

SONIA M. SOTOMAYOR HIGH SCHOOL

CAMPUS POLICY

2025-2026

ADMINISTRATION OF SONIA M. SOTOMAYOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ada Bohlken	Principal
Jacquelyn Lambert	Associate Principal
Linda Luna	Academic Dean
Candace Olivares	Assistant Principal
Brian Pfeiffer	Assistant Principal
Rebecca Reyes	Assistant Principal
Cristobal Saldana	Assistant Principal

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Desiree Soliz – Sotomayor Head Counselor

Lydia Annayevea	Johnny Anzaluda	Katrina Duval	Jessica Fevata
Melinda Garcia	Nathesha Jarrett	Christina Nevarez	

LIBRARIAN

Stacey Quick

DEPARTMENT COORDINATORS

Juan Morales	Athletics
Heidi Arevinas	Career and Technology
Henry Ramirez	English
Adriana Vela	Fine Arts
Joshua Campbell	Health
Gareth Casper	Mathematics
James Joseph	Physical Education
Emily Dillard	Science
Javonne Collier	Special Education
Amy Costello	Special Education
Keith Robinson	Social Studies
Elena Chambers	World Languages

This handbook has been compiled through the combined efforts of the Sonia M. Sotomayor High School faculty and administration, and in cooperation with the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Trustees of the Northside Independent School District.

Section A

Campus Policy

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To Students:

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures pertaining to student activities and responsibilities as set forth by the Board of Trustees of the Northside Independent School District. It is the responsibility of each student to read, understand, and abide by the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

To Parents:

The home is the greatest influence upon the child during the formative years; from these influences, the child develops his/her first habits and obtains most of his/her ideals and attitudes. The influence of a good home environment cannot be duplicated within the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that the home and school work cooperatively for the maximum development of your child.

Please make every effort to encourage your child to attend school regularly and punctually. Failure is often attributed to irregular attendance, while tardiness tends to develop the wrong habits and attitudes toward life and its responsibilities.

The purpose of this handbook is to supply you and your child with information about Sonia M. Sotomayor High School. Frequent reference to this handbook will acquaint you with the functions of your school. Please feel free to confer with the teachers, counselors, and the administration as necessary.

The cooperation of all stakeholders will result in a more efficient and successful school program.

To Parents and Students:

Questions regarding interpretations of rules and regulations in this handbook should be directed to the Sonia M. Sotomayor administration.

Sonia M. Sotomayor High School

Sonia M. Sotomayor High School, Northside ISD's 12th comprehensive high school, opened the fall of 2022.

Sonia M. Sotomayor has been an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court since 2009. Sotomayor became the youngest judge in the Southern District and the first Hispanic federal judge in New York State. She became the first Puerto Rican woman to serve as a judge in a U.S. federal court. She was one of seven women among the district's 58 judges.

Sonia M. Sotomayor High School, which will eventually serve about 3,000 students, was built to relieve overcrowding at Harlan and O'Connor high schools.

SOTOMAYOR ALMA MATER

Sotomayor we are true to thee

Strength, pride, and unity will lead to victory.

Close to our heart, reigns the silver, black, and white

Under the heritage tree, our memories we hold tight.

As embers blaze forever, loyal we shall stay

Fiercely committed to excellence, we say.

Sotomayor High, Wildcats!

SCHOOL COLORS

Black, Silver, and White

MASCOT

Wildcats

"CODE FOR THE GOOD CITIZEN OF THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL"

I realize that, as a student in an American high school, I owe an obligation to parents or relatives, whose sacrifices have given me the foundation upon which I am building, to the school which offers me an opportunity to develop my natural powers, and to the community which makes my educational advantages possible, to my country which gives me liberty under law, to my own future as an individual and as a citizen.

As a token of my determination to honorably discharge this obligation I promise:

- That I will use the facilities offered by the classroom to enlarge and broaden my interests, to increase my knowledge, to bring me closer to truth, and to cultivate habits of industry and sound thinking.
- That I will broaden my sympathies and practice the arts of sociability, true friendliness and helpfulness in my home, in the school and in all my association; avoiding snobbishness in my own conduct and condemning it in others.
- That I will develop habits of reading and conversing which will broaden my culture and enable me to better understand the problems of community, state and union.
- That I will carry on discussion in and out of the classroom, not to overcome opponents and gratify my pride, but that I may grow in knowledge and wisdom.
- That I will avoid every form of cheating or dishonesty and will undertake to discourage all dishonorable practices.
- That I will obey every rule or law of school, city, state, and nation, reserving the right to criticize rules and laws constructively, but respecting them so long as they prevail.

- That I will use my powers and influence for the common good.
- That I will pursue happiness myself and strive to establish conditions under which happiness and opportunity may be hopefully pursued by everyone in my home, my school, my community, my country and the world.

-Adopted by the National Association of Student Councils

BELL SCHEDULE

8:45	Students move to class
9:00-9:50	1st Period
9:56-10:54	2nd Period
11:00-11:50	3rd Period
11:56-12:46	4th Period
12:52-1:42	5th Period
1:48-2:38	6th Period
2:44-3:34	7th Period
3:40-4:20	8th Period

SCHOOL STAFF

Principal

The Principal is responsible to the Superintendent of Schools for the proper administration of Sonia M. Sotomayor High School. It is her duty to organize, supervise, and administer all of the affairs of the school as they affect students, teachers, and patrons. She will be glad to help you with any of your concerns.

