

AUSTIN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



“You Matter Here”

Student Handbook

2026 – 2027 School Year

Committed to Educational Excellence
Empowering Students to Learn, Lead, and Succeed

HOME OF THE PANTHERS

138 Costello Avenue • Austin, PA 16720
(814) 647-8603 • www.austinsd.net
School Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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Alma Mater

Oh! Happy days at Austin High!
How swiftly you are passing by
You're gliding by like birds that fly
Across the sky at Austin High.

But these fair days at Austin High
Will never from our lives pass by
They'll shine as bright as stars on high
That shed their light on Austin High.

Then may God bless you, Austin High
Help you to give as days go by
A new desire to still aspire
To things yet higher, Oh Austin High.

District Key Contacts

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL
Superintendent	Dr. Kimberly Rees	krees@austinsd.net
Principal	Erika Emerick	eemerick@austinsd.net
Business Manager	Pamela Terrette	pterrette@austinsd.net
Asst. Business Manager	Brock Belkowski	bbelkowski@austinsd.net
Admin. Asst. to Superintendent	Katelyn Ditzler	kditzler@austinsd.net
School Nurse	Elena Daisley	edaisley@austinsd.net
Guidance Counselor	Carrie Burgett	cburgett@austinsd.net
Athletic Director	Angela Brewer	abrewer@austinsd.net

Board of Education

OFFICER / MEMBER	MEMBER
Jerome Sasala, President	Donald Ayers
Sarah Stafford, Vice President	Julie Jeffers
Pamela Terrette, Secretary	Alexis McKeirnan
Britta Hoffallen, Treasurer	Josh Roeske
Angela Gola	Andrew Bothell

July
17**Board Meetings**

Held on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM in the school library.
Check www.austinsd.net for meeting agendas, minutes, and board policies.

Mission & Vision Statement

Mission

Austin Area School District, with cooperation from the community, parents and students, provides a supportive environment with a variety of educational opportunities to empower each student to develop the attitude, behaviors, skills, and knowledge to become self-assured, responsible, and economically productive citizens.

Vision

The vision of the Austin Area School District is to provide students with the skills necessary to reach the mission through a dedicated focus on core academics and to attain proficiency on state or federal assessments.

VISION PILLAR	DESCRIPTION
Communication	Students will apply skills through written products incorporating expansive vocabulary in various writing processes utilizing available current technology.
Social Skills	Students will demonstrate socially acceptable citizenship skills and the ability to apply conflict resolution for interpersonal and intrapersonal situations.
Critical Thinking	Students will analyze critical educational issues in science, math, social studies, English, and the arts to develop creative projects demonstrating solid instructional preparation.
Learning Skills	Students will self-analyze their instructional tendencies with focus on developing presentations and activities to expand strengths while addressing needs.
Rigor	The District will ensure instruction is aligned to state standards with an emphasis on educational rigor to provide the highest level of instruction for students to meet proficiency requirements through graduation and beyond.



About This Handbook

This handbook summarizes our policies and procedures for the 2026–2027 school year. Since the Board may update policies during the year, some details may change after publication; when they do, the Board's official policy is the most current and accurate source. Because this handbook is online, each policy is linked to the District's policy page so you can always find the latest version. Procedures can change during the year as well, and those changes aren't reflected in Board policy — for the most up-to-date procedures, please contact your child's school or the District office. If a major procedure change occurs during the year, students and families will be notified and the handbook will be updated.



Teaching Staff

TEACHER	GRADE / ASSIGNMENT	TEACHER	GRADE / ASSIGNMENT
L. Ayers	IU 9 Teacher	J. Kinney	Science
C. Bates	3rd/4th Math	J. Lincoln	MS Sci/Math/STEM
A. Brewer	HS Science	H. Nance	Music
B. Brown	Art	C. Rugh	MS/HS Social Studies
W. Brown	5th/6th Math	J. Switzer	2nd Grade
K. Chelton	MS/HS Math	C. VanWhy	Kindergarten
R. Dynda	1st Grade	T. Wetzel	3rd/4th ELA
S. Easton	IU 9 Teacher	A. Youngfleish	5th/6th ELA
E. Fiebig	Pre-K	K. Page	Title I Paraprofessional
A. Jacobs	IU 9 Teacher	S. Lucas	Paraprofessional
R. Johnson	P.E./Health/Tech Ed		



Grading, Marking Periods & Honor Roll

END OF MARKING PERIODS	REPORT CARDS SENT HOME
Quarter 1: Oct. 30	Quarter 1: Nov. 6
Quarter 2: Jan. 19	Quarter 2: Jan. 26
Quarter 3: Mar. 24	Quarter 3: Apr. 1
Quarter 4: June 3	Quarter 4: June 10

Jr/Sr High Grading Scale

LETTER	PERCENTAGE	
A	94–100	Passing
B	86–93	Passing
C	78–85	Passing
D	70–75	Passing
F	00–69	Failing

★ DISTINGUISHED HONOR ROLL	🏆 HONOR ROLL
Combined average of 93% or above in all areas, with no grade below 86%.	Combined average of 86% or above in all areas, with no grade below 77%.



