



NORTHSTAR
SCHOOL

Leading the Way in Education

**HANDBOOK FOR
PARENTS/GUARDIANS
AND STUDENTS**

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**RESPECT THE PAST, EMBRACE THE
PRESENT, CREATE THE FUTURE**

[updated 8/2024]

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THE NORTHSTAR MISSION

The mission of Northstar School is to provide a unique educational experience focused on equipping students with a superior skill set and collection of real-world experiences, resulting in young adults capable of successfully leading in a global marketplace where the velocity of change is ever increasing. The core curriculum is college preparatory, with a focus on science, engineering, and fine arts blended with local and international life application opportunities, the perpetuation of Texas culture and history, and commitment to community and environmental responsibilities. There will be provisions for enrichment through educational outreach programs as well.

THE NORTHSTAR CONCEPT

Northstar School has been founded to create a specifically optimized learning environment, based on best-practice examples drawn from research and educational facilities developed around the world, in order to create a place where children entering middle school and progressing to high school can maximize their individual talents, exposure to knowledge, and opportunities to gain real-world experience.

The Northstar approach blends traditional modes of instruction (classroom lectures) with specific study programs optimized and carried out by individual students, with assistance and support by their teachers. The physical facility is optimized to support this type of learning environment.

PARENT/GUARDIAN/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents/guardians are highly involved in the education of their children at Northstar School. Our philosophy envisions the family and community as integral to the success of our students. Students are involved in programs within the community that build on their strengths and allow them to expand their talents while learning new information. Northstar students are similarly involved with local universities and businesses to enhance their education. Finally, Northstar students are linked to Arlington's sister city, Bad Königshofen in Germany, and may participate in educational settings with those students.

Students at Northstar are required to complete community service commitments each year as part of their education curriculum. This service is documented by and for the students and will be filed within their education records at Northstar School.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum offered at Northstar is the classical/integrated approach to learning. The student's studies include the classics such as Latin and history components that are in turn supported within the math and science areas, thus offering solid background fundamentals. Within this curriculum, however, is the ever-present evolving world that we live in. The students are required to relate their studies to the real world. The science curriculum focuses on hands-on learning and partnership with area universities and corporations. In addition, there are other professional contacts that will be involved in all of our programs. This curriculum is rich with real-world learning. Often students present projects that integrate their studies throughout the semester.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Northstar's learning environment favors various learning styles. Group work, individual work, research teams, and science teams promote a real-world environment allowing students to flourish. The learning environment at Northstar also allows students to build on their strengths and provides an atmosphere of respect and support for students, teachers, and parents/guardians. Northstar offers 7th–12th grade curricula. **Northstar School is accredited by Cognia, formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AdvancED.**

APPLICATION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Students are admitted to Northstar School on a rolling basis. Applicants for enrollment will provide recent assessment information and complete the application forms provided by the school. The admissions committee then reviews the student's information. Admission is based on the following: student interview, student assessment information, teacher recommendations, consensus of the Admissions Committee, and class space availability.

After review by the admissions committee, parents/guardians will be notified by letter regarding the status of the student's acceptance at Northstar School.

The office will maintain a personal file on each student accepted into the program. According to the laws of the State of Texas, all information provided to the school must remain current. Please continue to update the student's information by notifying the office of any changes in the original information and/or updating Sycamore.

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

Northstar is pleased to offer a generous scholarship program to our current and future students. An application for financial assistance through this program is available through the school office. The Scholarship Committee reviews each completed application and makes a recommendation to the Board for action. The review process may take up to two months from the time of application.

In the majority of cases the scholarship program covers tuition only. Other fees associated with the academic program are typically not included and must therefore be paid by the family directly. Northstar School has been able to provide numerous scholarships based on additional fundraising supported by the families of the school. If a student is awarded a scholarship, there is an expectation that his or her family would in turn support the fundraising program and service to the school through active participation.

In addition, students in the scholarship program are expected to perform academically by maintaining at least a B- grade point average on an annual basis. We understand that there may be challenging situations in the family and for the student that from time to time might make this requirement difficult. We also expect that our scholarship students will be positive role models and ambassadors of Northstar School. Northstar is committed to working with our scholarship students, as we are for each and every student, to make them successful and this goal obtainable.

SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

School fundraising is a part of attending any school. Parent/guardian participation school fundraisers and events are expected each school year. We ask all students and families to support senior fundraising efforts. The duration of a specific fundraiser may vary and/or include multiple dates. The school administration recognizes that some parents/guardians or families may choose to make a monetary contribution in lieu of actual fundraisers, and this will be considered during the planning of the events for the school year. It is the goal of the administration to outline these potential fundraisers, timing, and requirements early to allow for adequate family planning and discussions. The Northstar Parent Organization (NPO) will coordinate many of these activities.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Northstar campus hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. Students not picked up by 6:00 pm will be subject to additional extended care fees. Students are to be in their seats at 8:30 am ready to begin the day. The academic school day ends at 4:30 pm.

COUNSELOR

Northstar School has access to a counselor to work with our students when needed.

TESTING

Northstar students will be assessed throughout the year using standardized tests including PSAT, SAT, Pre-ACT, ACT, and Iowa Assessment programs. Parents/guardians will be notified when the results are available and a conference will be set up at each family's request.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Northstar School operates on a quarter (nine-week) system.

Parents/guardians will receive a progress report for their student approximately every 5 weeks and a report card approximately one week after the completion of a quarter. Students and parents can always log in to Sycamore to see recent grades and assignments.

Parent/guardian conferences will be held as needed or requested.

ATTENDANCE & TARDY POLICY

Each day in the classroom is vital to a student's education. The intimate, active learning environment provided by instructors in a Northstar classroom cannot be duplicated or replaced simply by doing readings or completing assignments outside of school. For this reason, the Northstar administration strongly encourages students to attend every class every day. Absences are classified as "planned" (those known about in advance) or "unplanned" (in the event of an emergency or illness).

School authorities recognize that various circumstances arise that may necessitate absences from school. Such circumstances include but are not limited to health-related absences, medical and dental appointments, religious holidays, family emergencies, school-related athletic or special events, college visits, and family vacations. Please note that the published school calendar provides a number of holidays that may be referenced when planning family trips or vacations. In addition, Northstar School encourages students and parents/guardians to schedule medical and dental appointments AFTER school hours whenever possible.

Planned Absences: The student or parent/guardian should notify the Front Office as soon as possible about an impending planned absence. Timely notification allows a student sufficient time to communicate with all teachers and gather assignments he/she will miss. Failure to complete missed assignments, per the instructions of the teachers, will result in grade penalties, up to and including zeros.

Unplanned Absences: The student or parent/guardian should notify the Front Office as soon as they know of a student's unexpected or unplanned absence. Students and/or parents may email teachers to request missed assignments. Students should check their folders with their names in the file crate under the sign-out sheet in the front hallway upon returning to campus for any missed handouts/assignments. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a dialogue with his/her teachers about missing assignments.

School-Related Absences: The nature of Northstar School is such that there are numerous occasions when students are excused from academic classes for field trips, sporting events, or other school-related special events. While teachers and administration communicate with each other about such events, it remains the student's responsibility to remind teachers of an impending school-related absence, secure information about missed assignments, and complete it in a timely manner.

Tardies: Northstar students are expected to be seated in Leadership at 8:30 am, at which time attendance will be taken. Daily attendance records are maintained by the Front Office. Students arriving after 9:00 am must first check-in with the Front Office before going to their classes. Students who accrue eight (8) or more tardies within a four-week (or half-quarter) period will not be eligible for the forthcoming Gator Celebration, which in turn affects a student's eligibility for National Honor/Junior Honor Society. Students who accrue ten (10) or more tardies over the course of the school year will not be eligible for a Perfect Attendance Award.

Early Dismissals: Students leaving school early should provide an email from a parent/guardian to the Front Office at the beginning of the day or have the parent/guardian call the Front Office to notify administration of an early dismissal. The student is responsible for any missed

assignments (just as if he/she were absent) and must notify the Front Office before leaving for the day.

Signing Out: Students are required to sign out each day upon leaving campus, using the form on the clipboard by the front door. Signing out is required whether students are dismissed early or at the regular school dismissal time (4:30 pm). This procedure is essential for tracking which students are on campus at any given time on any given day.

Excessive Absences: If a student accrues more than ten (10) planned or unplanned absences and/or accrues five (5) planned or unplanned absences when projects are due and/or exams given, the Northstar administration may initiate a conference with the student and his or her parents/guardians. Classes that earn pass-fail (P/F) grades require 70% attendance to earn a passing grade. Documentation is required for lengthy, illness-related absences. Unless preapproved or documented, and barring other extenuating circumstances, excessive absences may result in grade penalties for the class participation portion, daily and/or homework portion of the class grade.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework assignments will not be given over holidays or weekends. For example, teachers may not assign something on a Friday and have it due the following Monday. Assignments may, however, be given on a Thursday and due the following Monday or given on a Friday and due the following Tuesday, so long as the homework does not require “weekend time” to complete.