Associate Principal

The Associate Principal works directly with the principal in the administration and organization of the school. She assumes the responsibility of the Principal in her absence.

Academic Dean

The Academic Dean works with the principal in the administration/supervision of the academic and instructional programs of the school. She works closely with the counseling staff to ensure appropriate academic placement of students.

Assistant Principals

The Assistant Principals work to coordinate and supervise the everyday activities of the student body. They handle the student issues with regard to attendance and student discipline. They also work in the area of teacher services and assist the Principal in the development of the school curriculum and the evaluation of the school instructional program.

Counselors

The Counselors work with students in discussing school programs, scholarship applications, occupational planning, course choices, and social/emotional concerns. The function of the Counselor is advisory, not disciplinary, and all information is confidential. A record of a student's scholastic achievement, interests, standardized tests and personal information is maintained in the counselor's office. This information enables the Counselors to better assist students while in high school and to help them plan for college or vocational careers.

Teachers

Teachers are specialists in the field in which they teach and are eager to facilitate student learning. They are the classroom leaders and are charged with the responsibility of supervising and directing all students in the pursuit of their education. Each teacher is assigned a conference period as part of his/her teaching assignment. This period is set aside to give the teacher opportunity for carrying out plans for both classroom work and individual guidance with students. Another purpose of this period is to provide a teacher with a scheduled time to conference with parents. To make an appointment, parents should e-mail or telephone the teacher.

Secretaries

The secretarial staff is available to help with the day-to-day operations of the school.

Instructional Assistants (IA's)

The primary responsibility of IA's is to collaborate with teachers to ensure student academic and behavioral success.

Custodians

The custodial staff is directed by a plant manager who assigns duties for custodians during both the day and night shifts. They are charged with the responsibility of maintaining a safe, clean, and inviting school. They also have the duty of keeping all systems and equipment operational.

Child Nutrition (Cafeteria) Personnel

Child Nutrition personnel provide well-balanced, nutritious meals for the students and staff at a reasonable cost. The cafeteria is managed by an experienced person who is trained in nutrition

and management.

Campus Police

The NISD police officers work with the administration, staff, students, and community to ensure a safe and secure environment for learning.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that their child comes to school and attends all scheduled classes. Students are expected to attend school and be on time to their classes--the first rule of success for a student is to arrive on time. Attendance is one of the principal's top priorities because students cannot learn in absentia, and the teachers cannot teach empty seats.

State law and school policy require attendance every day that school is in session. Illness, doctor/clinic visits, a death in the family, court appearances, religious holidays, and school-sponsored activities are the only excusable reasons for nonattendance. The legitimacy of absences for other reasons will be determined by the principal or her designee.

Absences

State of Texas Absence Policy:

Semester course: an 18-week class that meets every day. Semester 1 only 8 absences are allowed by state law. Semester 2 only 9 absences are allowed by state law.

Full year course: 36-week course that meets every day. Only 17 absences are allowed by state law.

By state law (Texas Education Code 25.092) a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance at least 90% of the days the class meets. Sonia M. Sotomayor HS operates on a traditional 8-period day. To fulfill the credit for class attendance requirement, a student must not miss more than 10% of the total number of times the class meets. A student cannot exceed 8 (semester 1), 9 (semester 2), or 17 (full year long) absences during the academic school year or credit will not be earned (this includes excused and unexcused absences). A student may have an opportunity to participate in Attendance Recovery to make up the time missed in regular class to recover the withheld credit. Absences accrued as a result of truancy are not eligible for Attendance Recovery. A waiver (for extenuating circumstances) may be granted by the campus attendance committee.

Excused Absences (count towards state allowed number of absences)

- a. Parent/guardian notes for less than four consecutive sick days
- b. Required Court appearances (other than traffic court)
- c. Doctor, dentist, clinic, or hospital visit
- d. Funeral for immediate family members
- e. Administration approved absences

Unexcused Absences (count towards state allowed number of absences)

- a. Car trouble
- b. Trips with parents
- c. Driving examinations
- d. Baby-sitting
- e. Missed bus
- f. Overslept
- g. Job interviews/health tests, etc.
- h. Any other category that does not meet state or district guidelines

Extended Absences

Parents are asked to contact campus administration if a student is expected to be absent for an extended period of time.

Readmission Procedures Following Absences

1. On the day following an all-day absence, the student will report to the Attendance Office and present a written excuse before school. The note will be kept in a file under the student's name; however, if a copy is requested, one will be made. The attendance secretary will be charged with the duty of updating the student's attendance. Parent notes will only be accepted up to 3 days after the absence. A note furnished by a doctor or court to excuse an absence must be provided within 3 days. Any note provided later than 3 days must be approved by an administrator.
2. If a student fails to bring a note, the absence will be left unexcused. This information will be given to the campus administration for processing.
3. A student attending only part of the school day due to appointments must sign in or out of school through the Attendance Office. Parents must come to the Attendance Office in person to sign a student out. If a student arrives after the school day starts, and provides a note from a parent, or other appropriate documentation, the student will be sent to class with a pass from the Attendance Office. When the student arrives at school late without any documentation, the student's absence will be considered unexcused. The unexcused absence will be coded as either AT (absent by tardy) or UA (for each class the student is absent the entire period). It is advised that students inform their teachers about any planned absences prior to the absence.
4. Students who arrive after fifteen (15) minutes to any class will be counted AT (absent by tardy), as mentioned above. This is an unexcused absence, and students will need a

pass from the Attendance Office or APO to be allowed into class. Likewise, any student who reports to school, after missing part of the school day, must check in at the Attendance Office. No student is allowed to miss one or more period(s) of instruction, and then arrive during the passing period and subsequently enter the next period on time. Students missing one or more class periods, prior to arriving at school, must report to the Attendance Office before going to any other classes.

