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parents and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released.
- RMA Texas staff will not physically restrain any student attempting to leave campus.

## LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an English language learner (ELL) in certain state statutes and state rules, is entitled to receive specialized services from RMA. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for a LEP student.

In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs the student will be required to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR-L, as mentioned at

**STANDARDIZED TESTING**, may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I and II end-of-course (EOC) assessments. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP student who qualify for services.

If a student is considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make these decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

## LOST AND FOUND

A "lost and found" collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. RMA discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, as RMA cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus may dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

## MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

RMA employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees in accordance with RMA Texas School Board Policy, may administer:
  - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
  - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
  - Non-prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication. If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the Principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity.

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood – or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other RMA employees may discuss a student’s academic progress or behavior with the student’s parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

1. Richard Milburn Academy (RMA Texas) integrates technology throughout its high school curriculum and offers approved career pathways, including career and technology education clusters, to meet graduation requirements in the State of Texas. Enrollment in these courses is based upon a student’s completion of the appropriate prerequisite coursework and ability to meet criteria identified in the course description. Activities, programs, and privileges are made equally accessible to all students. Admission to RMA Texas is based on the availability of student slots at the public charter high school. RMA Texas educates students who have had difficulty in the traditional public-school setting by offering small class sizes, flexible scheduling and certified teachers dedicated to meeting the individual needs of students. RMA Texas does not charge tuition or fees.
2. It is the policy of RMA Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational 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.
3. It is the policy of RMA Texas 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 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.
4. RMA Texas will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent’s Office at (830) 557-6181 and/or the Special Populations Coordinator.

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS/HEALTH SCREENINGS**

### **Vision and Hearing Screening at Enrollment**

When a student’s initial enrollment in RMA is also the student’s initial enrollment in any Texas school, the student shall be screened for possible vision and hearing problems. This screening shall occur prior to completion of the first semester, or within 120 calendar days of enrollment. Students may meet this requirement by providing evidence of screening conducted one year prior to enrollment.

The student or minor student’s parent, managing conservator, or guardian may elect to substitute one or more professional examinations for the required screening tests.

### **Routine Screening**

Students in grade 9 shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually at any time during the reporting year prior to May 31.

### **Spinal Screening**

Students in grade 9 shall be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. This requirement may be met by a professional examination performed by a state-licensed practitioner with expertise in diagnosing spinal deformities. Students entering the ninth grade not previously screened shall be screened within 120 days of enrollment.

If the screening indicates the student may have an abnormal spinal curvature, the Principal shall send the original of the screening report to the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian along with a letter advising of the parent's responsibility to select an appropriate health practitioner for an examination.

### **Exemption from Screenings**

A student is exempt from the screening requirements if the tests conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or a member. The student or minor student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian shall submit to the Principal on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to the screening.

### **Department of Health Annual Report**

Each school shall submit to the Texas Department of Health by June 30 of each year an annual report on the screening status of the individuals in attendance during the reporting year and shall include in the report any other information required by the Board of Health. The report shall be on a form prescribed by the health department and submitted according to Board of Health rules. [Board Policy Module 400.120]

### **Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

In accordance with a program approved by the State Board of Education, enrolled students shall be tested for dyslexia and related disorders at appropriate times and any student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder shall be provided with treatment.

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students 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 Principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provided for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11<sup>th</sup> falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

## **PRAYER**

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

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by RMA.

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards, and a student must attend 90% of the time that the course is offered in order to receive credit for any one course. Students in grades 9-12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

Parents of a student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

Certain students – some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency - may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the Principal, school counselor, or Special Education Director.

### **Personal Graduation Plan**

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for all students. The PGP will be designed and implemented by school counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the RMA. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. For additional information, see the school counselor. For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

### **REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every nine (9) weeks.

During the fourth week of a nine-week grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the Principal and Superintendent pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow RMA's grading policy.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the Principal. The report card or unsatisfactory progress reports will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject. Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within seven (7) days.

## SAFETY

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on RMA vehicles is a high priority of RMA. Although RMA has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the Principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the Principal or any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other RMA employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

### **Preparedness Drill: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, students, teachers, and other RMA employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given, or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the Principal to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. The decision to cancel school or begin late will be made by 6:00 a.m. Information on school closing may be obtained from the school office, or in case of bad weather, the local T.V. information channel or any major T.V. or radio station.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

### **Use by Students Before and After School**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus, students must leave campus immediately.

### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

### **Use of Hallways During Class Time**

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Cafeteria/Food Services**

RMA participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the school office for information. RMA follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day.

### **Meetings of Non-Curriculum-Related Groups**

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the Principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of the RMA Texas School Board Policy. A list of these groups is available in the Principal's office.