All homework assignments will be given so that there is sufficient time to complete them without using valuable family time.

Only the core classes (English, History, Science, and Math) may assign homework in the traditional sense. Non-core classes are graded, and students may still have assignments, quizzes, and projects to complete. Teachers will give such assignments with sufficient time allowed for students to complete them during class time. If a student misuses his or her time during class, however, s/he may need to bring a non-core class assignment home.

GRADING POLICIES

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are responsible for getting their make-up work before a planned absence or when they return to school from an unplanned absence. There will be one day allowed for make-up work (for each day of absence) with no grading penalties applied.

LATE WORK

Students are expected to turn in ALL assignments in ALL classes ON TIME. “On time” means precisely when and how the teacher asks for it. In other words, if a student comes to class with a paper completed on a flash drive and the teacher required the paper to be turned in as a hard copy, that assignment is LATE and may be subject to a grading penalty at the teacher’s discretion.

If an assignment is not turned in by the due date, students have one week to turn the late assignment in for credit. During the one-week grace period:

- the highest possible grade for 7th/8th grades is an 80 (B-)
- the highest possible grade for 9th/10th grades is a 70 (C-)
- the highest possible grade for 11th/12th grades is a 50 (F)

After one week, high school students must still complete the assignment for the learning benefit it provides, but **the grade will be a zero (0)**. **Middle school students can receive up to a grade of a 50 (F) if the completed assignment is turned in before the end of the quarter..**

Instructors will inform students and parents via email of missing work.

If there are extenuating circumstances, the student is expected to take the initiative to conference with the teacher before class begins and in as far advance as possible.

GPA WEIGHTING

Students who take classes at the Honors level have .5 points added to their GPA. Students who take classes at the Advanced level have 1.0 points added to their GPA. Students who take Northstar approved dual-credit courses have 1.0 points added to their GPA.

OTHER GRADING POLICIES

Teachers will take a minimum of one grade per week per class, in both core and non-core classes. In core classes, exams may be worth no more than 50% of the final grade. If exams are weighted that heavily, there will be a minimum of three exams per quarter.

All Northstar teachers are required to follow the Homework and Grading Policies outlined above. Beyond that, all such policies are subject to teachers’ discretion and will be laid out in their syllabi and discussed with students at the beginning of the year.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The curriculum at Northstar School fosters both personal and intellectual development. Consistent with the Student Code of Behavior (see pages 21-22), students are taught and encouraged to behave with integrity in all areas of their life, including academics. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable and may involve the following:

Copying – using another student’s work to complete a test, quiz, assignment, or project OR allowing another student to use your work for that purpose

Cheating – any act of deception that allows a student to gain (or attempt to gain) an unfair academic advantage on a test, quiz, assignment, or project

Plagiarism – the use of another’s words or ideas in writing (whether word-for-word copying OR paraphrasing) without properly citing the source of the words or ideas - including the use of generative AI software

Northstar School is a safe environment for students to make mistakes and learn from them. We recognize that young people sometimes make poor judgments but we believe they grow through the process of resolution. Students must be taught the seriousness of such offenses. Those caught copying, cheating, or plagiarizing their work will be called into the office and, following an investigation by Administration, will face the following consequences:

1. The grade for the assignment will be recorded as a zero (0) in Sycamore.
2. The student will receive a full letter grade deduction on his/her Citizenship grade.
3. The student’s parents/guardians will be notified.
4. The student will not attend the next Gator Celebration.
5. If the student is not yet a member of the National Honor Society or National Junior Honor Society, he/she will be ineligible for selection during that school year.
6. If the student is a member of the National Honor Society, he or she will be dismissed per the “one strike” policy discussed on page 21 of the handbook. If the student is a member of the National Junior Honor Society, and it is his or her *first* offense, he or she will be placed on probation. If the student is a member of the National Junior Honor Society and it is his or her *second* offense, he or she will be dismissed per the “two strike” policy discussed on page 21 of the handbook.
7. The student’s eligibility for school leadership positions and graduate honor positions will be determined as consistent with pages 21-22 of the Student Code of Behavior. Any decisions made in this context will be documented and the parents/guardians notified.

Additional violations of the academic integrity policy as outlined above may result in further and more serious disciplinary actions.