Bell Schedules

Elementary – Pre-K through 2nd Grade

MORNING BLOCK	LUNCH	RECESS	AFTERNOON BLOCK
8:30–11:00	11:00–11:30	11:30–12:00	12:00–2:55

3rd–6th Grade Enhanced Learning Academy

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30–8:45	Homeroom
8:45–10:15	ELA
10:15–11:45	Math
11:45–12:15	Lunch
12:15–12:45	Recess
12:45–1:30	WIN Time
1:30–2:15	PBL / Specials
2:15–2:55	Data Reflection and Conferencing

Jr/Sr High – 7th through 12th Grade

TIME	PERIOD
8:30–8:35	Homeroom
8:35–9:33	1st Period
9:35–10:33	2nd Period
10:35–11:33	3rd Period
11:20–11:40	CTC Lunch
11:35–12:05	Lunch
12:05–1:00	4th Period
1:02–1:57	5th Period
2:00–2:55	6th Period



Dismissal Times

Pre-K: ~2:50 PM

K–2: ~2:51 PM

3rd–5th: ~2:53 PM

6th–12th: ~2:55 PM

Pick-ups and walkers leave AFTER buses/vans have departed.



Daily Operations & Procedures

Lunchroom

The Austin Area School District maintains a closed lunch program. Students remain in the cafeteria while eating, except for those who have earned Gold Card privileges. Elementary students have a supervised recess following or prior to lunch. Any student leaving the cafeteria for any reason must get permission from the teacher on duty. No food or beverage is permitted in the lobby area during lunch.

Lockers

Lockers are provided for each secondary student to keep books and belongings. Lockers remain the property of the District. Students have no expectation of privacy over their lockers or their contents and may be searched by school representatives at any time.

Students are permitted to go to their lockers during the following times:

- During Homeroom period (with permission)
- Between classes
- End of school day

No other times will be permitted without teacher permission. No permanent stickers are allowed on lockers, inside or out. Locks are provided upon request and must be returned at the end of the school year or upon withdrawal.

**Lost or Damaged Lock Fee**

If a lock is lost or damaged, the student is responsible for a replacement fee of \$8.00.

**Locker Searches**

School authorities may search a student's locker and seize any illegal materials. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings. Student lockers remain the property of the Austin Area School District.

Student Government

The Austin Area Student Council gives students the opportunity to participate in self-government within the schools. The Student Council develops student leadership, democratic decision-making, and student voice in the realization of District goals. It is sponsored by a faculty advisor or advisors.

Textbooks & Supplies

Textbooks issued at the beginning of the school year are the property of the Austin Area School District. Students are fully responsible for the proper care of their textbooks and other District-provided materials. Report cards will not be issued until damaged or lost materials are paid for or returned.

Chromebooks

All students are issued a Chromebook to support blended learning. Students are responsible for their Chromebook physically and electronically at all times. Any damage or operating issues should be ticketed to IT and/or reported to the principal immediately.

- Students must not use the device to view or download inappropriate materials.
- All use is governed by the District's Acceptable Use Policy – 815.
- Insurance is offered at the student/guardian's expense. Information is sent home at the beginning of the school year.
- Additional copies of insurance information are available on the high school webpage.

Library

The library is open for use by all students if appropriate adult supervision is present. Library hours are posted and change each quarter based on teacher and paraprofessional availability. Students may use it during certain classes, in conjunction with assignments, and during homeroom with permission.

**Overdue Books**

No fines will be charged for overdue books.
Students with a book overdue for more than one month may not check out materials until it is returned or restitution is made.
Books not returned or paid for by the end of a marking period will result in withheld report cards.

Assemblies

Assemblies are presented for the educational entertainment of students. Students are expected to exhibit good manners during programs and will sit by homeroom in assigned areas. Disruptive students may be asked to leave and appropriate disciplinary action may be administered.

Fire & Emergency Evacuation Drills

Drills are held monthly to protect everyone in the event of a real emergency. When the fire alarm sounds, all students and teachers immediately leave the building in an orderly and systematic manner.

- Students should be as quiet as possible and not push or crowd while moving toward exits.
- After leaving the building, everyone should move at least fifty feet from the entrance.
- Teachers will direct each classroom to their assigned exit.
- In a special emergency, an announcement will be made directing faculty and students to use an alternate procedure.



Student Activities & Extracurriculars

The student activities program at Austin is varied and extensive. Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities available within the District and through co-op programs.

GENERAL ACTIVITY RULES	STUDENT EXPECTATIONS
• School activities must comply with School Board and PIAA regulations. • All attendees must exhibit good sportsmanship. • Behavior must comply with school policies; violators will be removed. • Failure to comply with expected conduct will result in suspension from activities. • Students in grades PreK–4 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. • No running in hallways; hall trips should be minimal during appropriate breaks.	• Abide by all regulations set by the school, coach, and/or advisor. • Attend all practices or meetings. • Avoid profane or abusive language during practices, meetings, or games. • Assume responsibility for all school-issued uniforms and equipment. • Maintain good sportsmanship; ensure actions reflect positively on the school.

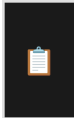
School Dances

Classes and organizations may hold dances with Superintendent/Principal approval. Requirements include:

- Four adult chaperones must be present, at least one of whom is a school official.
- A custodian must be present.
- Requests must be submitted on the proper form at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Dances are open only to Austin Area High School students in grades 7–12.
- A student may bring one guest — the proper dance form must be completed and approved by both the guest's home school and Austin Area School District in advance.
- Once a student leaves a dance, that student and their guest may not return.
- Refreshments are permitted only in designated areas.
- Sponsoring organizations are responsible for clean-up.