Note: If there is a question concerning the validity of any note, the student will be referred to an administrator for verification.

Third Party Notes

Third party notes are signed and dated notes from a doctor, dentist, hospital, clinic, court, or funeral home. These must include the days the student was absent and a phone number.

Waiver for Excessive Absences

To regain credit due to excessive absences for extenuating circumstances (illness etc.), students may participate in Attendance Recovery and/or submit a request for a waiver of the absences. Waivers are only approved by the Campus Attendance Committee for extenuating circumstances outside of student's control. Contact a campus administration concerning waivers and their requirements.

Student Information for Excessive Absence Waivers

1. A student with any documented truancy can be denied a waiver in all courses.
2. A letter must be written to the Attendance Committee requesting an excessive absence waiver and explaining the extenuating circumstances regarding the absences. The letter along with any supporting documentation should be submitted to the Attendance Office by the appropriate deadline.
3. A waiver will only be applied if a student has exceeded their allowable absences and will lose credit in their course(s) because they have gone over the days allowed by law.

Campus Attendance Committee

The Campus Attendance Committee has designated Attendance Recovery as a way to make up for excessive absences for credit purposes, and allows students to regain credit for classes where they may have exceeded the number of absences allowed. Each hour (equivalent to a class period) of Attendance Recovery recovers one absence in one designated class.

This committee also meets on a regular basis to review/approve/deny attendance waiver applications.

Attendance Recovery

(Does not change State Attendance Compulsory Law Requirements)

Any time during the school year that a student accumulates over the state allowed number of absences, he/she may make up the hours by attending Attendance Recovery and completing assignments for the classes missed during regular school time. If a student earned a passing grade during the semester/year, the participation in Attendance Recovery will give the student the opportunity to earn credit for his/her passing grade, but it will not affect a failing grade. Absences accrued as a result of truancy are not eligible for Attendance Recovery. The campus will utilize schoology to disseminate information regarding the Attendance Recovery program.

Note: The Attendance Recovery program is for credit earning purposes, not midterm/final exam exemption status.

Arrival at School/Check-Out Procedures

The school day will be from 9:00 a.m. until 4:20 p.m. Once a student arrives on school property, he/she must remain for the entire day unless they properly sign out through the Attendance Office. This procedure is done by one of the following methods:

1. Students must report to the Attendance Office and follow sign out procedures prior to leaving campus.
2. Students must bring a signed note from parent/guardian with a phone number for verification, or parent/guardian must come into the building to sign-out the student in the Attendance Office. Parent/guardian must be listed on the student's records and provide a valid photo ID. Students MUST wait to be called upon to be released from class.
3. Students who become ill during the day must be excused by the Attendance Office, by way of the nurse/health clinic.
4. Student checkouts will not be processed after 4:05 p.m.

Health Appointment During the School Day

A student who has a documented appointment with a healthcare professional during regular school hours will be considered present all day for every class if the student is in attendance a portion of the day (day of the appointment) or returns to school on the same day of the appointment and provides the health excuse note to the Attendance Office. The parent/guardian must sign the student in and out at the Attendance Office.

Tardies

Punctuality to all classes is essential in maintaining an effective school environment as well as developing good work habits. Students are required by law to be in class at the designated times. Students who are late are not only violating the law but disrupting the learning environment for other students. Students who are consistently late to class will be referred to the assistant principal's office for appropriate disciplinary action, including the loss of parking permits and off-campus lunch privileges. Students arriving to class after fifteen (15) minutes late will be considered absent by tardy (AT) and will be referred to the assistant principal's office for truancy.

Tardy Procedure

1. After the Tardy Bell rings, students not in their classes will be issued a tardy.

2. For every 5th tardy accumulated per class during a marking period, the student will be issued consequences.
3. Consequences will be issued accordingly:
 - 1-2 Student Warning / Teacher Conference
 - 3-4 Parent Contact by Teacher
 - 5 + Consequences determined by Administration, up to and including Overnight Suspension
- ****All consequences are subject to administrative discretion
4. Tardy accumulation will start over every marking period.
5. Arrival to class over fifteen (15) minutes late will result in an absence by tardy (AT) and counts towards the state allotted attendance.

Senior Skip Day

Teachers, students, and parents should be aware that there is no such thing as the mythical "Senior Skip Day" or any other student skip day. These absences are unexcused and will be dealt with accordingly. School holidays are published in this handbook.

Off Campus Lunch (Juniors/Seniors ONLY)

Off Campus Lunch provides juniors/seniors the opportunity to leave campus for lunch. Juniors/Seniors must submit an application signed by their parent/guardian to the Assistant Principal's Office for approval. After validation/approval, the student will receive an Off-Campus Lunch sticker that will be affixed to the student's Sotomayor ID card. Questions regarding Off Campus Lunch should be directed to an Administrator in the Assistant Principal's office.