ACADEMIC POLICY FOR FAILING GRADES

If a student receives a failing grade (anything below a 70) in two or more core classes, the following action(s) will be taken:

Student Receives Failing Grades in a Nine-Week Period

1. Student will receive a formal academic warning.
2. If the student is attending on a scholarship, the parents/guardians will be notified of placement on scholarship probation.
3. The administration will set up an academic plan for each failing student, covering each class in which he/she has received a failing grade.
4. TAPPS regulations state that if a student is failing 2 or more classes, s/he is ineligible to compete for two weeks. After the two weeks are up, eligibility is reviewed weekly.
5. Student may be ineligible to participate in some or all extracurricular activities.

Student Receives Failing Grades in a Second Nine-Week Period

1. Student is placed on academic probation and his/her academic plan is reviewed.
2. Scholarship withdrawn.

Student Receives Failing Grades in a Third Nine-Week Period

1. A list of academic requirements will be given to each student who is still failing after 3 grading periods.
2. The student will not be allowed to re-enroll at Northstar School unless these requirements have been fulfilled by a specified date.

CONFERENCE FLOW CHART

Parents/guardians requesting a conference should **always try first to resolve the issue with the teacher involved**. If this does not produce results, the following steps will be followed:

1. Parents/guardians meet with the teacher. Student may or may not attend.
2. Parents/guardians and teacher meet with Administrator(s). Student may or may not attend.
3. Involved parties meet with the Board of Directors. Student may or may not attend.

HONOR POSITION QUALIFICATIONS

The requirements for the two highest Northstar School honor positions of Valedictorian and Salutatorian are time and coursework accomplished at Northstar, minimum qualifying GPA, full-time enrollment, and entry to graduating class four years prior to graduation. The qualification requires four years of high school attendance. Of students who meet all of these qualifications, the highest two GPAs will be granted the honor of Valedictorian and Salutatorian respectively.

When calculating graduate honors, Northstar employs the Significant Difference Method. Students who have GPAs within .09 of each other are considered the same rank and will receive the same honor (i.e. Co-Valedictorians and/or Co-Salutatorians). If there are no qualifying students for one or both of these positions then a second tier of requirements is invoked. Tier Two requirements reduce the attendance requirement first to three years enrollment, then to two, and finally to one.

Violations of Northstar's Student Code of Behavior (see page 20) may result in a student's disqualification from an honor position. To be considered for graduate honor positions, students must actively engage, participate in school activities, and have good attendance.

All Cumulative GPA's for Latin Honors are rounded to 2 decimal places, therefore, the criteria for Graduate Honor Status are as follows:

Latin Honors from Cumulative GPA

Summa Cum Laude/with Highest Distinction: 4.0 and higher (gold cord)

Magna Cum Laude/with Great Distinction: 3.745 to 3.994 (silver cord)

Cum Laude, with Distinction: 3.495 to 3.744 (green cord)

SECURITY PROCEDURES

For their own safety, no student will be dismissed to anyone who has not been cleared by parents/guardians. If there is an emergency, parents/guardians are requested to call Northstar with notification. The parents/guardians will be notified in any case, to verify arrangements. Each person must be prepared to show a picture ID when picking up a student.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to keep personal information updated in Sycamore and to notify school personnel of emergency and personal information changes.

Northstar School will not release any personal information to outside sources including other parents/guardians and students.

Often, there are opportunities for student activities to appear in the media; if you do not wish your child to participate, please indicate that on the form at the end of this handbook when you return it to the Northstar office. Failure to return the handbook signature page will be interpreted as consent.

Northstar administration and faculty follow a Campus Safety Plan. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called if necessary and parents/guardians will be notified of the situation.

UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

Uniform pieces (formal, informal, and PE wear) can be purchased through the official uniform provider of Northstar School. Information about how and where to purchase will be disseminated each summer.

The purpose of the Northstar Dress Code is to create some level of standardization while still allowing for comfort and individual expression and creativity. The goal is to teach students how to dress and present appropriately for a school and/or professional environment. For example, it may not be professional or appropriate to attend a college interview or regional scholastic competition with a red mohawk. We want our students to learn that there is a time and place for everything.

Students are expected to arrive at school in their uniform ready to go to class. Any exceptions to this rule need to be addressed with a school administrator on an individual basis in advance. The following describes the acceptable details for dress during the school day and school functions for all Northstar students.

Daily Uniform

Top: solid-colored collared shirt (e.g., polo or oxford)

Bottom: solid khaki or navy bottoms (pants, shorts, skorts, skirts, or capri pants)

- no black bottoms, no denim, no patterns
- students may opt to wear solid-colored leggings or modesty shorts under a skirt - the length of skirts and shorts must be school-appropriate (buttocks cannot be at risk of exposure whether standing, sitting, bending over); school administration has final discretion over what constitutes appropriate length

Shoes: low-profile athletic shoes, loafers, or boots; no open-toed shoes

Jacket: Northstar-logoed black/blue fleece jacket, weather proof jacket, cardigan sweater, or performance wear or Northstar Letterman's Jacket

Students are also required to have a royal blue logoed Northstar polo for special events.