Extracurricular Eligibility

Students must remain academically eligible to participate in or attend extracurricular activities.



No student may participate or attend if failing two or more subjects cumulatively. Cumulative eligibility runs from the start of each grading period and is reported weekly. Co-Op Sports may have different eligibility criteria.

 17	A failing grade is 69 or lower. Ineligible students may not participate in or attend any interscholastic event, extracurricular activity, practice, sporting event, or dance during that period.
3x	Students declared ineligible three (3) consecutive times in any activity will be ineligible for that activity for the duration of the season. Coaches/advisors may apply more restrictive standards with prior approval.

Specific Activity Rules

Attendance

- All participants must be at school on time and for the full day on the day of all meetings, practices, and games.
- A student absent from school may not fully participate in any extracurricular activity without a doctor's slip. (A school-sponsored activity such as a field trip counts as attendance.)
- It is the participant's responsibility to contact the advisor or coach about any anticipated absence.

Suspension

- Any student suspended — in-school or out-of-school — is suspended from participation in any activities on the day of the suspension.

Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and/or Illegal Drugs (Including Vapes)

1ST OFFENSE	Suspension from all extracurricular participation for 14 calendar days and possible referral to law enforcement.
2ND OFFENSE	Suspension from all extracurricular participation for 30 calendar days, plus placement in a student assistance program.
3RD OFFENSE	Suspension from all extracurricular participation for one year, up to the start of the subsequent season of the originally suspended activity.

Transportation

The District assumes responsibility for student transportation to and from school for all away games. Students are required to use District-provided transportation. Only parents or guardians may transport their child home from away games. A sign-out form is provided by coaching staff at each event.

Activity Drop-Outs

Any student who drops out of an activity after two (2) weeks of participation before the end of the season/year may not join another activity that year without specific review by the coach, principal, and/or superintendent.

Career & Technical Center (CTC)

Students at Austin High School may participate in the Seneca Highlands Career Technical Center program. CTC programs are available to students in grades 10, 11, and 12. Requests for admission are made at the end of ninth grade.

	More Information For additional information about CTC programs, contact the Guidance Counselor, Carrie Burgett, at cburgett@austinsd.net .
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School Visitation Procedures

The District Superintendent or Building Principal has authority to prohibit entry to any person until proper arrangements have been made. All visitors must follow these procedures:

- For a parent/guardian or teacher-initiated conference: schedule in advance with the teacher, then enter through the secured visitors entrance and register at the office before proceeding.
- For any other purpose: arrangements must be made in advance through the main office.
- All visitors must enter through the secure visitor's entrance and register at the main office upon arrival.
- No visitor may confer with a student other than their own child without permission of the Building Principal.
- No visitor may photograph, videotape, or tape record any person, building, or conversation without prior approval of both the Building Principal and the District Superintendent.



Technology & Acceptable Use ([Policy 815](#))

Austin Area School District is 1:1 with iPads (Pre-K–1st grade) and Chromebooks (2nd–12th grade). Every classroom is also equipped with an interactive Promethean Board. Technology is a privilege, not a right — use it wisely and respectfully.

✓ ALLOWED	⚠ WITH PERMISSION	✗ NOT ALLOWED
• School-related learning • Digital textbooks & resources • Online assignments • Teacher-approved tools	• Games (teacher OK) • Social media (teacher OK) • Personal use before/after school	• Inappropriate/violent/hateful content • Cyberbullying or threatening messages • Hacking, cheating, breaking into accounts • Bypassing school internet filters • Sharing passwords • Downloading copyrighted material without permission



Consequences of Misuse

Loss of school technology privileges
 Loss of school-provided Internet access
 Disciplinary action at school
 In serious cases, referral to law enforcement

In accordance with COPPA, the District may utilize online services with students under 13 with required parental consent. A list of approved applications, software, and websites is available at www.austinsd.net/technology.

Positive Behavior & PBIS

PBIS is a national program providing a curriculum to support behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health in our school. AASD implemented this program to ensure students feel valued, connected, and supported.

PANTHER PRIDE				
P Positivity	R Respect	I Integrity	D Determination	E Engagement
Pre-K – 2nd Grade	3rd – 6th Grade		7th – 12th Grade	
Earn  Panther Paws for demonstrating PRIDE qualities.	Earn Dojo Points redeemable at the Dojo Store, which opens every 9 weeks.		Earn Panther Gold Card status with exclusive privileges.	

Panther Gold Card Privileges (Grades 7–12)

Students are recognized and rewarded for demonstrating excellence through academic achievement, strong attendance, and positive behavior. (No physical card is issued — a list is posted in prominent locations.)

 Free admission to all home athletic events	 Option to eat lunch outside in designated areas (weather permitting)	 Eligibility for special "Random" Gold Card events
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SENIOR PRIVILEGES	JUNIOR/SOPHOMORE PRIVILEGES
May leave school grounds in a vehicle during lunch and scheduled study halls with parent permission. (No transporting other students.)	May leave school grounds on foot or bicycle during lunch with parent permission.