The following rules apply to avoid forfeiture of this privilege:

- Eligibility is based on good standing for the following: academics, attendance, and behavior.
- Students must re-qualify each nine weeks.
- Students are not allowed to visit other campuses.
- Students are required to present a valid Sotomayor student ID with a valid lunch sticker to an administrator/designee when leaving campus for lunch, each day. If a student is picked up for off campus lunch, the individual must be an approved adult/student and sign the student out in the Attendance Office.
- Being tardy from lunch may result in suspension of Off Campus Lunch privileges.
- Students are not allowed to loiter in the parking lots, including sitting in a vehicle.
- Students may only transport other students with valid Sotomayor student ID and Off Campus Lunch stickers. Failure to comply may result in suspension of driving privileges and/or Off Campus Lunch privileges for driver and all passengers.
- Students who lose their ID must purchase a new ID card and obtain a new lunch sticker from the Assistant Principal's Office. Replacement fee: \$5.00.
- Students who become ill while off campus must return to campus and sign-out or have a parent come to campus and sign them out. NO PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
- Off Campus Lunch privileges may be revoked at the discretion of school Administration.

VOE Forms (In Attendance Office)

Students must have a Verification of Enrollment form if taking Driver's Education or if renewing a driver's license (under age 18). See the Attendance Office before school, during your lunch, or after school for details and allow a minimum of 48 hours for processing. Students seeking a Verification of Enrollment form must be in good standing with grades and attendance from the semester prior in order to be issued a VOE, per NISD and TEA policy.

Withdrawals

When it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from school, the student's parent or guardian should report to the Attendance Office to initiate the withdrawal process. All pertinent information that relates to the new educational setting will be recorded on a Withdrawal Documentation form, which then must be signed by the student's parent or guardian. The student will remove all articles from his/her assigned locker and return all textbooks, library books, technology device(s), and other items belonging to Sonia M. Sotomayor High School. The student may then attend his/her remaining scheduled classes that day or return home. Failure to return textbooks, library books, turn in uniforms, technology, or turn in money owed will delay the student's transcript being sent to other schools, jobs, or military service.

Change in Name, Home Phone Number, or Address

The Attendance Office should be informed of any change in the student's name, phone, number or address. This information and notification of such change(s) should be given to the secretary in the Attendance Office. Proof of Address, such as a utility bill, must be submitted to the Attendance Office in order to change the student's address.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Campus Safety

Adults and students should follow all NISD safety protocols. Exterior gates and doors are to remain closed during school hours. When exiting the campus, students may only go through open gates. Exterior/Emergency doors may not be used to exit the campus. Propping doors or gates open or exiting through emergency/exterior doors breaches campus safety and WILL

result in consequences, including but not limited to suspension. All students must be supervised while on campus and must avoid unauthorized locations. The use of metal detectors will be used randomly throughout the school year. Their use will allow the random checks of students, staff, or visitors, and will be coordinated by NISD police and campus administration. This will also support the work of our police canine unit on campuses.

Personal Communication Device Policy

In compliance with state law, the use of personal communication devices by students is not allowed at any NISD campus during the school day, from the first official bell to the last official bell. Usage of these items will also not be allowed during passing periods or lunch periods.

Personal communication devices include cell phones, smart watches, earbuds, tablets, or any other similar items.

Devices of this nature should be powered off and placed into student backpacks and kept in a designated location in each classroom. Students without a backpack will be required to place their device(s) into an identified storage container in the classroom.

Students in violation of this State law and district policy will be subject to progressive disciplinary consequences, to include possible confiscation of the device. Confiscated items will be released to the student's parent/guardian.

Dances

The dress for school dances will be announced prior to the affair and in no case will a student be permitted to attend a dance in improper dress. Students who are under suspension from school, or those students who have been expelled from school, will not be allowed to attend any school function.

School dances are for Sonia M. Sotomayor High School students only and a Sotomayor I.D. is required. Guests who do not attend Sonia M. Sotomayor must be pre-approved by administration. The NISD Student Code of Conduct will be enforced at all on campus and off campus/district events.

Deliveries

Deliveries of any kind will not be accepted on the campus. This includes, but is not limited to food, flowers, balloons, etc. These and any other type of delivery is a safety and security concern and will not be permitted on campus.

Detention

Students may be assigned to detention hall. Detention hall is used for academic and/or disciplinary purposes. Failure to attend a required detention will result in notification of the student's parents and further disciplinary action. Detention hall attendance is the student's responsibility. If a student is absent on detention day, the student must report to the Assistant Principal's office to reschedule it.

E-Cigarettes and Vape Pens

It is against the law for minors to possess e-cigarettes and vape pens. Students are not allowed to have in their possession or utilize e-cigarettes or vape pens on the campus. Students in violation will be subject to disciplinary and legal action and the items will be confiscated.

Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

In order to ensure the safety of the students, it will be necessary from time to time to have fire or evacuation drills.

Instructions will be found in each classroom and will be reviewed by the teacher. Students are to follow these instructions as carefully and as quickly as possible in the event of a drill or an emergency.

Financial Obligations

In order for a senior to participate in senior-related activities including but not limited to prom, invitation distribution, cap and gown distribution, graduation rehearsal, and graduation, the student must be in financially good standing with the campus and the school district. Seniors must clear all debts and obligations prior to these events. Debts and obligations could occur from clubs, classes, or organizations; spirit, fine arts, and athletic organization supplies and activities; uniforms; textbooks; fundraising events; and any other financial debt or obligation from school owned items checked out to the student. Restitution will also be considered an obligation. Furthermore, all other students must be in good standing.