Formal Uniform

- *For All Students:* Northstar blazer with logo, plaid skirt or khaki dress pants, button-down white shirt or blouse (long or short sleeve), approved tie/bowtie
- *With Plaid Skirt:* white or navy tights, bobby socks, or knee socks
- *With Khaki Dress Pants:* dark-colored belt, appropriate socks for dress shoes
- *Shoes:* dark, close-toed, polishable, hard-soled dress shoes (no athletic shoes); heel limit is 2"

PE/Gym Clothes

- *Top:* blue logoed Northstar PE t-shirt
- *Bottom:* logoed blue shorts or Northstar sweatpants
- *Shoes:* athletic shoes

Free Dress Day

- Clothing must be daytime and school-appropriate (no pajamas).
- No offensive t-shirts, no bare midriffs, no low-cut tops, no low-rise pants.
- If leggings are worn, the buttocks must be covered by additional clothing pieces.

- The length of skirts and shorts must be school-appropriate (buttocks cannot be at risk of exposure whether standing, sitting, bending over). School administration has final discretion over what constitutes appropriate length.
- No spaghetti straps or tank tops (shells are acceptable if straps are 2” wide).
- *Spirit Day(s)*: Students may wear Northstar t-shirts, hoodies, or sweatshirts with uniform bottoms

Presentation Criteria

- All parts of the daily uniform MUST be worn underneath the black fleece outerwear.
- Besides pierced ears, no other pierced jewelry is permissible except on Free-Dress Days or special event days as determined by the administration. No gauges permitted at any time.
- No hats of any kind are permissible except for Free-Dress Days and special events as indicated by the administration.
- No visible tattoos.
- Facial hair is acceptable if kept trim and tidy to maintain a school appropriate and professional look.

A lack of compliance in this policy will affect a student’s citizenship grade and may result in the loss of special free dress day. If a student is not in uniform, he or she may be offered a clean, correct piece of uniform to wear. Otherwise, parents/guardians will be contacted to bring appropriate clothing

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOR

The goal of this behavior plan is to provide the excellent educational climate every Northstar student deserves: a learning environment characterized by *respect*, *compassion*, and *high expectations* for behavior and achievement.

EXPECTATIONS

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE RESPECTFUL OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AT ALL TIMES.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR EACH SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL EVENT.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO TURN IN ASSIGNED WORK ON TIME.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ASK QUESTIONS IF THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE HONEST WITH THEIR SCHOOL WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE PREPARED FOR CLASS.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ON TIME FOR THE SCHOOL DAY AND EACH CLASS.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ACT RESPONSIBLY TOWARD THE SCHOOL FACILITY AND GROUNDS.

NORTHSTAR STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ACT RESPONSIBLY AND RESPECTFULLY WHEN WORKING AT OR VISITING OTHER SCHOOLS OR FACILITIES.

Positive Recognition/Rewards for Following the Northstar Code of Conduct:

- A great education!
- Gator Points to be used for coupons and Gator Celebrations
- Praise: positive notes, phone calls to parents, etc.
- Free time, prizes, treats
- Monthly Gator Celebrations!
- Special privileges

Consequences of Violation of the Northstar Code of Conduct/Inappropriate Behavior:

- Verbal/non-verbal reminders and redirection
- Signature in Sycamore; citizenship grade deduction
- Dismissal from class (office visit) to eliminate classroom disruption, resulting in a written warning
- Following a written warning, a parent/admin or teacher conference, including, but not limited to on or off campus suspension
- Isolated lunch time; loss of privileges; phone call to parents
- On or off-campus suspension
- Expulsion from Northstar School

Citizenship Grade Consequences:

- Points will be deducted for each behavior signature in Sycamore
- More points will be deducted for more serious infractions (i.e. destruction of property, removal from class, blatant disrespect, harassing behavior such as bullying, hateful speech, refusal to work, cheating, etc.)



**We believe and trust in our Northstar students!
We know you are highly capable.
We want your day to be productive, safe, and enjoyable.
We will listen to you. We care about you.
You are special to us!**

HONOR SOCIETY SELECTION CRITERIA

Each spring the Faculty Council for the National Honor Society (NHS) and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) determines which students are eligible for induction, relying in part on the Student Activity Information Form (SAIF), which all students are required to fill out each year. In addition, the Faculty Council reviews the activities and qualifications of current members to ensure they are meeting their member obligations, as outlined below.

