

## Signature School Academic Honesty Policy

Signature School students often refer to “The Signature Way,” an unwritten honor code that values honesty and respectfulness. We know that these qualities have supported and nurtured our school community and that maintaining a culture that values these attributes is crucial to our success. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) also recognizes the importance of these traits, more fully described in the IB Learner Profile. The IBO values learners who are principled and “act with integrity and honesty...and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere” (*Academic*).

The purpose of the Signature Academic Honesty Policy is to inform the Signature community about the responsibilities we all have to uphold and protect the learning environment we treasure. In the event that a student is found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty, this document explains the consequences and steps for appeal. The document should be read in conjunction with “Signature School Guidelines and Rules,” and the “Honor Code,” both appended to this document for reader convenience. Each year, all Signature School families affirm that they have read these documents by submitting a signed form. The "Signature Guidelines and Rules" are updated and approved by Signature School's School Board each year. The Academic Honest Policy is updated and approved by Signature's faculty at the IB Academic Calendar meeting, held every May.

### What is Academic Honesty?

According to the IBO, academic honesty “... must be seen as a set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. It is influenced and shaped by a variety of factors including peer pressure, culture, parental expectations, role modeling and taught skills” (*Academic 2*). Concepts that relate to academic honesty include, but are not limited to, authenticity of work, intellectual property, and proper conduct during testing procedures.

### Malpractice

According to the IBO, malpractice is defined as “behavior that results in, or may result in, the candidate or any other candidate gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment components” (*Academic 3*). Malpractice may involve plagiarism, collusion, cheating, fabrication, or duplication as explained below. Students, families, and staff are also directed to the document, [General Regulations: Diploma Programme](#), Articles 20-21.

### Understanding the forms of malpractice

#### 1. *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is the representation of the ideas or work of another person as one’s own. Teachers should discuss academic honesty in the context of their subject areas. Assessed work including written and oral assignments must be in the student’s “own language and expression.” Sources must be acknowledged, whether quoted directly or paraphrased (*Academic*). Signature School classes generally use the Modern Language Association (MLA) referencing system.

Examples of plagiarism:

- Failure to use quotation marks to signal that one is using another person's precise words.
- Submitting an examination, paper, homework assignment, or other project (laboratory report, artistic work, computer program, etc.) that was created entirely or partially by someone else.

- Failure to identify (cite) the source of quotations and paraphrases. Sources include unpublished as well as published items—for example, books, articles, material on the internet, television programs, instructors' lectures, and people (including other students, friends, and relatives).
- Failure to identify the source of the elements of a nonverbal work (for example, a painting, dance, musical composition, photograph/image, or mathematical proof) that are derived from the work of others.

## 2. *Collusion versus Collaboration*

Collusion is supporting malpractice by another student or assisting another student's academic dishonesty. Some assessments require students to work in groups and participate in an equal and fair manner. Group activities might include discussion, meeting face to face, blogs, or chat room conversations. Allowing a member or members of the group to write any part of your assessment piece is not acceptable, so also is giving a copy of one student's work with respect to that assessment to any other student within the group (*Academic*).

## 3. *Cheating*

Cheating is the use or attempted use of unapproved assistance during an examination, an assignment, homework, or other project. Some examples follow:

- Copying answers from another student's examination, paper, or assignment with or without that person's consent.
- Providing work to be copied (collusion).
- Communicating in any way with anyone during an examination without the permission of the instructor or proctor.
- Using unauthorized materials or devices (including notes, textbooks, universal translator, cell phone, calculator, or any other electronic device) during an assignment or examination without the permission of the instructor or proctor.
- Obtaining and/or reading a copy of an examination before its administration without the permission of the instructor or proctor.
- Collaborating with other students or third parties on a take-home examination, paper, homework assignment, lab work, or other project without the permission of the instructor.

## 4. *Fabrication*

Fabrication is the creation of false data or citations. Examples are as follows:

- Inventing or falsifying the data of a laboratory experiment, field project, CAS activity, or other project.
- Inventing a phony citation for a research paper or other project.
- Altering a graded examination, paper, homework assignment, or other project and resubmitting it to the instructor in order to claim an error in grading.

## 5. *Duplication*

Duplication of work is using the same work for more than one IB assessment. It is expected that the students produce original work for each IB component. An example would be submitting a paper for the IB History internal assessment and submitting that paper, or one very similar, for an IB History extended essay. To avoid the appearance of duplication, the IB coordinator or EE coordinator distributes a list of

extended essay topics and titles for subject area teachers to check their internal assessment submissions against.