Food Deliveries

In order to maintain campus security, food/restaurant deliveries will not be allowed from parents/ friends/ siblings/or any other family members, Uber Eats, DoorDash, Grubhub, Postmates or any other similar service. Food will be disposed of.

Graduation

The graduation ceremony is a school function, and being such is part of the school year. The school year for a senior ends with the completion of the graduation ceremony. Therefore, a graduating senior who violates the Student Code of Conduct, and as a result is assigned to an alternative placement for a period of time that extends through the date of graduation, may not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony.

Graduation is a solemn and dignified ceremony. Students should dress as if they are preparing to interview for an important job. Facial piercing (other than earrings) will not be tolerated. Students are expected to observe proper etiquette during the entire graduation ceremony. While they are on the stage and receiving diplomas, students must keep their hands at their sides.

at all times. The only time hands may be lifted is when students are receiving diplomas from school board members and shaking hands with the superintendent. Students who raise their hands above their waists for any reasons other than receiving the diplomas or shaking hands may be removed from the graduation ceremony. Students demonstrating any other behaviors that serve to lessen the dignity of the event may be removed from the graduation ceremony. All students are expected to demonstrate a high degree of maturity and behave appropriately. Don't cause embarrassment to yourselves, your parents, and your fellow classmates by being removed from this very special event.

Hall Passes

If a student must leave an assigned class, an official hall pass must be filled out and signed by a member of the faculty or staff. Students in the halls without a pass are subject to disciplinary action.

Handbills

No student or group may distribute or post handbills for any activity or event unless it is approved by the group's sponsor and the administration. Generally, only Northside sponsored activities will be approved.

Health Services

The school nurse gives first aid only. She does not diagnose illnesses, but takes note of symptoms and notifies the parents of her observations. Students are to be kept at home when ill, and they should return only after they have had a normal temperature for 24 hours after any illness. This is important for the health of the student and for the health of all students at school. If a student becomes ill or is injured while at school, he/she will be given first aid and his parents will be notified. In no case will a child be sent home until the parent or the person indicated by the parent has been contacted. Every effort will be made to contact the parent first. If the parent is unable to come for the student, arrangements must be made for his care by the parent. In an extreme emergency, EMS or an ambulance will be called. It is the parents' responsibility to renew the Medical Information Card each year. Please inform the student's counselor or the nurse of diagnosed medical problems. All medication, including OTC medication, must be taken to the nurse by an adult and remain in the nurse's office. Students are not allowed to carry medication on their persons.

Special Health/Medical Problems Occurring During the School Year.

Students with medical problems for which the family physician feels it is necessary to restrict the student's activity at school should promptly provide the school nurse with a note from the doctor specifying any restrictions and limitations and the time period for which they are expected to apply.

The school nurse will notify the appropriate school personnel and will return a copy of the note to the student/parent to be retained as a record.

Identification Badges

All students are required to have a Sonia M. Sotomayor I.D. badge whenever they are on the campus. Students will be required to wear their student badge and have it easily visible at all times. At the request of any school employee, the student is required to produce the badge for identification purposes. If a student loses the ID, the student must purchase a new ID for \$5.00.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

In-School Suspension will be used as a disciplinary measure by the Assistant Principal's office to help students assume more responsibility for their actions. Students will be expected to successfully complete the day and all assigned classwork and demonstrate their ability to follow rules. Failure to display appropriate behavior in ISS may result in an out-of-school suspension assignment and parent conference.

Items Forgotten at Home

If a student forgets books, money, research papers, PE shorts, etc., the administration will not interrupt the instructional process in order to deliver such items to the students; however, properly identified items may be left in the Attendance Office where it will be the responsibility of the student to obtain such items between classes or with a pass from a teacher.

Internet Use

The STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM form must be filled out and signed before a student can have access to the internet. Students are subject to disciplinary action if inappropriate use of the internet occurs while on campus or off campus using a district issued device.

Lockers

Lockers will be issued upon request and should be used for storing books and personal items. Responsibility for lost or stolen items is not assumed by the school or the administration. Every locker left unlocked will be considered out of use and its contents removed. Sonia M. Sotomayor High School has sufficient lockers (one for every student); therefore, lockers should not be shared. Report locker problems to the Assistant Principal's Office. The student is responsible for keeping a record of his/her locker number and combination for future reference. Each student is responsible for removing all belongings from his/her locker prior to the end of the school year. Any items left in the locker will be considered abandoned property and will be donated to charity. DO NOT store valuable items in your locker.

LOCKERS SHOULD ALWAYS BE LOCKED WHEN NOT IN USE. DO NOT GIVE YOUR COMBINATION TO ANYONE ELSE. DO NOT LEAVE MONEY OR VALUABLES IN YOUR LOCKER. DO NOT SHARE LOCKERS!

Lost and Found

If you find anything of value on school grounds or in the building, turn it into the Assistant Principal's Office. An attempt will be made to find the rightful owner. If you lose anything, check with

lost and found in the Assistant Principal's Office.