Requirements to Maintain Panther Gold Status

	A combined average of 86% or higher in all classes, with no grade below 77%.
	No more than 4 tardies and no more than 5 absences per marking period.
	No incomplete grades.
	No detentions or suspensions within 20 days of a new marking period.
	Privileges will be revoked for the current marking period if a detention or suspension is received. Administration reserves the right to restrict privileges for safety or weather-related reasons.



Attendance Policy ([Policy 204](#))

Regular attendance is essential for the continuity of the education process. Compulsory attendance in Pennsylvania requires all children from kindergarten entry or age 6 (whichever comes first) through age 18 to attend an approved educational institution unless legally excused.

✓ EXCUSED ABSENCES	✗ UNEXCUSED ABSENCES
- Written note within 3 days stating illness - Doctor's excuse - Family emergency - Pre-arranged doctor/dentist appointment - Authorized school activities - Pre-arranged educational family vacation	- Absence with parent consent for non-excusable reasons - Leaving school during school hours without office permission - Calling home to report illness without going to the nurse/office first - Unscheduled doctor visits without a supporting note

Key Attendance Rules

- A half-day absence is counted from 11:00 AM or after.
- Written excuses must be turned in no later than three (3) school days after the student returns. Verbal confirmation does not count.
- Only ten (10) written excuses provided by a parent/guardian are allowed per school year. After 10, all absences must be covered by a licensed physician's note.
- Make-up work: A student who has been absent must complete missed work within three (3) school days and make arrangements with their teachers.

THRESHOLD	TERM	CONSEQUENCE
3+ unexcused days	Truant	School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) offered.
6+ unexcused days	Habitually Truant	Referral to attendance improvement program; possible citation filed with magisterial district judge.
10 parent notes reached	Note Limit	All future absences require a licensed physician's note to be excused.



Calling Home Without Office Permission

If a student calls home without going to the nurse or office first, and is picked up by a parent, the absence will be UNEXCUSED unless a doctor's note is provided.



Student Responsibilities & Conduct

Proper student behavior is achieved when a student develops the desire and ability to live as a responsible citizen. All student behavior is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves accordingly. Assume a rule is in effect until it is waived, altered, or repealed in writing.
- Volunteer information in matters relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- Dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health, and not to cause disruption to the educational process.
- Assist the school staff in operating a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
- Comply with Commonwealth and local laws.
- Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
- Attend school daily and be on time for all classes and other school functions.
- Make up work when absent from school.
- Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by Commonwealth and local school authorities.

Student Conduct

Students are considered to be under the jurisdiction of school authorities while in school, at school activities, and when going to and from school. All students must conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectful manner. No student has the right to interfere with the education of fellow students.

Dress Code ([Policy 221](#))

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents/guardians to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices disrupt the educational program or constitute a health or safety hazard.

Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing during physical education, technical education, extracurricular activities, field trips, or other situations requiring special attire for health or safety. The Building Principal or District Superintendent has authority to determine appropriate attire.

Electronic Devices ([Policy 237](#))

Electronic devices include all devices that can take photographs; record, play, or edit audio or video data; store, transmit, or receive calls, messages, text, data, or images; operate online applications; or provide wireless Internet access.

Permitted use locations/times:

- For educational or instructional purposes as supervised by the classroom teacher.
- Before and after school, in the cafeteria at lunchtime, in hallways during passing of classes.
- On the bus if authorized by the driver; in the library or study hall if authorized by the teacher.
- When approved by the principal for educational, safety, emergency, medical, or security purposes.

Electronic devices are PROHIBITED in locker rooms, bathrooms, health suites, and other changing areas at any time. The District is not liable for the loss, damage, or misuse of any electronic device.



Electronic Images & Photographs

Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing, or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs is strictly prohibited — whether by electronic data transfer, texting, emailing, or any other means.

Such violations may constitute a crime under state and/or federal law and may be reported to law enforcement.



Student Discipline ([Policy 218](#))

An effective educational program requires a safe and orderly environment. The Board establishes fair, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory rules regarding conduct for all students. No student will be subject to disciplinary action because of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or handicap/disability.

Disciplinary Actions

	ACTION	DESCRIPTION
1	Warning	A verbal or written notice making the student aware of poor judgment with opportunity for possible alternatives to correct the problem.
2	Detention	Assigned based on Behavior Matrix or at administrative discretion. May be lunch, recess, or after-school. Students must arrive prepared to work quietly for the full hour.
3	Suspension	In-school or out-of-school for 1–10 days. Parents are notified. Student may not participate in any school activities on the day(s) of suspension.
4	Expulsion	Exclusion for more than 10 consecutive school days for serious disciplinary issues. Student is entitled to a formal hearing before the Board with full due process rights.

Teacher Check System, Grades 3–12

Checks may be issued for disrespect, defiance, taking others' belongings, being unprepared or late to class, off-task behavior, and disruption. During the first quarter, five accumulated checks result in detention. During the second through fourth quarters, three accumulated checks result in detention.

Behavior Matrix

How to read this matrix: The consequences listed represent a progressive range of responses, not automatic penalties. The actual response is based on the severity, frequency, and circumstances of each incident. A serious first offense may result in consequences beyond a warning or teacher check, and administration may use discretion when appropriate.