### **School / IB Coordinator Responsibilities**

- The school has the responsibility to establish the processes and procedures that support a culture that actively encourages academic honesty.
  - Signature students are familiar with the IB Learner profile.
  - Signature students understand the IB Mission and the Signature School Mission.
- The school ensures that all students, parents, and teachers understand what constitutes malpractice and what academic honesty is by providing verbal and printed instruction, along with providing additional resources when needed.
  - Students, on entering the IB Diploma Programme, are given copies of the *General Regulations: Diploma Programme* to review with their families. Articles relevant to misconduct are read and discussed during the resource period at the start of year 1. Families digitally sign that they have received and reviewed the document, and these are kept for a year following a student's graduation.
  - Students, on registering for an IB exam, or asked to sign the Candidate consent form. If they took an IB exam as juniors, they are asked to sign a second form as seniors. These forms are kept for a year following a student's graduation.
  - Students and staff are given opportunities to read and discuss documents in the Candidate Library on IBIS
    - "Effective citing and referencing"
    - "Academic Honesty in the Diploma Program"
  - Staff in charge of conducting IB internal and external assessments are made aware of and encouraged to discuss in class relevant content of the IBIS Library folder, "Academic misconduct related materials" before they commence assessments.
- The school subscribes to Turnitin.com and ensures that staff members are well trained in how to use the service and that they use the service for the submission of all IB student work.
- The school ensures that all IB staff are IB trained and that they understand how to authenticate student work by formally assessing the ongoing work of students at prescribed intervals.
- The school posts Signature School's Academic Policy on the Signature School website.
- Prior to and throughout the May Session,
  - the school posts the document "Conduct of the examinations: Notice to candidates" around the school and discusses expectations with candidates
  - the school ensures that
    - exams are stored securely
    - that invigilators understand all of their duties as spelled out in the current year's version of "The conduct of IB Diploma Programme examinations"
    - IB's calculator policy is strictly monitored and enforced
- The Executive Director and the IB coordinator investigate any claims of academic misconduct and, should those claims turn out to be valid, address acts of misconduct in an equitable, consistent, and timely way using the full measure of consequences available under Indiana law, including but not limited to expulsion, suspension, and awarding a failing grade for the assignment or even for the course.

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- Teachers review Signature School's Academic Honesty Policy with each class and discuss the most effective ways to report malpractice and all supporting documents regarding academic misconduct and effective citing.
- Teachers chunk extended assignments in to smaller pieces so that they may be reviewed at regular intervals before the final due date for the purpose of authenticating work and informing candidates early on in the process if they are not complying with academic honesty policies.
- Teachers confirm, to the best of their knowledge, that all work submitted for assessment is authentic.
- They instruct students in the use of Turnitin.com and familiarize students with originality reports used to detect plagiarism.
- Teachers demonstrate and model academic honesty in all presentations and projects.
- They provide guidance to students on study skills, academic writing, research, and acknowledging sources.
- They provide reminders of the IB Learner Profile.
- They report cases of academic misconduct to the IB coordinator or to the Executive Director.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Students understand that their IB Diploma candidacy or their participation in IB Diploma Course assessments brings with it an expectation that they will strive to embody the characteristics of the IB Learner Profile.
- Students read the Signature School Academic Honesty Policy and all supporting documents regarding academic honesty and misconduct, as outlined above.
- They indicate their understanding of the full range of what is considered academic dishonesty and its consequences by digitally signing with their families that they have reviewed *General Regulations: Diploma Programme* and by physically signing the Candidate consent form.
- They make sure that all work submitted for assessment is authentic, with the work or ideas of others fully and correctly acknowledged. This includes web sites, chat rooms, blogs, electronic media (news feeds, podcasts, YouTube, sources of photographs, maps, illustrations, computer programs, data, graphs, audio-visual, and direct quotations, etc.).
- They learn procedures for submitting IB assessment to Turnitin.com.
- They cite and acknowledge original authorship of work and ideas.
- They take ownership of learning by asking for clarification when necessary and seeking help when needed. If they suspect malpractice they must report it and help cultivate a culture of academic honesty at the school.
- They produce original pieces of assessed work in all subjects while using proper referencing procedures. It is important to report data as it is collected and not be fabricated or manipulated falsely to fit the need.
- They adhere to assessment policies during exams as documented in the Notice to Candidates.
- They understand that if found guilty of misconduct, they may be expelled, suspended, lose a credit, or be assigned a failing grade.
- They understand that, in accord with Indiana law, they may appeal any action taken by the Executive Director as a consequence for academic misconduct at the School Board meeting directly following the administration of consequences.
- Each year, they review with their child "Signature School Guidelines and Rules," the "Honor Code."

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Parents attend IB informational meetings in which IB's academic honesty policy and the school's academic honesty policy are explained or otherwise work to inform themselves of school policies.
- They encourage their student to practice and help cultivate a culture of academic honesty at school.
- They review with their child *General Regulations: Diploma Programme* and testify to their understanding of the document with their digital signature.
- Each year, they review with their child "Signature School Guidelines and Rules," the "Honor Code."

Please see *Academic Honesty in the IB educational context* for frequently asked questions and case studies that show academic honesty in a variety of Diploma Programme courses. This document is available on the IBO website or via this link: <http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/academic-honesty-ib-en.pdf>.