Metal Detectors

The use of metal detectors will be used randomly throughout the school year. Their use will allow the random checks of students, staff, or visitors, and will be coordinated by NISD police and campus administration. This will also support the work of our police canine unit on campuses.

Nuisance Items

Students are not permitted to wear headphones while in the hallway, classrooms or the library; for safety purposes, the only type of headphones that may be used at school are the small, ear-bud type—no noise-reducing and/or headphones that cover the entire ear.

Students are not permitted to have special occasion/celebration items in the hallways or classrooms. Such items are subject to confiscation by school officials. **(See Section C)**

A nuisance item may be anything that creates a distraction or a safety concern, or in some way disrupts the instructional environment. The designation of an item as a "nuisance" is at the discretion of the principal; these items are not permitted on campus.

Parking Vehicles On Campus

Students may drive their vehicle to school provided they have a current/valid driver's license, have completed the parking permit form, have proof of insurance to include being listed as a driver, and have purchased a parking permit from the Assistant Principal's office. After approval, a parking permit will be issued and affixed to the windshield. Parking is on a first come basis. This permit grants parking privileges for the student lot only. Students must park in designated student parking areas. If you change vehicles, please report the change to the Assistant Principal's office in order to maintain accurate records and to purchase a new parking permit. Any vehicle in the parking lot without a parking permit or improperly parked will be towed at the owner's expense. The policy on parking is subject to change if increased security measures become necessary. Parking stickers change each year. Previous stickers are invalid. No student is to be in the parking lot or adjacent areas during school hours, including the lunch periods, without permission from the administrative office. When arriving at school, secure your vehicle and proceed into the building. Vehicle violations (moving/parked) may result in the removal of parking privileges. Once a parking permit/privilege has been revoked, administrative discretion will determine if or when the privilege will be reinstated. Parking information and parking permits may be obtained in the Assistant Principal's office.

Parking and Traffic Regulations

1.RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. BY ENTERING CAMPUS, THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF ANY VEHICLE CONSENTS TO A SEARCH OF THE ENTIRE VEHICLE AND ITS CONTENTS BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS AND/OR POLICE OFFICERS.
- B. All students, faculty and staff members who park their vehicles on the campus must secure and display a parking permit. THE PURCHASE OF A PARKING PERMIT DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PARKING SPACE. However, it does authorize parking if the space is available.
- C. Strict adherence to rules pertaining to speed and parking will be required to protect pedestrians and vehicles and to provide access for firefighting equipment and ambulances.
- D. Texas laws governing motor vehicle operation are effective on all campus locations.
- E. All accidents on campus should be reported to the campus police officer.

2.PARKING REGULATIONS

- A. Vehicles must be properly parked in designated areas.
- B. Two-wheel vehicles are to be parked in the designated area.
- C. Drivers will refrain from parking in places that may obstruct traffic. It is a violation of these regulations to park in the following manner and may result in the vehicle being towed away:
 - on any curb, sidewalk or island
 - by a red curb
 - in front of a fire hydrant
 - in any place designated as a loading zone or marked "no parking"
 - in front of a movable barrier
 - in any driveway, entrance, or exit
 - double parking
 - parking without a permit affixed to the windshield
 - parking in two spaces
 - parking in reserved areas (visitor, faculty, handicapped, etc.)
 - parking on lawn areas
- D. Space may be limited – come early for a place to park.

3.STUDENT PARKING PERMITS

- Parking Permits are \$20.00. Permits are valid for the current academic year only.
- ONE PERMIT will be issued per student per vehicle. A permit must be affixed to the vehicle's windshield.
- Registration information includes operator's name and address, a valid driver's license, school identification card, vehicle license number and description, and copy of vehicle

insurance and policy number. The insurance policy must have the student listed as one of the insured drivers or as an assigned driver of the vehicle. (Vehicle must be insured before a permit will be issued.)

- All vehicles driven on campus must be registered in the Assistant Principal's office.

Passing Periods

There will be no loitering in the hallways. Students will have sufficient time to go directly from one class to the next. Student will have a six (6) minute passing period. Arriving late to class may result in disciplinary action.

Personal Electronic Devices/BYOD

Students should follow specific guidelines regarding PED's in Section E of the Student-Parent Handbook which include the Acceptable Use of District's Technology Resources. Devices may be used in the classroom; however, it is at the complete discretion of the teacher and must not interfere with instructional time.

Posters

All posters and signs must be placed in designated areas ONLY after they have been approved by the sponsor of the club/organization/class AND the administration. Posters on painted surfaces are PROHIBITED. All posters/signs should be removed in a timely manner.

Restroom Privileges

Students must use the restroom closest to their classroom. Socializing and/or loitering in the restroom is strictly prohibited. Students may not take their cell phones to the restroom during class time. Students may not share a stall for any reason. Violations will result in consequences.

Social Media Awareness

Social media can be a valuable tool when used appropriately. Not everything you read on social media is true. Inaccurate or false information spread on social media can be dangerous and disruptive to a school community. **Students who engage in posting or sharing false or hoax reports will be subject to disciplinary and criminal action (possibly a third degree felony).**

Students Selected for Popularity Courts

Students are elected to courts in conjunction with various events held on the high school campus. Examples include but are not limited to homecoming court, dance and ball courts, and prom court. It is the position of the district that these selections are based on popularity. However, if these court representatives are involved in activities that are extracurricular, or if the activity is held in conjunction with another activity that is considered extracurricular (i.e. Homecoming Court), then the students must meet all eligibility rules relating to extracurricular activities. Student participation in courts that are not considered extracurricular (i.e. dances, ball courts, prom court) must follow the guidelines as specified by the activity sponsor, or the campus principal. Students' participation on any popularity court will ultimately be at the discretion of the campus principal.