Member Obligations:

- 1) Maintain the standards of scholarship, service, leadership, and character as laid out in Article IV, Section 5 of the by-laws.
- 2) Pay the annual dues of \$20.00 in a timely manner.
- 3) Attend all chapter meetings unless excused prior to the event.
- 4) Complete at least one individual service project and participate in all planned chapter service projects unless excused prior to the event.
- 5) Attend and participate in the induction ceremony for new members.
- 6) Turn in a completed, signed SAIF by the deadline set by the Northstar Administration.
- 7) Set an example of scholarship, leadership, character and service for others to follow.

Should a current member fall short of one or more of the standards, he or she will be issued a letter of probation detailing how the deficiency can be corrected and the amount of time allotted to do so. Please see the NHS or NJHS by-laws (available from the Chapter Advisor) for further information.

There is a “one-strike” policy for members of the NHS who are caught cheating and a “two strike” policy for members of the NJHS. Any member caught cheating will be called upon to explain their actions and may be disciplined or dismissed following a vote by the Faculty Council. As outlined in the by-laws, there is a process in place should the member wish to appeal the Council’s decision. Students who are not members of the NHS or NJHS and are caught cheating are disqualified from selection for the school year in which the cheating offense occurred. Additionally, students will not be eligible for selection if they fail to submit a fully completed and signed SAIF by the specified deadline.

For new members, students must first meet the scholarship requirement (a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA). The Faculty Council then evaluates the student holistically, based on character, leadership, citizenship, and service. Selection criteria for character, leadership, and service are as follows:

Character

The Six Pillars of Character as defined by the Character Counts Coalition (of which the NHS is a member) are respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Northstar School’s curriculum includes a “Citizenship” grade that incorporates many of these characteristics.

HONOR SOCIETY SELECTION CRITERIA (CONT.)

To be considered for selection the candidate must have a minimum Citizenship grade of 93 (A). In addition, the candidate cannot have missed more than two Gator Celebrations during the previous calendar year (defined as the spring of the last school year and the fall of the new school year) nor have any pending criminal or civil disciplinary actions.

Leadership

Leadership is a key component for membership selection. For the National Honor Society, the successful candidate will have held at least two (2) leadership positions at school or in the community OR be an established class leader in the estimation of the Northstar faculty. For the National Junior Honor Society, the successful candidate will have held at least one (1) leadership position at school or in the community OR be an established class leader.

In either case, leadership shall not be interpreted solely on the grounds of holding elective office or other traditional leadership positions. If no elective office is held, the Faculty Council may consider the following list of leadership qualities in order to determine eligibility as well as the student's own understanding of their leadership capabilities documented on the SAIF.

The student who demonstrates leadership is resourceful in proposing new solutions to problems, applying principles, and making constructive suggestions; demonstrates initiative in promoting school activities; exercises a positive influence on peers in upholding school ideals; contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school; is able to delegate responsibilities; exemplifies positive attitudes; inspires positive behavior in others; demonstrates academic initiative; is thorough and dependable in any responsibility accepted; is willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal school attitude.

Service

Service is generally considered to be those activities undertaken by the student, which are done with or on behalf of others without any direct financial or material compensation to the individual performing the service. In considering service, the Faculty Council shall consider the contributions the candidate has made to the school, classmates, and community, as well as the student's attitude toward service. Successful candidates will have completed no less than thirty (30) documented hours of community service per calendar year. For students new to Northstar, the requirement shall be reduced to fifteen (15) documented hours of service. The Faculty Council may require verification of service hours completed outside the purview of Northstar School.

Meeting the minimum eligibility requirements outlined above does not guarantee selection to the National Honor Society or National Junior Honor Society.

GATOR CELEBRATION POLICY

The purpose of Gator Celebrations is to reward and celebrate students who are “taking care of business” and behaving as good citizens of the Northstar community. Attendance at Gator Celebration is NOT contingent upon academic grades. Rather, it is connected to whether or not students do what is expected of them on a day-to-day basis (showing up on time to school, turning in all assignments when they are due, and making good behavior choices).

The school year is divided into four nine-week quarters. There are two Gator Celebrations each quarter (for a total of eight Gator celebrations per year). The locations and activities for Gator Celebrations are not announced to students or parents in advance so that we may surprise the eligible students.

On a Gator Celebration day, we gather those students who have earned the right to attend and take them somewhere fun for a couple of hours. Students who stay behind are not punished. They use that time to get caught up on missing work, engage in academic enrichment activities, and help out around the school.