### **Works Cited**

International Baccalaureate Organization. *Academic Honesty*. United Kingdom: Anthony Rowe, Ltd., 2007. Print.

## SIGNATURE SCHOOL

### HONOR CODE

As a self-motivated student at Signature School, I understand that I must be respectful, honest, hardworking, and accountable. I will uphold the standards of Signature School by neither giving nor receiving unauthorized assistance on any form of academic work. I also understand that it is my responsibility to report any violation of the Honor Code.

I understand that violations of the Honor Code will be documented and recorded in my personal file. Information in my student file will be available to determine placement in Honors organizations and for scholarship recommendations. I also understand that violations of the Honor Code may result in my suspension from Signature School and expulsion from the International Baccalaureate Program.

## SIGNATURE SCHOOL GUIDELINES & RULES

2016-2017

Signature School is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. Students and parents are responsible for knowing and observing the guidelines and rules which govern Signature School. Any one or combination of the following actions may be used in order to maintain discipline in school: parent conference, counseling, restriction of extra-curricular activities, suspension of privileges, suspension from class, suspension from school, expulsion from school, referral to juvenile court, suspension from the bus, or other reasonable disciplinary action which is left to the discretion of the teacher and/or building administrator.

Signature School operates with an open campus. Safety is our number one priority, and we do everything possible to guarantee the protection of our students. Parents and guardians make the final decision for their child to attend Signature with the knowledge that our campus is open and that their child bears responsibility to adhere to all rules in order to best provide a safe environment.

Signature School may, at its discretion, report any disciplinary action to colleges, universities, and other post-secondary institutions as well as other legitimate organizations where a student may seek admission or with which a student wishes to associate.

**Signature School does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or limited English proficiency in its programs or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Law (I.C.22-9-1), Title IV and Title VI (Civil Rights Act of 1964), the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (Educational Amendments), the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act, and Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973).**

### MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE

Recognizing that the behavior of some students may be so disruptive that it interferes with school purposes or educational functions of the school, Signature School may find it necessary to remove a student from the school. In this event and in accordance with the provisions of **Indiana Code -20-33-8**, the Signature School Board of Directors authorizes administrators and staff members to take the following actions:

**1. REMOVAL FROM CLASS OR ACTIVITY-TEACHER**

A teacher will have the right to remove a student from his/her class or activity for one (1) class period or length of the class.

**2. SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL-PRINCIPAL**

The school principal (or designee) may deny a student the right to attend school or take part in any school function for a time of up to (5) school days or ten (10) school days.

**Students are not allowed on any Signature School property while on suspension and may not attend any activity sponsored by Signature School.**

**3. EXPULSION**

In accordance with the due process procedures defined in this policy, a student may be expelled from school for a period no longer than the remainder of the current semester plus the following semester, with the exception of a violation of **the weapons rule (RULE 3)** listed under the grounds for Suspension and Expulsion in this policy which will result in a one year expulsion. **Expelled students are not allowed on any Signature School property and may not attend any activity sponsored by Signature School.**

**\*\*A VIOLATION, OR REPEATED VIOLATION, OF ANY SCHOOL RULE IS GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION INCLUDING SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION.**

## GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION

### IC 20-33-8-14

#### **Sec. 14: Grounds for suspension or expulsion.**

(a) The following are the grounds for student suspension or expulsion, subject to the procedural requirements of this chapter and as stated by school corporation rules:

(1) Student misconduct.

(2) Substantial disobedience.

(b) The grounds for suspension or expulsion listed in subsection (a) apply when a student is:

(1) on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;

(2) off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or

(3) traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

*As added by P.L. 1-2005, SEC. 17.*

### IC 20-33-8-15

#### **Sec. 15: Unlawful activity by student**

In addition to the grounds specified in section 14 of this chapter, a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in unlawful activity on or off school grounds if:

(1) the unlawful activity may reasonably be considered to be an interference with school purposes or an educational function; or

(2) the student's removal is necessary to restore order or protect persons on school property; including an unlawful activity during weekends, holidays, other school breaks, and the summer period when a student may not be attending classes or other school functions.

*As added by P.L. 1-2005, SEC. 17.*

## **RULE 1. SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

### A. **Alcohol**

**Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of** any alcoholic beverage is prohibited. Any substance which is represented to be alcohol is prohibited. (IDOE Code 01)

### B. **Drugs**

**Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of** any drug that is not used in accordance with doctor's orders is prohibited. Any substance/chemical which is represented to be or looks like drugs/paraphernalia, or is not used for intended purpose, is also prohibited. (IDOE Code 02) **(Note: Student shall surrender any prescription or non-prescription drugs in the original container to Ms. Muehlbauer upon arrival at school.)**

### C. **Tobacco**

Possessing, using, and/or transmitting tobacco or tobacco products is prohibited. Use of tobacco shall mean all uses of tobacco, including cigar, cigarette, pipe, snuff, or any other matter of substance that contains tobacco, as well as electronic, "vapor," or other substitute forms of cigarettes. (IDOE Code 07)



