

INFORMATIONAL GUIDELINES

2025-26

PHONE: (936) 468-5899

FAX: 936.468.7015

WEB: sfasu.edu/charterschool

2428 Raguet Street

P.O. Box 6072, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, Texas 75962

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STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM ★ NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

Welcome to the SFA Charter School (SFACS) for the 2024-2025 school year. This handbook provides a reference for pertinent information regarding our school and questions you may have throughout the year. We strive to provide the best education possible in a safe, supportive, and nurturing school environment.

Our goal is to build a reputation for a progressive attitude and involved parents. We encourage you to partner with our school through involvement and support. We know that your commitment, combined with our outstanding faculty, will make this a satisfying year of social, emotional, and academic growth for your child.

Sincerely,
Lyra Hagan, CEO/Principal #gojuniorjacks



MISSION STATEMENT: The SFA Charter School mission is to create a responsive social learning community which inspires autonomy, integrity, and deep critical thinking.



SFA CHARTER SCHOOL MASCOT: The mascot of SFACS is the Junior Jack. The school colors are purple and white.



BREAKFAST AND LUNCH: Breakfast is served from 7:55 AM to 8:00 AM for grades K-5. Lunch times may be found on your child's classroom schedule. One payment covers both **Breakfast /Lunch**, and may be made in advance in the office:

8 monthly payments of	\$85
2 semester payments of	\$330
1 yearly payment of	\$645

Notification of monthly payment amounts go home periodically and are found on the school website. **Delinquent lunch accounts will warrant removal from the SFA Charter School to his or her home campus and parent subsection to further university collection efforts.** Meal menus may be found on the SFACS website:
<https://sfasu.edu/charterschool/prospective-families/lunch-info>



EARLY MORNING AND INSTRUCTIONAL DAY: The front and north SFACS entrance are for student vehicle arrival and dismissal. These doors are open from 7:30 to 8:00 AM and 3:15 to 3:35 PM. The front entrance is open from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Students in grades K-5 assemble from 7:30-7:40 in designated areas. The day begins at 7:45 AM with morning snacks, activities, and planning. The instructional day begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 3:15 PM. Students **MUST** be picked up by **3:35** PM.



DISMISSAL: All child pick-ups take place through the specified car lines beginning at 3:15 pm., Persons designated to pick-up, must be recorded on **School Dismissal Manager**.



ATTENDANCE: Regular, on time, attendance is essential to achievement. Students are expected to attend for a minimum of **98%** of the school year. Perfect attendance will be recognized periodically. Attendance is checked each day at 10:00 AM. If students are missing at that time, they are recorded absent. Parents must provide signed note/email or statement from a physician or clinic that describes the reason for the absence.

Please note that unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if a parent provides a note explaining the absence.



LATE ARRIVAL: Children should arrive on time every school day. Students arriving after 8:00 AM are **LATE** and must be signed in by a parent. The beginning of the day is valuable instructional time and when students are late, they not only start the day behind their peers, but also disrupt the learning process already in progress in the classroom. Please make every effort to allow your child to arrive to school on time.

Late arrivals or early departures will accrue into absences. **3 late arrivals and/or early departures accrue as one absence.**



EARLY DEPARTURE DURING THE DAY: Early departure from school causes students to miss valuable learning time. Leaving school prior to 3:00 PM is an early departure. Any student leaving the building during school hours must be signed out in the office by a parent/guardian who is listed on the child's registration form. School personnel will not release a child to a person who is not on this form. No student is to leave the grounds without permission from the office.

Late arrivals or early departures will accrue into absences. **3 late arrivals and/or early departures accrue as one absence.**



MANDATORY STATEMENT FROM PHYSICIAN OR CLINIC: A student absent for **3 or more consecutive days** because of personal illness must bring a statement from a physician or clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school.

Should the student's attendance fall **below 98% (5 days)**, the CEO/Principal will require that a student present a physician's or clinic's statement of illness after a single day's absence as a condition of classifying the absence as unexcused or excused with extenuating circumstances.