LEVEL I OFFENSES

Example of Offense	Definition	Responsibility	Range of Consequences
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Disrespect to another student	Incidents of verbal abuse, minor contact with a student	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	Warning and/or teacher check; repeated behavior may result in 1-3 days detention.
Offensive language	Offensive, vulgar, obscene language (swearing)	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	Warning and/or teacher check; repeated behavior may result in 1-3 days detention.
Cafeteria Misconduct	Throwing food or other objects, removing food from the cafeteria, other disruptive behaviors	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	Warning and/or teacher check; repeated behavior may result in 1-3 days detention.
Disruptive Attire	Messages or images that express or imply obscenity, violence, drug use, alcohol use, illegal use of any other substance, sexual content or other messages or images that is offensive	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	1st offense - warning, removal of offensive clothing; 2nd offense - Detention, removal of offensive clothing; 3rd offense and/or a refusal to comply at any time - Suspension
Class Cut	Failure to attend regularly scheduled class	Professional Staff - Notify the office at the beginning of class period	Detention - 2 days for each skipped class
Cheating, Plagiarism, and other acts of academic dishonesty	The intentional use of a work of art or literature without proper citation to serve as the student's original work	Administration	No credit for work; Guidance or SAP referral; Detention - 1 Day
Public Display of Affection	Kissing, hugging or other close contact activities during school hours or activities	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	1st incident - Warning; 2nd - Detention (1 day)
Missing Detention (unexcused)	The student must notify the office of any situations affecting the date of the detention at least 24 hours prior to the detention	Administration	Detention (2 days); 1 day for original plus 1 additional day for not adhering to school rules
Computer Violation	Using another student's password, attempting to access inappropriate sites, intentional attempts to affect a computer or program	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	Detention (1 day) and Loss of privileges based on the severity of the incident (Administrative discretion)
Minor Classroom disruptions	Teachers have the discretion based upon class discipline policies to assign detention for disruptive student activities	Professional Staff - detailed report submitted to office	Warning and/or teacher check; repeated behavior may result in 1-3 days detention.

Note: The fourth Level I violation (includes all violations) will be processed as a Level II violation.

LEVEL I BUS OFFENSES

Example of Offense	Definition	Responsibility	Range of Consequences
Minor Bus Disruptions	Bus drivers have the discretion based upon class discipline policies to assign detention for disruptive student activities	Bus Driver - Detailed report submitted to office	1st Offense - Warning; 2nd Offense - Detention; 3rd Offense - Detention & loss of bus privilege for one week; 4th Offense - Suspension (1 day) & loss of bus privileges for 45 days

Throwing Objects	Throwing food or other objects in or out of the bus	Bus Driver - Detailed report submitted to office	1st Offense - Warning; 2nd Offense - Detention; 3rd Offense - Detention & loss of bus privilege for one week; 4th Offense - Suspension (1 day) & loss of bus privileges for 45 days
Offensive Language	Offensive, vulgar, obscene language (swearing)	Bus Driver - Detailed report submitted to office	1st Offense - Detention; 2nd Offense - Detention & loss of bus privilege for one week; 3rd Offense - Suspension (1 day) & loss of bus privileges for 45 days
Disrespect to another student	Incidents of verbal abuse, minor contact with a student (Bullying)	Bus Driver - Detailed report submitted to office	1st Offense - Warning; 2nd Offense - Detention; 3rd Offense - Detention & loss of bus privilege for one week; 4th Offense - Suspension (1 day) & loss of bus privileges for 45 days

LEVEL II OFFENSES (One to Three Days)

Example of Offense	Definition	Responsibility	Range of Consequences
Chronic Level I Behavior	Three previous detentions; Seven previous detentions; Eleven previous detentions	Administration	In-School Suspension (1 day); Out of School Suspension (2 days); Out of School Suspension (3 days)
Bullying as defined by Policy 249	Intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students.	Administration	Continuum of consequences as outlined by Board Policy 249
Insubordination	Direct and intentional defiance of a request by a teacher or staff	Administration	In-School Suspension (1 - 3 days)
Forgery	The intentional use of another person's signature for benefit or harm	Administration	In-School Suspension (1 - 3 days)
Leaving School Grounds without permission	The act of leaving school without notifying the office. Teachers should check attendance and call the office	Administration	In-School Suspension (1 - 3 days)
Possession of a dangerous object other than a weapon	Dangerous object: Any item not ordinarily considered a weapon but capable of causing injury when used or possessed in a threatening or unsafe manner.	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Legal action as appropriate, Possible referral to SAP
Theft, Burglary	The unauthorized possession of school or personal items belonging to another individual	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Legal action as appropriate; Possible referral to SAP
Vandalism	Destruction of personal or private property	Administration; Legal Action as appropriate	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Restitution for the replacement cost and installation, if necessary; Possible referral to SAP

Harassment	Intentional repeated physical, sexual, racial or ethnic harassment with the intention to cause harm to another	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Referral to SAP; Board Policy 103 followed if appropriate
Physical Harassment	Intentional unwanted contact with another student with intent to intimidate	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Referral to SAP; Board Policy 103 followed if appropriate
Fighting or Physical contact	The intentional contact with an individual to cause harm including striking another student after the first contact	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 5 days); Legal action as appropriate; Possible referral to SAP
Possession or use of Tobacco Products	The unauthorized possession or use of any tobacco product	Administration	Out of School Suspension (1 - 3 days); Referral to SAP; Legal action as appropriate

Note: The third offense of any Level II violation will result in a hearing before the Board for possible placement into an alternative education setting.