## **RULE 2. WEAPONS**

### **A. POLICY ON POSSESSION OF WEAPONS**

1. No student shall possess, handle, or transmit any firearm, deadly weapons, destructive devices, or dangerous instruments, as defined in Indiana Codes 20-33-8-16 and 35-47-5-2.5, on school property. Look-alike weapons of any kind are also prohibited. (IDOE Code 03-06)

**B. The penalty for possession of a firearm, deadly weapons, or destructive devices: The student must be expelled for One (1) calendar year with the return of the student to be at the beginning of the first school semester after the end of One (1) year period.** The Executive Director/Principal may, on a case-by-case basis, modify the period of expulsion for a student who is expelled under this section.

C. The Executive Director/Principal shall notify the county prosecuting attorney's office when a student is expelled under this rule (Rule 2).

## **RULE 3. INTIMIDATION/BULLYING/HARASSMENT**

A. No student shall intimidate, bully, harass, or threaten other students or school personnel in any form or manner as defined by Indiana Codes 35-45-2 and 22-33-8-0.2. (IDOE Code 13) Behaving in a way that is disrespectful towards others is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

B. Students are prohibited from continuously and intentionally making noise or acting in any manner so as to interfere seriously with the ability of any teacher or any other school personnel to conduct the education function under their supervision.

C. Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are reasonably necessary in carrying out school purposes or an educational function and are validly adopted in accordance with Indiana law.

## **RULE 4. THEFT, DAMAGE, OR DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

### **A. Theft, Damage, Destruction of Property**

Causing or attempting to cause damage to private or school property, stealing or attempting to steal private or school property is prohibited. (Items found by a student should be taken to the office immediately.)

B. School property: Students shall not write on desks, walls, books, or deface school property. Students shall not litter school property.

C. Students shall not post advertising or other materials in the school without permission of an administrator.

D. Trespassing on school property is prohibited.

## **RULE 5. ASSAULT, FIGHTING, THREAT**

- A. Fighting is prohibited. (IDOE Code 11)
- B. Battery as defined by I.C. 35-42-2-1 is prohibited. (IDOE Code 12)
- C. Verbal aggression and profanity: Verbal aggression and profanity are prohibited. (IDOE Code 14)
- D. Forming groups who associate closely, such as a group engaging in antisocial, delinquent and/or criminal behavior: Forming groups who associate closely, such as a group engaging in antisocial, delinquent and/or criminal behavior is forbidden. Use of signals related to membership in groups is prohibited. Writing gang signs or symbols on your person at school is prohibited. This includes gang-related tattoos. (IDOE Code 10)

## **RULE 6. DEFIANCE**

Defiant behavior is prohibited. Defiance is defined as failing to comply with directions of teachers or other school personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision and/or the behavior constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function. (IDOE Code 15)

## **RULE 7. UNAUTHORIZED ITEMS**

Students shall not bring equipment or other objects to school or school activities which can be considered disruptive and/or are being used in the educational process without permission from school personnel. (IDOE Code 15)

## **RULE 8. VIOLATION OF STATE/FEDERAL LAW**

Engaging in any activity forbidden by the **laws of Indiana** or the Federal Government is prohibited. (IDOE Code 10)

## **RULE 9. SCHOOL RULES**

***Walkway Safety: Because Signature School's campus is downtown Evansville, students are advised to be careful when on the walkway. No student is allowed to be on the walkway alone. Students must always travel in groups or pairs.***

- A. Cell phones **must be turned off** and not used **inside** the main building, Science Center, Victory (3<sup>rd</sup> floor and 4<sup>th</sup> floor studio) from 8:30 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. Cell phones may not be used during passing periods.
  - 1. Cell phones may be used **outside** the school during lunch.
  - 2. Cell phones or other electronic devices may not be used in any manner, such as **texting**, that will cause disruption to the educational environment.
- B. Students shall adhere to safety practices and all other school rules during the school day, school activities, and during transportation to and from school and school sponsored activities.

C. Students shall not cheat or use misrepresentation including, but not limited to, forging and/or misuse of any document, excuse, official forms or records, assignments, homework i.e., Reason for Absence form, false telephone calls, text messaging, etc.

D. Creating, writing or distributing newspapers, bulletins, newsletters or websites under the auspices of the Signature name or logo which are not authorized by the school administration is prohibited.

E. **Blogs and websites:** Libel (writing derogatory statements that cannot be proven), defamation and invasion of privacy are punishable by law. **No** blog or website should take the Signature name as a part of its title, inferring that it is somehow sponsored or sanctioned by the school.