Eligibility

First, we look at **tardiness**:

- students are eligible to attend Gator Celebration if they have been tardy five or less times during a half-quarter period
- if a student has been tardy six or seven times, he or she may use Gator Points to “buy off” one or two tardies in order to become eligible
- if a student has been tardy seven or more times in a half-quarter period, he or she will not be eligible to attend Gator Celebration

Second, we look at **discipline**:

- students are eligible to attend Gator Celebration if they have been signed 5 times or less during a half-quarter period. In addition, students are only eligible to attend Gator Celebration if they are not failing Citizenship during a half-quarter period
- if a student has been signed six or seven times, he or she may use Gator Points to “buy off” one or two signs in order to get down to become eligible
- if a student has been signed seven or more times in a half-quarter period, he or she will not be eligible to attend Gator Celebration
- students who engage in even one episode of serious disciplinary behavior during a half quarter period (such as destruction of property, removal from class, blatant disrespect, harassing behavior such as bullying, hateful speech, refusal to work, cheating, etc.) will not attend Gator Celebration

Third, we look at **missing work**:

- students may attend Gator Celebration if all of their missing work is turned in
- students are responsible for speaking with their teachers to determine whether they have missing work, but a week before each Gator Celebration we encourage students to get up to date by reminding them to check their missing assignments according to their Sycamore account
- students must turn in any missing work by the Friday before the forthcoming Gator Celebration (roughly one week in advance); the deadline to submit missing work is 4:30 pm.

Students' attendance at Gator Celebrations is tied to their eligibility for selection to the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society. Potential candidates (and current members) may not miss more than TWO Gator Celebrations in a calendar year, defined as the spring of the last school year and the fall of the new school year.

Missing three or more Gator Celebrations will prevent selection to the Honor Society, while current members who miss three or more may be placed on probation. If you have any questions about Gator Celebrations, please contact the Administration.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

1. The school phone may be used for calls to parents (with teacher permission) or when parents have messages for the students.
2. Electronic devices must be put away at the beginning of class and may not be used during class without teacher permission.
3. No headphones or earbuds allowed during class without teacher permission. They may only be used before school, during breaks, at lunch, and after school.
4. When headphones/earbuds have been specifically allowed, only one earbud may be used between the hours of 8:30 and 4:30.

If a student has not followed instructions concerning the electronics policy, the item may be confiscated by a teacher or administrator and will be returned to the parent or the student at the end of the school day. The student also loses points off his or her citizenship grade.

If a student continually violates this policy (that is, violates it three or more times), the student will receive lunch detention. If violations continue, the student may lose the privilege of having electronics at school.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

First and foremost, students are encouraged to always exercise the utmost caution when participating in any form of social media or online communications, both within the Northstar School community and beyond. Appropriate use of social media is taught yearly in our Leadership Development curriculum.

Students who participate in online interactions must remember that their posts reflect on the entire Northstar School community and are subject to the same behavioral standards we expect from our students at all times. Students may not use social media sites to publish disparaging or harassing remarks about Northstar School community members, athletic or academic contest rivals, etc.

Students may not use social media sites to post material that Northstar School determines is threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity. Students who choose to post editorial content to websites or other forms of online media must ensure that their submission does not reflect poorly upon the school. Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

SAFE AND RESPECTFUL INTERACTION POLICY

The first expectation Northstar has of its students is that they are to be respectful of themselves and others at all times. The educational environment at Northstar must be safe and respectful for all students, faculty, and staff, and as such, we do not tolerate hostile or harmful actions or speech that create an unsafe and/or disrespectful environment. This includes, but is not limited to: bullying, harassment (in action or speech), slurs, and other serious misbehaviors that disrupt learning, or which may endanger or contribute to a hostile learning environment for any student.

For clarity, the following definitions are provided:

Bullying- Northstar recognizes the harmful effects of bullying/harassment on student learning and school attendance and desires to provide safe school environments that protect students from physical and emotional harm. Student safety is a high priority, and Northstar employees shall not tolerate bullying of any student. Bullying can be verbal, nonverbal, physical or emotional behaviors that occur more than once or, in the judgment of Northstar Administration, have a high potential to take place more than once.

No individual or group of students shall, through physical, written, verbal, or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, retaliate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against any other student or school personnel with regards to race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, socio-economic background, social/family background, linguistic preference, political beliefs, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability, difference, or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic or because of one's association with a particular person or group of persons.

Slurs- an insinuation or allegation about someone that is likely to insult them or damage their reputation, such as any statement that degrades or demeans any person's racial, ethnic, cultural or National origin, religion, disability, sexual preference, gender, and/or gender identity.