LEVEL III OFFENSES

Example of Offense	Definition	Responsibility	Range of Consequences
Physical contact with intent to harm another person (Assault)	Intentional acts of violence delivered with the intent to cause harm, including major fighting incidents	Administration	Out of School Suspension (4–10 days); informal hearing within 5 days; legal action as appropriate
Harassment — physical, sexual, racial, or ethnic	Intentional repeated physical, sexual, racial or ethnic harassment with the intention to cause harm to another.	Administration	Out of School Suspension (4–10 days); informal hearing within 5 days; legal action as appropriate; Board Policy 103 followed if appropriate
Theft, Burglary, Unauthorized Use	The unauthorized possession of school or personal items belonging to another individual.	Administration	Out of School Suspension (4–10 days); informal hearing within 5 days; legal action as appropriate
Possession of dangerous objects other than weapons	Dangerous object: Any item not ordinarily considered a weapon but capable of causing injury when used or possessed in a threatening or unsafe manner.	Administration	Out of School Suspension (4–10 days); informal hearing within 5 days; legal action as appropriate

Note: The third offense of any Level III violation will result in a full suspension and referral to the Superintendent for a discipline hearing.

LEVEL IV OFFENSES

Example of Offense	Responsibility	Range of Consequences
Unmodified Level II and Level III Behavior	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Extortion	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Bomb Threat	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Possession/use/transfer of explosive or incendiary devices	Administration	Referral to Superintendent

Assault and/or Battery	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Possession or sale of stolen property	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Arson	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
False Fire Alarm	Administration	Referral to Superintendent
Furnishing/selling/possession of drugs, alcohol, or other unauthorized substances	Administration	Referral to Superintendent

Note: These acts are clearly criminal and are so serious that they always require administrative action, which will result in the removal of the student from school, the intervention of legal authorities, and action by the Board of School Directors.

On and Off-Campus Jurisdiction

Policy 218 and the Code of Student Conduct apply to behavior at all times on school property, at school-sponsored activities, and while traveling to/from school. Off-campus behavior is also covered when it:

- Involves or threatens violence directed at students, staff, or the school environment.
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or school activities.
- Interferes with the rights of students or staff or the safe operation of schools.
- Involves the theft or vandalism of school property.
- Has a direct connection to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity.

Weapons ([Policy 218.1](#))

Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is strictly prohibited by law.



Weapons Are Prohibited

Weapons include any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, or any tool capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

Possession means the weapon is found on the student, in their locker, or under their control on school property, at any school function, or while traveling to/from school.

The Board SHALL expel for not less than one (1) year any student who violates this policy.

All incidents are immediately reported to law enforcement.

Possession or discharge of a firearm within 1,000 feet of school grounds is also prohibited under federal law.

Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia ([Policy 227](#))

Students are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of controlled substances during school hours, on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or while traveling to/from school.

"Controlled substances" includes illegal drugs, look-alike drugs, alcoholic beverages, anabolic steroids, drug paraphernalia, inhalants, and unauthorized prescription/OTC medications.

Violations may result in expulsion and prosecution. The Board may require drug counseling, rehabilitation, or testing as a condition of reinstatement. Required incidents will be reported to law enforcement.

Bus Conduct & Policies

Violations occurring on a school bus are subject to the same policies as if they occurred on school grounds. While the law requires the District to provide transportation, parents/guardians retain supervision responsibility until the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the day.

1

Warning and possible parental conference (in person or by phone)

2	Suspension of bus privileges — up to five days
3	Suspension from school
4	Termination of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year



Riding an Alternate Bus

All students may ride an alternate bus on a day-to-day basis ONLY with parental/guardian permission and Building Principal or District Superintendent approval based on available seating. Signed approval must be presented to the main office. Bus drivers will NOT permit students not regularly assigned to their bus to board without office approval.



Health Services



School Nurse

Elena Daisley | edaisley@austinsd.net | (814) 647-8603

A nurse is available for emergencies and first aid. If a student becomes ill or is injured, they should ask their teacher for permission to see the nurse. If the student should not remain at school, the nurse will make arrangements for them to go home. The parent/guardian will be consulted before any major treatment is arranged. In a dire emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital and family contact will continue to be attempted.

 MEDICATION RULES	 EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS
• All medications must be delivered by a parent/guardian — never send medication with a child. • No medication of ANY KIND may be given by school personnel without a doctor's written order (except inhalers and other medications allowed by PA state law). • The doctor's written order must include: child's name, medication name, dosage, frequency, times of administration, and special instructions. • In addition to the doctor's order, a written parent/guardian request must be on file. • Medication must be in the original container with the name of the medication, student, doctor, and administration directions.	• Epinephrine (EpiPen): Per PA law, emergency epinephrine may be administered to students experiencing life-threatening allergic reactions. Parents may opt out by submitting a signed opt-out form. • Naloxone (Narcan): The District stocks and will administer Naloxone for known or suspected opioid overdose emergencies for any student, staff member, or visitor.