F. Students wishing to use the elevator shall refrain from any actions that could result in the malfunction of the elevator, such as pushing multiple buttons simultaneously, jumping up and down, etc. Students are reminded to be respectful of others when entering or exiting the elevators. **The number of individuals on the elevators should not exceed 12.**

G. Matches or lighters are prohibited.

H. The selling of items for fundraising purposes must be approved by the principal.

I. Students who bring electronic equipment such as MP3 players, laptops, compact disc (CD, DVD), paging devices, camera phones, are to observe Signature's Acceptable Use Policy. Information on paging devices confiscated by the school is subject to being reviewed by the police liaison officer.

J. Students are asked to help maintain the cleanliness and overall appearance of the building. Do not bring in food or drinks in open containers. No eating or drinking in hallways or elevators.

K. Students are asked not to block the hallways, elevators, or stairwells with backpacks (bookbags). **Backpacks should not be left in the lobby on the first floor or outside in front of the school.**

L. **No public display of affection.**

## **RULE 10. HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of Signature School to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment, or other harassment based on race, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, limited English proficiency, or any other reason protected by law. Students are prohibited from bullying, threatening, intimidating, or transmitting sexually explicit communication via electronic devices and social media.

It shall be a violation of the policy for any employee, student, or agent of Signature School to harass another employee, student, or agent through conduct or communications of a sexual nature or other protected basis. The use of the term "employee" also includes non-employees and volunteers who work subject to control of school authorities.

- A. A student shall not exhibit conduct which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with another student's academic development or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment.
- B. A student shall not make unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or exhibit other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- C. A student shall not engage in subtle forms of harassment such as unwelcome cartoons, caricatures, jokes of a sexual or racial nature, race or sex-oriented verbal kidding or abuse, and unwelcome, deliberate physical contact.
- D. Verbal or physical abuse, racial harassment, sexual harassment of others, any indecent language or gesture or act, threats of violence to the school staff or its body are prohibited.

**E. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE INVOLVING AN EMPLOYEE, STUDENT, OR AGENT OF SIGNATURE SCHOOL**

Pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, "sexual harassment" is defined as: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's status in a class, educational program, or activity;
2. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for educational decisions affecting such individual;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment; or of interfering with one's ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite gender.

Prohibited acts that constitute sexual harassment may take a variety of forms. Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations.
- Physical assault.
- Threats or insinuations that a person's academic grade, promotion, classroom work or assignments, academic status, participation in athletics or extra-curricular programs or events, or other conditions of education may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances.
- Unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; the unwelcome use of sexually degrading language, jokes or innuendoes; unwelcome suggestive or insulting sounds or whistles; obscene telephone calls.

- Sexually suggestive objects, pictures, videotapes, audio recordings or literature, placed in the educational environment, which may embarrass or offend individuals.
- Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, or pinching; obscene gestures.
- A pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another.
- Remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history.
- Consensual sexual relationships where such relationship leads to favoritism of a student with whom the teacher or superior is sexually involved and where such favoritism adversely affects other students.

Not all behavior with sexual connotations constitutes unlawful sexual harassment. Conduct must be sufficiently severe, pervasive, and persistent such that it adversely affects an individual's education, or such that it creates a hostile or abusive educational environment.

## **RULE 11. ATTENDANCE (I.C. 20-33-2)**

### **A. ABSENCES AND PROCEDURES**

Student absences shall be reported to the school by parent/guardian **before 9:30 am** on the day of absence, or where circumstances require, a note may be sent to school on the following day.

1. Absences will count in the determination of loss of credits.
2. Unexcused absences, if excessive, can lead to legal action under the compulsory school attendance law. I.C. 20-33-2
3. A suspension or expulsion from another educational institution will apply to and be upheld by Signature School.
4. **Vacations during school time are counted as unexcused absences and can lead to the loss of the student's credit(s)**. In Indiana, school attendance is mandatory, and schools cannot give permission for absence beyond the law. Parents/guardians are advised to plan family activities when school is not in session.
5. Student absences for activities other than those listed in Rule 11, Section C, will be counted as unexcused absences unless deemed otherwise by the Executive Director. Requests for such absences must be submitted in advance and in writing to the Executive Director.
6. Students who find it necessary to leave school before the end of the school day must receive the approval of the proper school authority and sign out in the school office.

7. Students shall attend all of the scheduled classes and activities to which they are assigned during the school day unless properly excused by school authority.
8. When absent from school, the student is responsible for requesting make-up work, including tests, by following the procedures set forth by the school. **Make-up work will not be allowed** for students who are truant.
9. If a student has been suspended, the student should contact the teacher and request makeup work for the time absent. A student who does not request the work by the end of the third day after return will forfeit his/her rights to make up the work.
10. **In order to participate in extra-curricular activities, the student must be in attendance in ALL classes on the day of the activity, unless excused by the principal.** Students who are suspended from school may not practice or participate in extra-curricular activities.
11. Students attending Signature School must be legal residents in the state of Indiana.