Late arrivals and/or early releases will require a statement from a physician or clinic verifying an appointment for the student to be counted present for the full day.

***Chronic absences, late arrivals, and early departures without medically fragile documented status will warrant removal from the SFA Charter School to his or her home campus and parents may face possible court action.** See [Student Code of Conduct](#).

[Texas Education Code 25.087 – Excused Absences](#)
<https://codes.findlaw.com/tx/education-code/educ-sect-25-087.html>



COMPLETION OF INSTRUCTION DUE TO

ABSENCE: Due to the schoolwide philosophy of constructivist learning, it is the school's standard practice to provide instruction for missed learning with the student upon return to school. The teacher meets individually with the student or in a small group setting to provide the instruction, work, and assessments.



SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITMENT:

Our campus and university are committed to heightened safety and security measures for the learning environment of our students and teachers.

Students will bring all materials to campus in the SFA Charter School provided **clear folder or clear zip bag**. Students may not bring bags, backpacks, or purses into classrooms.

All parents/guardians will be asked to complete an annual name based, background check form, and a current driver's license, to receive **access** through our SFACS office during designated times. All guardians or other visitors **MUST** have a background check with a current driver's license, to get an identification name badge for campus access. Everyone **MUST SIGN IN** with the SFACS Office.

Outside doors are locked throughout the day. Inform SFACS in writing if special custody or security concerns exist. The school relies on families to provide copies of court orders that give or deny permission to specific parties.



STUDENT DRESS:

SFACS students are expected to adhere to dress, makeup, hair, and grooming standards, which do not distract from learning. If a student appearance distracts from the learning environment, he or she will be asked to change the clothing, hairstyle, or grooming to be more conducive to the goal of learning. Students are expected to wear appropriate athletic shoes for PE and play. For increased safety, students should wear SFACS shirts on learning excursions/study trips.



PERSONAL ITEMS:

Parents should prevent unnecessary items such as cell phones, makeup, toys, radios, playing cards, electronic devices, umbrellas, etc. from being brought to school. These interfere with the learning process. The school will not be responsible for any personal property brought to school, including jewelry. School personnel will collect these items and return to parents. Classroom teacher will inform families of dates when certain personal items may be appropriate.



PORTFOLIO CONFERENCES:

Parent /Teacher Portfolio Conferences are held throughout the school year. During portfolio conferences the teachers will share information with parents regarding the child's TEKS based performance, work samples from the child, social emotional growth, and self-management progress. Parents and teachers will partner to set goals for the child's progress.



MEDICATION:

Any prescription medication, which cannot be taken at home and must be administered during school time, must be sent to the school in the **ORIGINAL LABELED CONTAINER**. A permission note, signed by parent or guardian allowing us to administer the medication must be completed before we give the medicine. Proper utensils for measuring and dispensing the medication must also be sent (spoon or medicine cup). The container and notes must include student's name, medication name, medication purpose, dose, time of day when it is needed, and how the medicine is taken.



EMERGENCY CARE INFORMATION:

It is critical that we have a completed registration/emergency form on file for each child. All telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and street addresses should be recorded and kept **up to date** so that a contact can be made as soon as possible in the event of an emergency.

Parents will be called to pick up students from school if injured, ill, has a 100° or above temperature. Parents are expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. Students sent home with fever may return to school when fever-free without fever reducing medication. Students with pink eye or lice should be treated and return to school.

The school office will release students only to individuals listed on the registration form. Special permission for someone else to pick-up your child must be in writing, and recorded in **School Dismissal Manager**. Parents may stop by the school office to add or delete names as appropriate. All parents must have a telephone number where they can be reached during the school day. Persons entering the building must provide identification.