Asthma Inhalers & Epinephrine Auto-Injectors ([Policy 210.1](#))

The Board permits students to possess and self-administer prescribed asthma inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors at school, provided that required written authorization from the parent/guardian and licensed medical provider is on file with the school nurse, and the nurse has confirmed the student's ability to self-administer.

- Students must not share, give, or sell their inhaler or auto-injector.
- Students must notify the school nurse following each use.

- Students who misuse medication or cannot demonstrate responsible self-management may lose self-carry privileges.
- Authorization must be renewed annually.

Anti-Bullying ([Policy 249](#))

Bullying / Cyberbullying ([Policy 249](#))

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. All forms of bullying are prohibited.



Definition of Bullying

An intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student, occurring in a school setting and/or outside, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of:

- Substantially interfering with a student's education
- Creating a threatening environment
- Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school

Bullying includes cyberbullying. 'School setting' includes school grounds, school vehicles, bus stops, and any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

IF YOU ARE BULLIED	CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING
• Report promptly to the building principal or any District employee. • Confidentiality of all parties will be maintained consistent with legal and investigative obligations. • No retaliation will occur against anyone who makes a good-faith report. • Complaints will be investigated promptly and corrective action taken when allegations are verified.	• Counseling within the school • Parental conference • Loss of school privileges • Transfer to another classroom or school • Exclusion from school-sponsored activities • Detention, Suspension, or Expulsion • Counseling/therapy outside of school • Referral to law enforcement officials

Unlawful Harassment ([Policy 248](#))

The Board prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment of students and third parties by any District student, staff member, contractor, vendor, or volunteer. Harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion that is severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to interfere with a student's ability to participate in the educational program — or that creates an intimidating or abusive environment — is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment is likewise prohibited.

Students who believe they have experienced unlawful harassment should report it promptly to the building principal, any District employee, or directly to the Superintendent (Compliance Officer) if the principal is the subject of the complaint. All complaints will be investigated confidentially within 15 days. No retaliation shall occur. Appeals may be submitted to the Compliance Officer within 15 days of the investigative outcome.

Student Expression / Dissemination of Materials ([Policy 220](#))

The Board recognizes students' constitutional right to freedom of expression in word, symbol, and distribution of non-school materials. Students may express themselves and share non-school materials provided that such expression does not materially disrupt the educational process, threaten harm, encourage unlawful activity, or violate the rights of others. Defamatory, obscene, vulgar, or dangerous expression is prohibited.

Students who wish to distribute non-school materials on school property must submit them to the building principal at least one (1) school day in advance. Distribution is limited to non-instructional times and designated locations. Decisions may be appealed to the Superintendent and then to the Board.

Required Annual Notices

Title I Program

At Austin Area School District, Title I is a federally funded supplemental education program used to help K–6 students meet state content and performance standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Federal funds are used to support smaller classes, hire additional teachers and assistants, and provide extra reading and math instruction using a variety of teaching methods and materials.

Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy

The Austin Area School District recognizes that parents and families are their children's first and most influential teachers, and that continued parental involvement greatly contributes to student achievement. The District, in collaboration with parents, establishes programs and practices that enhance parent involvement.

Key commitments include:

- This jointly developed written parent involvement policy is reviewed annually and distributed to parents.
- Informational meetings are held for all parents in the fall at the annual open house, with additional flexible-time meetings throughout the year.
- Parents receive assistance understanding Title I requirements, educational standards, and school assessments through annual meetings and parent-teacher conferences.
- Parents receive an explanation of the school's performance profile, forms of academic assessment, and expected proficiency levels through annual progress reports and individual reports at conference time.
- Parents are informed of and involved in their child's participation in the Title I program, including the curriculum, instructional objectives, and methods used.
- Parent recommendations are encouraged and responded to in a timely manner.
- Parents are involved with planning, review, and improvement of programs. A Title I parent survey is conducted annually.
- A jointly developed school/parent compact outlines how parents, teachers, administration, and students share responsibility for improved student achievement.
- Communication between home and school is ongoing, two-way, and meaningful.
- Parents may request information on the professional qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals.
- The elementary school collaborates with Head Start, Early Intervention, and other preschool programs to facilitate school transition.

Notice of Nondiscrimination – Title IX / Section 504 / Title II

The Austin Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, ancestry, disability, or any other legally protected classification in its educational programs, activities, admission, or employment, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. The District provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, in the District's education programs and activities. This prohibition applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission or employment.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX, questions about this notice, or reports of sex discrimination may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.



Civil Rights Coordinators

Title IX Coordinator — Pam Terrette, Business Manager

138 Costello Avenue, Austin, PA 16720 · 814-647-8603 · pterrette@austinsd.net

Section 504 / ADA Coordinator — Erika Emerick, Principal

138 Costello Avenue, Austin, PA 16720 · 814-647-8603 · eeemerick@austinsd.net

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights — Philadelphia Office

The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107

Phone: 215-656-8541 · TDD: 800-877-8339 · Fax: 215-656-8605 · Email:

OCR.Philadelphia@ed.gov

Accessibility and accommodations. Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or an accessible format to participate in District programs, meetings, or events — such as an interpreter, assistive listening, or materials in an alternate format — may contact the Section 504 / ADA Coordinator, Erika Emerick, at 814-647-8603 or eeemerick@austinsd.net. Please make requests as far in advance as possible.

