

IRENE L. CHAVEZ EXCEL ACADEMY

6500 Ingram Rd. Building F • San Antonio, TX 78238 • (210) 397-8120 • Fax: (210) 706-8953
<http://nisd.net/excel>

Student – Parent Handbook

2025-2026

ADMINISTRATION OF NORTHSIDE EXCEL ACADEMY

Darren Calvert.....	Principal	darren.calvert@nisd.net
Vanessa Juarez	Counselor	vanessa.juarez@nisd.net
Elma Flores.....	Registrar/Attendance Secretary	elma.flores@nisd.net
Marisela Gutierrez.....	Bookkeeper/Principal's Secretary	marisela.gutierrez@nisd.net
Michelle Guillen.....	Counselor Secretary.....	michelle.guillen@nisd.net

TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Teachers

Charles Boone - Math	charles.boone@nisd.net
Geoffrey Hernandez- English/Speech/Spanish...	geoffrey.hernandez@nisd.net
Ron Hyde - Social Studies	ron.hyde@nisd.net
Yasemine Kirby – Science	yasemine.kirby@nisd.net
Phillip Lopez - Social Studies.....	phillip.lopez@nisd.net
Carlos Salinas – English/Speech/Spanish	carlos.salinas@nisd.net

Community in Schools

Arianna Martinez.....	cis039@nisd.net
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Special Education Coordinator

Eva Longoria.....	eva.longoria@nisd.net
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Section A Campus Policy

Introduction.....	A-1
To Students	A-1
Code Of Character For ICEA	
Students.....	A-1
To Parents.....	A-1
To Parents and Students.....	A-1
Mission.....	A-1
Philosophy	A-1
School Logo	A-1
School Motto.....	A-1
School Colors	A-1
Student Eligibility	A-2
Application Process	A-2
Student Identification	A-2
People Who Can Help You	A-2
Your Principal.....	A-2
Your Teachers.....	A-2
Your Counselor	A-2
Your Parents	A-3
The Secretaries and Instructional Assistants.....	A-3
Student Voice.....	A-3
Curriculum.....	A-3

Credit Attainment.....	A-3
Financial Obligations	A-3
Awarding of the Diplomas	A-3
Graduation Ceremonies.....	A-3
Class Schedule	A-4
Absences.....	A-4
Excused Absences.....	A-4
Unexcused Absences	A-4
Food Service.....	A-5
Transportation	A-5
Parking Requirements	A-5
Closed Campus	A-5
Evacuation Procedures	A-5
Student Daily Responsibilities	A-6
Visitors	A-6
Student Code of Conduct	A-6
Metal Detectors.....	A-6
Personal Communication Devices	A-6

INTRODUCTION

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 School District. It is the responsibility of each student to read, understand and abide by the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

CODE OF CHARACTER FOR ICEA STUDENTS

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 honorably to discharge this obligation, I promise:

- 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 associations, 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, and my country and the world.

Adopted by the National Association of Student Council

To Parents:

The home is the greatest influence upon the youth during the formative years; from these influences the youth 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, the home and school must work cooperatively for the maximum development of your son or daughter. The purpose of this handbook is to supply you and your son or daughter with information about Irene L. Chavez Excel Academy (ICEA). Hopefully, this information can build a partnership between home and school that more readily assures a successful education for your child. Please make every effort to encourage your son or daughter to attend school regularly (a minimum of four/five consecutive hours, five days a week). Failures are often attributed to irregular attendance, poor learning habits and unwillingness to access help at home and school.

To Parents and Students:

Questions regarding interpretations of rules and regulations in this handbook should be directed to the administration of ICEA (210) 397-8120.

MISSION

The mission of ICEA is to strive to remove barriers for students to earn their high school diploma through a self-paced and challenging curriculum in order to become successful, productive members of society.

PHILOSOPHY

ICEA adheres to the philosophy and goals of Northside Independent School District and the State Board of Education by offering students the opportunity to have a truly unique educational experience. Recognizing student diversity and individual educational needs, ICEA utilizes computer-assisted instruction and relevant application of the curriculum to give students an optimal high school education and foster a lifelong love for learning. ICEA is primarily established for the student who thrives in a self-paced, all-academic, small learning environment and has exhausted all other options to graduate.

SCHOOL LOGO

The eagle symbolizes the freedom and liberty gained through the pursuit of excellence in education. The graduation cap and scroll signify character, academic achievement, and perseverance.