NEWSLETTERS AND WEBSITE:

Parent Communication will be provided each Monday through email, and a school folder. Newsletters and information related to student progress, class/school activities, current learning, home-school connections, available services, school meetings, and other informational notes will be provided. Take time to read these carefully, discuss at home, respond as requested, and ask questions as necessary. We encourage families to view our website: <https://sfasu.edu/charterschool>



PARENT VISITATION:

Parents are encouraged to schedule a visit with the SFACS throughout the year, during academic times. This requires a 24 hour notice. The classroom schedule has designated academic times for optimal observation opportunities. Teachers are unable to stop instruction when parents visit. Making appointments for teacher conferences at least a day in advance is not only a courtesy, but also enables teachers to be fully prepared to make the most of visits. Teachers will gladly meet at a mutually convenient time. Photography while visiting, is not allowed. Through newsletters, information will be provided on family/school partnership opportunities, which will be scheduled at various times. Everyone **MUST SIGN IN** with the SFACS Office.



AFTER SCHOOL WORK: SFACS expects children to give their all to learning during the school day. Students may be expected to do some homework during the school week. SFACS would like for students to have the opportunity to learn in other areas (sports, music, drama, arts, foreign language) outside the school day.



STUDY TRIPS: Parents will be notified in advance whenever children leave campus on study trips. All study trips are planned for educational purposes only. We appreciate parent volunteers. Please communicate with teachers if you plan to attend a study trip. If personal transportation is used, students must have a permission form signed by the parents.



EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS: All students have the right to learn, therefore, no child is permitted to disrupt learning. School-wide rules are communicated to students. Severe disruptions would warrant an immediate Discipline Referral to an administrator. Parents will receive copies of this form, to sign and return. All students/parents are required to sign a SFACS Code of Conduct Parent/Student Acknowledgement. SFACS rules:

1. Listen to others
2. Respect self, others, and property
3. Be safe
4. Do your best
5. Take care of our school



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY RULES: For smooth, safe, and efficient student drop-off and pick-up times, all parents/guardians should remain in vehicles at all times. Comply with the following safety rules:

- The **front and north entrances** are for **vehicle** use for student drop off and pick up.
- Students should walk on sidewalks.
- Students should never be dropped off in the street nor be allowed to cross the street/parking lot unsupervised.
- Keep all traffic in the designated lane for drop-off and pick-up.
- Be patient with the lines that form at pick-up time, we will get children into vehicles in a swift and safe manner.
- When the weather is bad, it is especially important that we follow all the traffic safety rules. It will take a little longer, but it will ensure the safety of everyone.



SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE: SFACS established this committee to coordinate with state and local partners, and perform a safety and security audit of the campus every three years. Recommendations will be provided for updating the SFACS Multihazard Emergency Operations Plan and increasing law enforcement presence on campus. This committee meets at least once during each semester and at least once during the summer.



DIRECTORY INFORMATION: If you do not want the SFACS to disclose directory information from your child's educational records without your prior written consent, you must annually notify the school in writing by the end of the 10th day of school in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.



SFA CHARTER DOCTORAL INTERNSHIP: SFACS is proud to have an APA Accredited School Psychology Doctoral Training Internship Program with doctoral interns from the SFASU School Psychology Program. These individuals provide psychological and educational services to SFACS students. Services include psychological and educational assessment, counseling, behavior plans, social skills, and consultation with teachers for classroom management as needed.



PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION: We encourage all parents to become involved in their child's education by joining the SFACS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). SFACS PTO is a very active organization. Involvement in your child's school will increase success.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: The volunteer program is designed to enable parents to participate in the educational process of SFACS as needed. Volunteers are necessary for many events and study trips. All parents are encouraged to volunteer in some manner during the school year. This includes assuring your child's attendance at grade level activities and performances.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SFACS Advisory Committee, composed of volunteers, provides an important and necessary foundation for the school program to successfully build. We encourage parents to become involved in their child's education by voicing suggestions through this committee, which meets a minimum of twice per school year.



STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SFACS Student Advisory Council/Jr. Jacks Give Back, offers students an opportunity for engagement in service learning. Students assist to plan, implement, and reflect on special community service goals.

**The SFACS Informational Guidelines is originally adapted from the UT Elementary Informational Guidelines.*



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, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The implementation of MTSS has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

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

Special Education Referrals:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Lysa M. Hagan

Phone Number: 936.468.5899

Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Lysa M. Hagan

Phone Number: 936 468 5899

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](#)