Telephones

Office telephones are for business use only and students are not to use them without permission. Telephone messages for students will only be accepted in case of emergency from parents. Class will not be interrupted for telephone calls.

Transportation (District Provided/Private)

Students who ride NISD buses will be dropped off and picked up in the bus loop. For security and safety reasons, students must remain behind the rails while boarding. Students departing the campus before the final dismissal bell may not return to ride NISD transportation. Students who arrive in private vehicles are to be dropped off and picked up in front of the school or in the student parking lot ONLY. Any student seeking a temporary ride on another school bus must bring a signed letter from their parents and must seek administrative permission no later than the morning of the request.

Visitors

All parents and visitors to the campus are required to register in the Front Office with the secretary and indicate the reason for visiting the campus. All parents and visitors must present a valid driver's license or Texas ID. Upon sign-in, all parents and visitors should receive a Visitor's Pass to be displayed on their person while on campus. They are also required to sign-out prior to leaving the campus and return the Visitor's Pass.

STUDENT ACTIVITY AREAS

All students are expected to keep the campus clean.

Ground Rules

Students are required to remain on the school grounds during school hours, including lunch period, subject to the regulations listed below:

1. The building will be open each day at 8:00 a.m.
2. Students who need to go home before the end of the day must report to the Attendance Office to check-out. (See Arrival at School/Check-Out Procedures)

3. The following areas are considered "off limits" to students unless involved in class or official school business. Failure to observe these areas will result in disciplinary action.
 - Parking lots
 - Front/back/sides of the building
 - Athletic playing fields
 - Auditorium
 - Hallways; except during passing periods
 - Teacher/Staff workrooms
 - Teacher/Staff restrooms
 - Unsupervised areas

SCHOOL SERVICES

Career Center

The Career Center offers opportunities for Career Investigation, Post-Secondary Education, and Scholarship Research. The Career Center provides many different types of occupational information designed to help the student research career interests. The following services are available upon request: career interest inventories and computer access to careers, military, colleges, universities and financial assistance, and practice/preparation for college entrance exams. The Career Center is open to students, staff, parents and the community members. Visit the Career Center as often as possible.

Guidance and Counseling

The Northside ISD Guidance Program delivers services to students, parents, and staff through four program components that Texas law (TEC 33.0005+) prescribes for guidance services in Texas Schools: Individual Planning, Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, System Support. The Guidance program is a developmental educational program designed to help students acquire skills for social, personal, and academic success through planned educational experiences and activities. Conferences with counselors are encouraged for students, their parents, and teachers at any time there is a need for special assistance with the student's educational, vocational or personal problems. All students will be scheduled to meet with their counselor in order to review his/her school career and to discuss his/her future educational and vocational plans. Efforts will be made to contact every student during the year to encourage early educational and career planning.

For additional information please visit the Northside web page under Guidance and Counseling.

Health Services

The school nurse administers first aid only. She does not diagnose illnesses, but takes note of symptoms and notifies the parent/guardian of her observations. Students should be kept home when ill, and should have a normal temperature for at least 24 hours without medication after any illness before returning to school. This is important for the health of the students and staff.

Medication

Parents are encouraged to schedule the administration of medication at home when possible. If medication administration is required at school, the following strict rules must be followed:

1. Antibiotics and short-term prescription medication may be administered at school upon written request from the parent/guardian for a maximum of two weeks. Long term prescription medication may be given only if a special medication form is completed by the student's health care provider. All medication must be brought to school in the original prescription labeled bottle.
2. The administration of non-prescription medication is not permitted except when it is ordered in writing by the student's health care provider for a specific condition. Medication should be brought to school in the unopened, original manufacturer's package.
3. No medication, prescription or non-prescription, can be dispensed to or carried by a student at school at any time - this includes cold and cough medications, throat lozenges, cough drops, vitamins or herbal remedies, pain medication, etc....
4. All medication should be delivered to the clinic/office by an adult. If this is not possible, and the medication is sent to school via a student, the parent is responsible for the medication until the medication is delivered to the clinic/office staff.
5. Only students with diabetes, asthma and food allergy can self-administer medication with the proper authorization from their health care provider.

Library

Sonia M. Sotomayor Library Mission Statement: In support of the mission of Northside ISD and the Department of Library Services, the Sonia M. Sotomayor library provides support and leadership for all Sotomayor teachers and students. In the Sotomayor library, the student comes first, and all programs and activities encourage and support the growth, development, and enrichment of our students through their direct involvement in research, reading, and the effective use of technology.

Library Rules

1. Library hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
2. Students may check out up to three items.
3. Books are loaned for a three-week period and may be renewed unless a hold has been placed on the books.