SCHOOL MOTTO

Soaring to Excellence

SCHOOL COLORS

Midnight black, royal blue, and white

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

A student candidate for ICEA must participate in an application process to determine the appropriateness of enrollment and proper placement. The following are guidelines for student enrollment.

At least one of the following criteria exists:

- A student seeking a non-traditional school, small learning environment with individualized/personalized instruction.
- A student whose life situation necessitates a more flexible schedule.
- A student who has dropped out of high school and/or received a GED and would like to earn a high school diploma.

All of the following criteria must exist:

- A high school student who resides in the Northside Independent School District.
- A student who has earned at least 17 credits towards graduation.
- A student at least 17 years of age (less than 21).
- A student that has passed **all** EOC exams.
- A student must be in their 4th year of high school.

APPLICATION PROCESS

*****Students that graduate from ICEA are not ranked as they are in the comprehensive high schools. Our students do not have a statistical factor such as class membership in common which is needed in order to be ranked*****

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

Every student will be issued a student identification card at the time of enrollment. The student ID card must be carried by the student every school day. On occasion, a student may need to check out a wireless laptop computer for their use while at school. Only a government picture ID (current driver's license or military dependent card) will be accepted to checkout a wireless laptop computer.

PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU

Your Principal

The principal of ICEA is responsible to the Superintendent of Schools for proper administration. It is the duty of the principal to organize, supervise, and administer all of the affairs of the school as they affect students, teachers, and patrons. The ultimate goal is the academic success of each student and the principal is more than willing to help you with any of your concerns.

Your Teachers

Your teachers are professionals and specialists in the field in which they teach. They are eager to help you learn new knowledge and skills in your classes. You can rely on your teachers to be resourceful in their methods of instruction, conscientious in making sure that you attain essential knowledge and skills, responsive to your various needs, and diligent in communicating effectively.

Your teachers are the classroom leaders and are charged with the responsibility of supervising and directing all students in the pursuit of an excellent education. Also, the teachers are charged with the responsibility of carrying out the rules and regulations of the Board of Education and any additional policies set up by the administration. In addition to the school rules, each teacher has their own set of classroom rules and expectations. Students are expected to get familiar with the classroom rules of each teacher.

Your Counselor

The ICEA counselor is responsible for nurturing and providing guidance to all students. The counselor is charged to develop each student's capacity to mature, each student's ability to make sound decisions, each student's attainment of realistic goals, and each student's individual education plan.

Students should see the counselor about any of the following areas:

1. Interpersonal relationships
2. Personal problems
3. Group guidance sessions
4. Academic planning; scheduling
5. Career planning
6. Scholarships
7. Financial aid for college
8. College choices
9. Cumulative permanent records

Your Parents

Do not overlook your parents as a resource for support, advice, successful study habits, and "in-house" tutoring. Your parents desire your academic

success and your flourishing entry into adult life.

The Secretaries

The ICEA secretaries are often the first people that you can access for help. They are very knowledgeable about the school and capable of answering your questions.

Student Voice

In order to build a positive community of learners, students are encouraged, even expected, to initiate good communication, participate in critical educational discussions/decisions and share their ideas with the staff of ICEA. Your voice is valuable and needed to maintain a school that is responsive to your educational needs.

Students are invited to become members and participate in the School Advisory Team Meetings.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CAMPUS OPERATING HOURS

- Front Office Hours are from **7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**, Monday through Thursday. On-Friday office hours are from **7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
- Monday through Thursday, classes begin at **7:30 a.m.** and at **3:30 p.m.**. On Friday, classes begin at **7:30 a.m.** and end at **3:00 p.m.**

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

ICEA does not have U.I.L. or extracurricular activities on this campus, however if a student is attending an NISD event the same guidance applies.

All school and U.I.L. rules apply to conduct and dress code for students who attend after-school activities. Written permission and/or an admission fee may be required for many events. Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents for these activities; parents are expected to pick up their child immediately at the conclusion of each activity. Children should not have to wait longer than 15 minutes for parents to pick them up after a school event. If a parent or guardian does not pick up their child in a timely manner, the protocol and procedure set forth by NISD in the Crisis Handbook could be followed by the administrator or staff member if they deem it necessary. Students who are not picked up in a timely manner after a school event or school function could be denied the right to attend future after school functions for the remainder of the year. Students who exhibit inappropriate behaviors will be removed from the activity. Formal attire and/or limousine transportation are not appropriate for these events. Any clothing deemed inappropriate or suggestive is not permitted.