#### **B. LATES (TARDIES) TO SCHOOL/CLASS**

1. A student will be considered late when he/she is not in his/her assigned class at the designated time of the class.
2. **Three lates to a class will equal one unexcused absence to that class and will be counted as one of the five unexcused absences.**
3. Students who report to school late in the morning shall sign in at the office. The student is responsible for providing documentation to excuse the absence.

#### **C. EXEMPT/EXCUSED ABSENCES**

The following absences are **excused** and **will not** count in the determination of loss of credits or the pursuit of legal action due to violations of the compulsory school attendance law. (I.C. 20-33-2)

1. Death in immediate family (this would include the death of a parent, grandparent or sibling)
2. Verified medical or dental appointment (written medical verification of illness and proof of medical visit must be provided)
3. Chronic illness (school form must be filled out by doctor **each year**)
4. Religious holiday/activities (must be verified by a note from the parent and/or religious leader and should be received by the administrator one week in advance of the event)
5. Legal appointment (written legal verification must be provided)
6. Other activities as approved by the principal
7. **Students will be exempt and not counted absent when attending or participating in/as:**
  - (a) School-approved field trip

- (b) Service as a page or an honoree of the Indiana General Assembly. (I.C. 20-33-2-14)
- (c) A high school student who serves on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or to a political party on the date of each general, city or town special, and primary election at which the student works. Prior to the date of the election, the student must submit a document signed by one of the student's parents or guardians giving permission to participate in the election provided in this section, and the student must verify to school authorities the performance of services by submitting document signed by the candidate, political party chairman, campaign manager, or precinct officer. The document must describe generally the duties of the student on the date of the election. (I.C. 20-33-2-15)
- (d) A student who is issued a subpoena to appear in court as witness in a judicial proceeding is excused from school. (I.C. 20-33-2-16)
- (e) A student who is ordered to active duty with the Indiana Guard for not more than ten days in a school year. (I.C. 20-33-2-17)
- (f) Students who participate in educationally related contests during the school day, e.g. Optimist Oratorical, etc.

**8. Parents/guardians of students who anticipate an absence from school shall contact the office by telephone, email, or written note prior to the absence.**

**9. Students are responsible for providing documentation for all excused and exempt absences.**

#### **D. PRE-COURT CONFERENCE**

Students who accumulate more than **5 unexcused absences** in a semester (without medical documentation) or who accumulate **3 or more truancies** may be referred for pre-court conference.

Students who have been referred for a pre-court conference due to a violation of the compulsory school attendance law are required to produce medical or legal documentation of any missed days for one calendar year. Students who do not provide proper documentation and continue to miss school after their pre-court conference will be counted as truant, and the student and or their parent will be referred to the prosecutor's office.

#### **E. DENIAL OF CREDIT**

**EACH SEMESTER A STUDENT WILL BE DENIED CREDIT AFTER THE FIFTH ABSENCE FROM A CLASS.** Extensions will be provided to students who have written medical or dental excuses on file in the attendance office. **Notes from doctors, dentists, or other health care providers must be received by the attendance office within three school days of the date the student returns to school.** Notes not received within three school days may not be accepted. When a student is denied credit in three or more classes, he/she will be recommended for expulsion from school or referred to the prosecutor's office; or, if of legal age, will have the option to withdraw. **(All appeals should be directed to the Executive Director/principal of the school.)**

#### **F. TRUANCY**

1. A HABITUAL TRUANT is defined as a student who is "chronically absent, having unexcused absences from school for more than ten (10) days of school in one (1) year. (I.C. 20-33-2-11)

2. A student is truant when no just reason is presented to Signature School for the absences within three days.
3. Make-up work is not permissible for students who have been marked truant.

**G. STUDENTS SHALL NOT LEAVE ANY CAMPUS BUILDING BETWEEN PERIODS WITH THESE EXCEPTIONS:**

1. Those who are ill and have been excused by an administrator.
2. Those with permission of an administrator.

Students should use the exit by the front office at all times, and students leaving any campus building during the day must sign out in the main office.

**RULE 12. SCHOOL BUILDING**

**A. LUNCH**

1. Signature students have two options during lunch:
  - Students may bring their lunch and eat on the fifth floor of the Victory, outside on the "Grassy Knoll" (on the Civic Center side of Signature School), or in designated classrooms for appointments with teachers or faculty-supervised club meetings.
  - Teachers will be with students at selected restaurants on the Walkway.
2. Students will be provided a copy of the lunch procedures on the first day of school.
3. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves at all times.
4. Students may not have lunch with non-Signature students.
5. **Family members who have lunch with a student must sign in at the front desk in the office.**

**B. BOOK DAMAGE**

1. Students are responsible for books and equipment issued and loaned to them by Signature School. Those that are lost must be paid for by the student. Fines are also charged for damages to rental or borrowed books. Students shall not damage or deface textbooks, computers, or media material in any manner.