Reporting Sex Discrimination or Sexual Harassment (Title IX)

Any person may report sex discrimination or sexual harassment — including a student, parent or guardian, employee, or any other individual — whether or not the person reporting is the one alleged to have experienced the conduct. Reports may be made to the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, by phone, or by email at any time, or to any District employee.

What this means for families. Because Austin Area School District is a K–12 school, a report made to any District employee places the District on notice and triggers its obligation to respond. Employees who receive such a report are required to promptly notify the Title IX Coordinator.

What happens next. The Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the person alleged to have experienced the conduct to discuss the availability of supportive measures, explain the process for filing a formal complaint, and consider that person's wishes.

Filing a formal complaint. A formal complaint may be filed by the complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator, and the District will follow the grievance process required by federal regulations. The District presumes that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination is made at the conclusion of that process.

No retaliation. The District prohibits retaliation against any person who reports sex discrimination, files a complaint, or participates in any part of a Title IX process.

Full policy and materials. The District's complete Title IX grievance process ([Policy 103](#) and its Attachment 3) and its Unlawful Harassment policy (Policy 248), along with the Title IX training materials for the Coordinator, investigators, and decision-makers, are available on the District website at <https://policymain.org/austin-area-school-district/policies> and in the main office at 138 Costello Avenue, Austin, PA 16720.

Section 504 / Protected Handicapped Students – Annual Notice

As required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and 22 Pa. Code Chapter 15, the Austin Area School District does not discriminate against students with disabilities and is committed to identifying, evaluating, and providing appropriate services to all protected handicapped students. A "protected handicapped student" is a student of school age who has a physical or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Parents/guardians have the right to:

- Request an evaluation of their child.
- Review relevant school records.
- Receive notice of any proposed actions related to their child's educational program.
- Request an impartial hearing if they disagree with the District's decisions.

For more information or to request services, contact the building principal or the Section 504 / ADA Coordinator, Erika Emerick, Principal, at 814-647-8603 (eemerick@austinsd.net).

Education for Students Experiencing Homelessness (McKinney-Vento) ([Policy 251](#))

The Austin Area School District ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education provided to all students. Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, "homeless" includes students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence — for example, those sharing housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship; living in motels, shelters, or transitional housing; living in cars, parks, or other inadequate accommodations; or unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian.

Eligible students have the right to immediate enrollment without the records typically required (such as proof of residency, immunization or school records, or birth certificate); to remain in their school of origin when in their best interest; to transportation to and from the school of origin; and to receive services comparable to those offered other students, including free school meals.

Families or youth who believe they may qualify should contact the District's McKinney-Vento Liaison: **Carrie Burgett**, 138 Costello Avenue, Austin, PA 16720 · 814-647-8603 · cburgett@austinsd.net.

Notice of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students (age 18+) certain rights regarding education records:

1	Right to inspect and review education records within 45 days of a written request to the school principal.
2	Right to request amendment of records believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of privacy rights. Submit in writing to the principal identifying the record and reason. If denied, you will be notified of your right to a formal hearing.
3	Right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information, except where FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent (e.g., to school officials with a legitimate educational interest).
4	Right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education: Family Policy Compliance Office, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202.



Directory Information

The District may disclose certain 'directory information' (name, address, phone, dates of attendance, grade level, activities, awards) without prior consent UNLESS a parent/guardian submits a written request to the principal to withhold it.

If you wish to restrict release of your child's directory information, submit a written request to the building principal within 15 days of the start of the school year.

Military Recruiter and Higher Education Access to Student Information. Separate from the directory information provisions above, federal law (20 U.S.C. § 7908) requires the District, upon request, to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher education with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of secondary students, unless the parent/guardian — or the student, if 18 or older — requests that this information not be released without prior written consent. A parent/guardian or eligible student may opt out of the release of this information to military recruiters and/or institutions of higher education by submitting a written request to the Building Principal. This opt-out is separate from, and in addition to, any request to withhold directory information generally; opting out of one does not automatically opt out of the other.

Notice of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) gives parents/guardians — and students who are 18 or older — rights regarding surveys, the collection of student information for marketing, and certain physical examinations:

- 1. Consent** is required before a student takes a survey funded in whole or part by the U.S. Department of Education that asks about protected topics: political beliefs; mental or psychological problems; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of close family members; privileged relationships (e.g., with lawyers, physicians, or clergy); religious beliefs; or income.
- 2. Opt-out** rights apply to any other survey on those protected topics, any non-emergency invasive physical examination required as a condition of attendance, and any collection of a student's personal information for marketing or sale.
- 3. Inspection** rights allow parents/guardians, upon written request, to review any such survey, any instrument used to collect information for marketing, and related instructional materials before use.

The District will notify parents/guardians of these rights at the start of each school year and will give advance notice of the approximate dates of any protected survey or activity, with an opportunity to opt out. Under Pennsylvania law, parents/guardians retain their rights to notice and inspection even after a student turns 18.

See Board [Policy 235.1](#) (Surveys) for details. Complaints may be filed with the Student Privacy Policy Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202.



Need Help Finding a Policy?

Contact the main office at (814) 647-8603 or visit www.austinsd.net

Full board policies are available at <https://policymain.org/austin-area-school-district/policies>.