Circumstances that restrict students from attending after-school events are the following:

- out of school suspension/in school suspension assigned for the day of the event
- other disciplinary actions that may warrant non-attendance of the event
- absence from school the day of the event
- repeated misconduct at after-school events
- assignment to an alternative educational campus
- withdrawal from NISD Schools (athletic events may be permitted.)

CURRICULUM

Curriculum offerings will adhere to state curriculum requirements and Northside Independent School District academic standards. Teaching methodologies will include:

- Cooperative learning and small group instruction
- Computer Assisted Instruction
- Individualized instruction
- Relevant applications/projects for each course

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- ICEA is pleased to offer a flexible attendance schedule. The intention of this flexible schedule is to remove time constraints that may exist for students unable to remain enrolled at one of our comprehensive high schools and to increase their attendance rate.

ABSENCES

- To receive an excused absence, students must have a doctor's note, court papers, funeral home note, etc. upon return to school.
- If and when the 5th unexcused absence occurs, the student may be withdrawn from the school.
- A student withdrawn for excessive absences may have the opportunity to re-enroll later in the school year if space is available.

Excused Absences

- Documented medical appointment
- Documented illness
- Documented family emergency
- Documented illness of one's own child
- Documented death in immediate family
- Documented court appointments
- Military testing or training

Unexcused Absences

- Undocumented absence
- Overslept
- Family business
- Family errands
- Job interview

CREDIT ATTAINMENT

Student earning credits for completion of their high school diploma may be taking courses 1) of which they previously did not meet passing standards according to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and/or 2) to attain course credit for the first time. Most credits are earned through online curriculums, computer-based learning system). The final grade is based on computer-assisted instruction and on off-line relevant applications of the TEKS, i.e., projects, presentation, reports, demonstrations, etc.

AWARDING OF THE DIPLOMAS

Upon completion of the graduation requirements set by the State of Texas, students will be awarded a high school diploma. Students that have transferred to ICEA from one of the Northside ISD high schools will be issued a diploma with the name of the campus from which they transferred. For example, a student transferring from Warren High School, upon completion of all graduation requirements will receive a diploma with Warren High School printed on it. Students who have not been enrolled at their home campus for one year or more or that are coming from another school district will be awarded an Irene L. Chavez Excel Academy diploma.

Regardless of what school name is on your diploma, students are not eligible to participate in the home campuses' graduation ceremony or other graduation related activities. Students are only eligible to participate in one of the two district graduation ceremonies listed below. All students' permanent school records will remain under Irene L. Chavez Excel Academy regardless of what your diploma reads.

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

- Students earn credits and obtain graduation status at their own pace. Learning habits, self-discipline, personal abilities to gain essential knowledge and skills, and good attendance are all determining factors that impact how quickly you can earn your credits.
- ICEA offers two graduation ceremonies: one in the winter and the other in the summer. All students who have successfully met all of the Texas Education Agency graduation requirements will be invited to participate in the commencement ceremonies. All graduates must wear the ICEA colors: the black cap and gown with the blue and black tassel regardless of the school's name printed on the diploma the graduate received.
- The graduation ceremonies are school functions, and being such are part of the school year. The school year for a senior ends with the completion of the graduation ceremonies. Therefore, all students participating in the graduation ceremonies **must** follow the Student Code of Conduct. Any student 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, will not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies.
- 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.

FOOD SERVICE

ICEA does not have a cafeteria. However, students eligible for the reimbursable meal program (formerly known as the free or reduced lunch program) may use Holmes cafeteria. Students must always carry their student identification cards with them at all times just in case a staff member requests to see it. It is expected that ICEA students always follow the cafeteria rules and demonstrate appropriate behavior. Students are welcome to bring in their own food from home or use the vending machine. In addition, a microwave and refrigerator are provided for the students' use.

TRANSPORTATION

Northside ISD does not provide bus transportation for students who attend ICEA.

PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Students must apply for a parking permit to drive to school. Proof of insurance and a valid driver's license are required to receive a parking permit. Each vehicle that a student drives must have a parking permit. Students driving a vehicle without a permit may receive a ticket from NISD Police.

CLOSED CAMPUS

ICEA is a closed campus. Students attend school for a minimum of four consecutive hours without leaving the building. Exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the administration. All visitors are required to report to the main office.