**C. DRESS CODE**

1. Appropriate dress and personal grooming are required of each student as a vital part of maintaining the educational environment. Modes of grooming or styles of attire which detract from a good teaching/learning situation are not acceptable. **Extremes shall be avoided in all areas of dress and grooming** including body piercing. The building administrator and staff shall determine what is inappropriate. Students in violation of the dress code will be asked to correct the violation prior to returning to the classroom and could face further disciplinary action. (IDOE Code 15)
2. Students in their dress and grooming must recognize the necessity for health, safety, cleanliness, and modesty at all times.
3. The wearing of any apparel that has on it any writing, printing, symbols or pictures that is judged by the building administrator to be vulgar, suggestive and/or implies sex, drugs,



alcohol, violence, or other subjects disruptive to the normal operation of the school is prohibited.

4. Wearing pajamas and/or house slippers is prohibited.
5. Wearing low-rise, baggy or sagging pants that reveal any skin or undergarments is prohibited.
6. See-through or sheer garments are prohibited.
7. Length of shorts or skirts should be at least finger-tip length when arms are resting at the side of the body.
8. The wearing of low-cut tops or blouses should be avoided.

### **RULE 13. BUS TRANSPORT**

1. The school bus is an extension of the classroom or school property. All school rules apply to those students who ride the bus. Students shall follow rules of safety required for bus riders.

### **RULE 14. COMPUTERS**

All students will be provided a copy of Signature School's Acceptable Use Policy. To have access to Signature School computers, students and parents must sign and return the "Network User's Agreement" to the main office.

1. Students shall not access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit materials. Nor shall students transmit pornographic, obscene, abusive, or sexually explicit materials, or "stalk" or harass others.
2. Students are prohibited from bullying, threatening, intimidating, or transmitting sexually explicit communication via electronic devices.
3. Students shall not use the network to violate local, state or federal statutes.
4. Students shall not access the files, information, or software of others without prior authorization.
5. Students shall not vandalize, damage or disable or "hack" the files, networks, software, profiles, and other electronic media and devices of others. Creation of a "virus" is considered vandalism.
6. Students shall not upload, download, or otherwise use copyrighted material or other intellectual property of others without prior authorization. Copyright violations can result in fines or imprisonment.
7. Students shall not purchase any goods or services through any on-line service.
8. Computers and the computer mobile lab are to be used only for educational purposes. Students are prohibited from using the school computers to check personal e-mails or access Facebook, MySpace.Com or other sites of this nature.

**RULE 15. DRIVING PRIVILEGES/PARKING/LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT PERMISSION**

1. Only those students who have classes off campus or have approval from the principal are allowed to leave Signature School during the day.
2. Students who leave school during lunch without permission may face suspension.
3. Students are not allowed to leave classes to move their cars.

**RULE 16. SEARCH**

- A. As used in this section, “reasonable cause for a search” means circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to believe that the search of a particular person, place, or thing will lead to the discovery of:
  1. evidence of a violation of school rules and guidelines
  2. anything which might present an immediate danger of physical harm or illness to any person.
- B. The administration or a teacher may search any storage area on school premises at any time.
- C. Student searches can be conducted by the principal or principal’s designee.
  1. Searches of the student shall be limited to:
    - a. Searches of the pockets of the student, and/or;
    - b. Any object in the possession of the student such as a purse or backpack, and/or;
    - c. a “pat down” of the exterior of the students clothing.
  2. Searches of the person of a student which require removal of clothing other than shoes, socks, coat or jacket shall be referred to a law enforcement officer.
- D. Driving a motor vehicle to school is a privilege. The principal or principal’s designee may search a motor vehicle on or near school property, or which has been driven to a school event.

<b>SIGNATURE SCHOOL ANTI-SMOKING POLICY</b>
---

The Signature School Board of Directors recognizes that the use of tobacco presents a health hazard which can have serious consequences both for the user and the nonuser and is, therefore, of concern to the Board.

For purposes of this policy, "use of tobacco" shall mean all uses of tobacco, including a cigar, cigarette, pipe, snuff, or any other matter of substance that contains tobacco, as well as electronic, “vapor,” or other substitute forms of cigarettes.

In order to protect students and staff who choose not to use tobacco from an environment noxious to them, and because the Board cannot condone the use of tobacco, the Board prohibits the use of tobacco by professional staff members, students, and visitors in school buildings at all times. Such prohibition also applies on school grounds, on school buses, at any school-related event except at designated times and in designated areas.

It is the policy of the School Board to comply with the city and county smoking ordinance. The ordinance can be accessed from the link below.

<http://www.vanderburgh.org/auditor/codification/title8/8.24.html>

**SIGNATURE SCHOOL  
POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Signature School does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or limited English proficiency in its programs or employment policies as required by the Indiana Civil Rights Law (I.C.22-9-1), Title IV and Title VI (Civil Rights Act of 1964), the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (Educational Amendments), the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act, and Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

**Signature School is in compliance with federal regulation 40 CFR 763.85 covering asbestos Inspections and testing.** Signature School has an asbestos management plan in place that is available to parents/guardians to view.