Harassment- when a student engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the Board or Administration determine that the behavior:

- (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
- (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, and or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student.
- (3) This conduct is considered Harassment/Bullying if it interferes with a student's education and/or positive experience at Northstar or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.
- (4) Repeated threats to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, engaging in Intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another student, subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety.

Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Mistreatment/Inappropriate Behavior Prevention- To the extent possible, Northstar faculty and administration will create strategies that shall focus on prevention of bullying/harassment or inappropriate behavior by establishing clear rules for student conduct and strategies to promote a positive, collaborative school climate.

Students shall be informed, through student handbooks and other appropriate means, of school rules related to bullying, mechanisms available for reporting incidents or threats, and the consequences for engaging in inappropriate behavior.

As appropriate, Northstar shall provide students with instruction, in the classroom or other educational settings, that promotes effective communication and conflict resolution skills, social skills, character/values education, respect for cultural and individual differences, self-esteem development, assertiveness skills, and appropriate online behavior.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Northstar students may not use, possess, sell, transfer, or purchase alcohol, illegal drugs (or legal drugs for which students do not have prescriptions), nicotine, or tobacco on campus or during any school related function, trip, or activity. Students may not be under the influence of such substances on campus or during any school-related function, trip, or activity.

Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION POLICY

Northstar students may not engage in public displays of affection. Being overly affectionate in school creates an environment that is not conducive to concentration and learning, therefore students should refrain from inappropriate, intimate behaviors on campus or at school-related events and activities. Students are expected to show good taste and respect themselves, others, and the school environment at all times.

Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

HEALTH POLICY

- ❖ Student must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- ❖ Student must be free of vomiting without the use of medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- ❖ Parents/guardians will be notified if the possibility of a serious communicable disease is present in the school population.
- ❖ Parents/guardians will be notified in the case of suspicion that their child is ill. Administration may determine whether the student should return to class or be picked up by a parent/guardian.
- ❖ Northstar requires that every student be immunized as regulated by Texas state law unless official documentation of parental objections are submitted to the school office. Changes or

updates in these records must be submitted as soon as possible. Maintenance of such records is required and auditable by the state.

- ❖ The medication form on the next page must accompany all medication left at the school to be administered to the student.
- ❖ All medication must be in its original container.
- ❖ Prescription medications must be labeled with the pharmacy name, date, doctor's name, student's name, and directions.
- ❖ Non-prescription medications must be labeled with the student's name.
- ❖ Expired medications may be disposed of.
- ❖ Any medication left on campus at the end of the school year must be picked up by the parents/guardians or it will be disposed of.

Please notify the office if your child has any special nutritional needs. Allergies should be indicated on the student medical form. Please indicate if reactions are extreme so that we may care for the student accordingly.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

For school personnel to administer medication during the school day, a completed form along with the medication and/or special equipment items need to be brought to the school by parents/guardians. Medications should be given outside of school hours whenever possible.

- Medication must be brought to school in original, properly labeled containers. The pharmacy can supply two (2) labeled bottles for this purpose. Medications sent in baggies will not be administered.
- Medications will not be given without a specific written request signed by at least one parent or legal guardian.
- All medications must be kept in the school office.
- Even over-the-counter medications require a parent signature. The medication can only be given as directed by the manufacturer and must be FDA approved.
- Parents must complete a Student Medical form each year to allow Northstar personnel to administer medications.

SIGNATURE PAGE

My signature below certifies that I have read the Northstar School Handbook, and that I will adhere to the policies and procedures as stated. I am aware that if I have questions, I can contact the school office.

Printed Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

Printed Student Name(s)

Student Signature(s) and Date

Please return this form to the Northstar School office as soon as possible. This agreement will remain in effect and on file during the current school year.

Request to administer PRESCRIPTION medication during school hours

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ Grade: _____

Medication Name: _____ Dose: _____

Administration Time: _____ Start date: _____ End date: _____

Diagnosis: _____

Additional Comments/Instructions: _____

Request to administer OVER-THE-COUNTER medication during school hours

Please initial next to any of the medications that Northstar School personnel can administer to your child according to the manufacturer's directions.

Tylenol (Acetaminophen) _____ Motrin (Ibuprofen) _____ Benadryl (antihistamine) _____

We (I) the undersigned, the parents/guardian (s) of the above-named student, request the medication or procedure listed above to be administered to our (my) child. This medication form is valid ONLY for the current school year. Information must be updated every new school year.

Name: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Signature: _____ Phone Number: _____

Date: _____