4. The student is responsible for all books checked out in his/her name until the name has been cleared.
5. If a book has been lost or damaged, the student will be required to pay for the book. If a book which has been lost and paid for is found in good condition, the student may request a reimbursement of the amount paid by submitting the receipt and a completed request for reimbursement form.
6. Students using the library are required to sign in and out on the log-in computer.
7. Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior while in the library. Students may be subject to disciplinary action if removed from the library.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION (SEE SECTION B)

AVID

AVID is a 4-year elective college preparatory class that recruits students from the feeder middle schools and enrolls them in advanced level college preparatory classes that fulfill entrance requirements. This preparation is done through providing support to prepare students for college, increasing coping skills, motivating students to seek a college education, and increasing students' career awareness. It is not required that students have any prior honors or college preparatory classes. Students are recruited on their desire to prepare for and attend college after high school.

Awards Assembly - Wildcat Awards

Each year Sonia M. Sotomayor HS recognizes the performance of outstanding students in the areas of academic programs, leadership, and perfect attendance. Selection is based on student performance and teacher nominations.

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes should meet the district criteria as stated in **Section B** of this handbook. Requests for schedule changes should be made through the student's teacher. Appeal of a denied request may be made to the Head Counselor and then to the Academic Dean.

Registrar/Student Records

The Registrar maintains student records. Educational records including courses taken, grades and credits earned, results of standardized tests, and attendance are housed in the Registrar's Office. Student records are treated as highly confidential, and information is released only to authorized persons concerned with the student.

Transcripts

Transcripts of a student's scholastic achievement record and state test scores may be obtained on request. Students who want copies of transcripts sent to colleges, employers, or other agencies should make their requests two weeks in advance and online at <https://nisdtx.scriborder.com/>. The cost for transcripts is \$3.00 each for current students and \$5.00 for former students. The additional amount is to cover the cost of retrieval and processing. Official transcripts will only be sent to schools or agencies designated by the requesting student (with parental signature if the student is under eighteen years of age). The parental signature is required only one time, allowing the Registrar to send copies as requested.

Tutoring

Teachers will provide a tutoring schedule at the beginning of the school year.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Sonia M. Sotomayor High School has a large number of organizations which round out the school program, develop school spirit, and offer a diversity of opportunity for self-expression and development. School organizations and clubs must present a charter for approval and official sanction by the school principal. All clubs and organizations will have a faculty sponsor present at all on or off-campus activities. School organizations and clubs will follow all NISD policies and administrative regulations. Membership in clubs/organizations may consider good standing in academics, behavior, and attendance.

Clubs/Organizations

Students may participate in school-sponsored clubs and organizations only with written consent from a parent or guardian. A completed permission slip must be on file prior to a student's participation in any club meetings, activities, or events.

Membership and Club Charters

Membership in clubs and organizations is open to all students. Students are encouraged to participate in clubs and organizations as they can profit from a wide range of experiences in their high school career. All clubs and organizations have charters on file in the APO. Any student(s) or teacher(s) desiring to start a new club must submit a written charter and have approval of the administration.

Eligibility Requirements for All Offices

Entrance

1. Candidates must have completed and passed all courses for the previous school year.
2. Candidates must not have more than two (2) "Needs Improvement" and/or one (1) "Unsatisfactory" citizenship grade for the previous school year.
3. Candidates must possess the ability to be a leader by being a hard worker with a good attitude. They must be willing to organize projects, speak in front of groups, if necessary, and be willing to meet before or after school as often as one time a week or more often as necessary.

4. Candidates will be screened by their teachers and administration for citizenship, leadership, and scholarship.

Maintenance – Removal from Office

1. Officers must maintain an overall average of 75 or higher in all classes throughout the school year with no grade falling below a 70 in any one class.
2. Officers missing more than two (2) scheduled meetings will be placed on probation. Missing a third meeting will result in removal from office.
3. If any officer fails to meet any of the above criteria, the student will be placed on probation for six (6) weeks. If there is a second probationary period, it will result in removal from office for the remainder of the school year.
4. Applications must be submitted by the deadline on the application form. No late applications will be considered.

Athletics

Sonia M. Sotomayor High School participates in competition under the direction of the University Interscholastic League (U.I.L.) in football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis, golf, volleyball, soccer, softball, water polo and swimming. It is the aim of Sonia M. Sotomayor High School to develop well-rounded athletic programs that will be a source of pride to every student at Sotomayor as well as to everyone in the Sotomayor community.

Choral Department

The choral classes include a men's choir, women's choir, a freshman choir, and a mixed choir. This department presents several concerts each year. Students who are eligible may participate in individual competition leading towards placement in the Texas All-State Choir. Eligible students are also able to participate in the UIL Solo/Ensemble Contest and Concert/Sight-reading Contest.

JROTC

JROTC educates and trains high school students in citizenship; promotes community service; instills responsibility, character and self-discipline; and provides instruction in air and space fundamentals. Junior ROTC is an elective course available to students in all grades. Students are required to wear the Junior ROTC uniform at least once a week on a designated day. Uniforms and books are provided at no cost, and there is no military obligation. Students are also given the opportunity to compete for promotions and leadership positions within the corps of cadets.

Publications

A yearbook, newspaper, and a literary magazine are planned for publication.

Sotomayor Band

The Wildcat Band plays for pep rallies, parades, concerts, and many other events during the year. They perform at football games during half-time activities. The band competes in the following Interscholastic League events: U.I.L. Marching Contest, Solo and Ensemble Contest, and Concert Sight-Reading Contest.

Spirit Organizations

Sonia M. Sotomayor will have a varsity and junior varsity cheerleading squad, dance team, drill team, and pep squad. An administrative procedure has been developed for the selection of these teams.