### **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

### **Students' Desks and Lockers**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others. Searches of desks and lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

### **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network system is not private and will be monitored by RMA. Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of RMA. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student's parent will be contacted. If a search is also refused by the student's parent, RMA may turn the matter over to law

enforcement. RMA may, in certain circumstances, contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted. The charter reserves the right to suspend privileges of drivers attempting to park on school grounds or within 300 feet of the campus. The charter assumes no responsibility for damages incurred by vehicles parked at the school or within this 300-foot perimeter.

### **Trained Dogs**

RMA will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

### **Metal Detectors**

If the board has approved using metal detectors for safety purposes, parents and student should be given notice that searches may occur at any time. All students are subject to electronic screening upon entering the school or at any time they are within the school building or 300 feet of the campus.

### **Drug-Testing**

RMA Texas Inc. does not conduct drug testing on students.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

RMA provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and student with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in RMA or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the Principal.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Many colleges require either the American College Tests (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

### **End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments for Students in Grades 9-12**

Beginning with ninth graders in the 2011-2012 school year and, as modified by House Bill 5, end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- United states History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee. These particular EOC assessments may have different testing windows than the general assessments, and the ARD committee will determine whether successful performance on the assessments will be required for graduation.

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient (LEP) and who require this type of testing accommodation.

### **TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized assessment called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through RMA as well. Beginning in fall 2013, all Texas public colleges and universities will begin administering a new TSI assessment, which will assist as one of several factors in determining whether the student is considered ready to enroll in college-level courses or whether the student needs to enroll in what is termed developmental education courses prior to enrollment in college level courses.

RMA Texas Inc. will pay for students to take the TSI once, provided they are enrolled in the supporting dual credit course offered through RMA Texas Inc. campuses.

### **STEROIDS**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use. Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense. Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Website at <https://www.uil texas.org/health/steroid-information>.

### **STUDENTS IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY OF THE STATE**

In an effort to provide educational stability, RMA strives to assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in either temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state of Texas with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in RMA.

A student who is placed in custody of the state and who is moved outside of RMA's attendance boundaries is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement until the student reaches the highest-grade level at the particular school. In addition, if a student in grade 11 or 12 is transferred to another district and does not meet the graduation requirements of the transferring district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

Please contact the Executive Director of Instructional Operations, who has been designated as RMA's liaison for children in the conservatorship of the state, at (830) 557-6181 with any questions.

## STUDENT SPEAKERS

RMA provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: graduation ceremonies, parent-teacher open house meetings, beginning/end of school year student and parent involvement activities, student council sponsored activities, community service events, athletic events, homecoming or prom events, leading the U.S. and Texas Pledge of Allegiance at public events, and any other campus events approved by the Principal or the Principal's designee. Students are eligible to introduce these events if the student is within 90% attendance compliance and is an exemplary model of student citizenship behavior, and service to the school.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce once of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name to the Principal during the first week of the fall semester and/or spring semester. The names of all students who volunteered will be randomly drawn and matched to the event for which the student will give introduction. If the selected student speaker declines or becomes ineligible, then no student introduction will be made at the event.

As determined by the Principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audience at designated events. Speeches will be reviewed and approved by the school Principal.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its Website:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/transition/mhsa.aspx> .

## SUICIDE AWARENESS

RMA is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access <https://texassuicideprevention.org/> or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school options are available at most RMA Texas Inc. campuses. See the campus Principal in your area for information.

## TEXTBOOKS, ELETRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

RMA Texas Inc. uses a learning management system known as Edgenuity. This tool is deployed as part of the blended rotational framework in most classes but is also used for “stand alone” instruction in campus elective labs, credit recovery, and course acceleration.

## TRANSFERS

The Principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another or from one session to another (morning to afternoon or vice versa).

## TRANSPORTATIONS

### **School- Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the Principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

Parents/Students may request transportation options from the school office.

Students shall not disobey rules for conduct on school buses/vans/vehicles during school sponsored trips or at school sponsored activities, field trips, or functions. Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in buses/vans/vehicles provided by RMA Texas, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver’s directions at all times
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver’s signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a RMA Texas provided bus/van/vehicle, may be suspended or revoked.

## VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come- littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purpose, video and audio recording equipment is used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The Principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification and complete the required state check in process. Visits to individual classroom during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the Principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct, disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

### **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

On High School Career Day, RMA invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

## VOLUNTEERS

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Principal for more information. Please note, in some circumstances, state law may require all volunteers working students to pass a background check.

## WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 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. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the Principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the office for health records; to the school counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the Principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Administrative law allows the local campus Principal to administratively withdrawal students over the age of 18 when they have more than five absences during any semester. Students under the age 18 may also be administratively withdrawn after 10 consecutive absences provided the local campus Principal- in concert with the campus Attendance Review Committee - documents three efforts to contact the parent or guardian in regard to their child's absences. Parents enjoy the right of appeal to these decisions provided they request a review by the superintendent within 10 days of written notice of the decision to administratively withdraw

their child. This notice will be sent through certified mail and details of the child's absences will be documented in the notice as well as efforts to contact the parent.