CAMPUS VISITORS

All Parents and Visitors are required to register in the Front Office with the Principal's secretary regardless of how long they plan to stay on campus, and must indicate the reason for visiting the campus. They are also required to sign-out prior to leaving the campus. Upon sign-in, all Parents and Visitors should receive a Visitor's Pass, and must wear this pass where it can be visible to staff. These precautions are taken to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff. All volunteers and mentors are also required to do a criminal background check before volunteering on campus or field trips. The background check may be done on-line through the NISD website.

DELIVERY OF ITEMS/ OUTSIDE FOOD ITEMS

In an effort to minimize interruptions and maximize instructional time, **we do not deliver items directly to students.** However, we also recognize that students will sometimes forget an item at home. We will deliver glasses, school items (books, assignments, etc), house keys, and lunch money. For all other items, the student is expected to come by the office BETWEEN classes to retrieve their belongings. No business will be permitted to deliver food to a student (i.e. pizza delivery, sandwich delivery, food delivery services). This procedure helps the school to maintain an academic environment and is effective in helping students practice personal responsibility. **Parent/Guardian dropping off food needs to be an emergency contact listed in HAC. Student needs to be aware food is being delivered and are not permitted to share food. Flowers, balloons, birthday presents etc. will not be delivered and will be held in the office until the end of the day when students can pick them up to be taken home.**

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Each classroom will have specific safety and evacuation procedures posted. Students are to follow in the prescribed directions for each classroom in an orderly manner and follow their teachers' instructions.

STUDENT DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students driving their own vehicles to school should park and immediately enter the school building. Loitering is not allowed.
2. Students arriving by bus should immediately enter the school building. Loitering is not allowed.
3. Upon entering the school building, students must report to the main office and log in.
4. Attendance starts when students arrive at the classroom and begin their course work. The teacher will mark the time the student enters/exits the classroom. Tardies are not issued at ICEA.
5. All students are expected to actively engage in learning at all times and make academic progress.
6. Students are responsible for the computer/laptop issued to them and for their personal belongings.
7. Students are expected to help maintain the cleanliness of the learning environment by properly disposing of trash. Do not place food or drinks near the computers.
8. Students are expected to follow the NISD Student Code of Conduct at all times. Attendance and behavior cards monitor expected student attendance and behavior. These cards should be left with the classroom teachers at all times.
9. At the time of departure, students must return to the main office to log out. Failing to log out will create an absence.
10. Communicate with your teachers or someone in the office of any changes that may impact your attendance or enrollment.

VISITORS

All visitors will enter through main entrance and report to the office. All visitors must sign in and receive a visitor's pass from the office. Anybody found on campus without a pass should be asked if they have a pass or if they need any assistance. If they do not have a pass, they will be escorted to the office.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/ TECHNOLOGY

School districts throughout the country, including Northside ISD, have moved into the "Information Age" by providing network and Internet access for students. Technology will be used abundantly at ICEA. Everything from testing reading levels of students to accessing the Library's card catalog database requires the use of networked computers. With this privilege comes responsibility. Students must use the Northside network and the Internet in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the Northside ISD Acceptable Use Policy. At the beginning of each school year there are two forms that must be signed and returned to the school before your child will be able to use a networked computer at ICEA or have their work published on the ICEA's website and social media platforms.

TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, STUDENTS MUST ASSUME PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO BEHAVE ETHICALLY, EVEN WHEN TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES THEM THE FREEDOM TO DO OTHERWISE. THE USE OF NORTHSIDE NETWORK AND THE INTERNET IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT, WHICH MAY BE REVOKED AT ANY TIME FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR. USERS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY AND GUIDELINES AS A CONDITION OF USING THE NORTHSIDE NETWORK AND THE INTERNET. USE OF NORTHSIDE NETWORK OR THE INTERNET THAT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THIS POLICY MAY RESULT IN LOSS OF ACCESS AS WELL AS OTHER DISCIPLINARY OR LEGAL ACTION.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

In order for a senior to participate in senior related activities such as, cap and gown distribution, graduation rehearsal, and the graduation ceremony, 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.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Section "C" of the Student-Parent Handbook outlines the policies that pertain to all Northside students. However, ICEA uses a unique tool to monitor student attendance and behavior.

An Attendance, Performance, and Behavior (APB) card is issued to each student at the time of enrollment. On a daily basis, teachers record attendance, academic performance, and behavior on this card. **It is the parents' and students' responsibility to read all of the Irene L. Chavez Excel Academy and NISD Handbook policies and procedures before enrolling.**

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.