Signature School may on occasion use pesticides to control insects and pests. Parents/Guardians have the right to be notified of pesticide usage. If a parent/guardian wishes to be notified in advance of pesticide usage, he/she must notify Ms. Muehlbauer in writing that he/she wishes to be placed on a notification list.

Signature School receives Title I funding and, in accordance with ESEA Section 1111(h)(6), wishes to communicate to parents/guardians the terms of Title I. Please refer to the above citation or contact Jean Hitchcock, Executive Director, for further information.

**THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

FERPA allows schools to disclose certain "directory" information without student or parental consent. This information could include a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. FERPA requires that parents and eligible students have the right to request the school NOT disclose this information. If any Signature School parents or eligible students wish to have information withheld during the 2015-'16 school year, they must notify their school administrator by August 21, 2015 To see full FERPA information, go to <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

**HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of Signature School to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment, or other harassment based on race, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, or any other reason protected by law.

It shall be a violation of the policy for any employee, student, or agent of Signature to harass or intimidate another employee, student, or agent through conduct or communications that are based on the latter individual's sex or other protected characteristic. The use of the term "employee" also includes non-employees and volunteers who work subject to control of school authorities.

Signature School will investigate all allegations of harassment, and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the school and the Board of Directors will take immediate steps to end the harassment. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

## **PARENT/STUDENT RIGHTS IN IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION, AND PLACEMENT**

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to students with handicaps. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

You have the right to the following:

- Have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination because of his/her handicapping condition.
- Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
- Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation, or placement of your child.
- Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
- Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided non-handicapped students.
- Have your child receive special education and related services if she/he is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and/or general education interventions/modifications outside of special education under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources and by persons who know the student, the evaluation data, and placement options.
- Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
- Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
- Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, and placement.
- Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
- A response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
- Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request for amendment, it shall notify you within a reasonable time and advise you of the right to a hearing.

- Request mediation, grievance, or an impartial due process hearing or appeal related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement. The costs for these due process procedures will be borne by the school corporation. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you. Requests for mediation should be made to the school Executive Director/Principal. Requests for grievance, hearing, or appeal should be made to the Executive Director/Principal.
- Request a review (appeal) of the hearing should you not prevail.
- Ask for payment of reasonable attorney fees if you are successful on your claim.

**NOTICE OF RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS UNDER SECTION 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal\* to those provided to non-disabled students.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who (a) has, (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and performing manual tasks.

Dual Eligibility: Some students will be eligible for education services under both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Students who are eligible under the IDEA have many specific rights that are not available to students who are eligible solely under Section 504.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact the school's 504 Coordinator at: 812-421-1820.

Signature School  
610 Main Street  
Evansville, Indiana 47708

\* Equal educational benefits and opportunities does not mean the "same" benefits and/or opportunities.

The implementing regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. You have a right to be informed by the school district of your rights under Section 504. (The purpose of this Notice form is to advise you of those rights.) (34 CFR 104.32.)
2. Your child has the right to an appropriate education designed to meet his/her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met. (34 CFR 104.33.)
3. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. (34 CFR 104.33.)
4. Your child has a right to placement in the least restrictive environment. (34 CFR 104.34.)
5. Your child has a right to facilities, services, and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. (34 CFR 104.34.)
6. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to an initial Section 504 placement and any subsequent significant change in placement. (34 CFR 104.35.)

7. Testing and other evaluation procedures must conform to the requirements (34 CFR 104.35) as to validation, administration, areas of evaluation, etc. Signature School shall consider information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, adaptive behavior, physical or medical reports, student grades, progress reports, parent observations, and anecdotal reports. (34 CFR 104.35.)
8. Placement decisions must be made by a group of persons (i.e., Student Intervention Team and/or Signature School 504 Committee), including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. (34 CFR 104.35.)
9. If eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic reevaluations, generally every three years. (34 CFR 104.36.)
10. You have the right to examine relevant records. (34 CFR 104.36.)
11. You have the right to notice prior to any action by Signature School in regard to the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. (34 CFR 104.36.)
12. You have a right to an impartial hearing with respect to Signature School's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. (34 CFR 104.36.)
13. If you wish to challenge the actions of Signature School's 504 Committee in regard to your child's identification, evaluation, and education placement, you should file a written request for a hearing with your state department of education's Section 504 compliance office. A hearing will be scheduled before an impartial hearing officer and you will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place for the hearing.
14. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer, you have a right to review of that decision by a court of competent jurisdiction. (34 CFR 104.36.)
15. On Section 504 matters other than your child's identification, evaluation, and placement, you have a right to file a discrimination complaint with the School's Chief Diversity Officer, who will investigate the allegations to the extent warranted by the nature of the complaint in an effort to reach a prompt and equitable resolution.
16. You have the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights.

***Signature School reserves the right to change or modify school rules based on the action of the Signature School Board or legislative mandate.***