

2025-26 Parent / Student Handbook Summary

Chapter 1: Introductory Information and General Notices [pp. 9-21]

This section provides general information about District 161 schools, including start times [p.11], cell phone expectations [p. 11], opportunities for parents to get involved in parent organizations [p. 18], and information about the prevention of child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors [p. 19].

Chapter 2: Attendance, Promotion, and Graduation [pp. 22-27]

Consistent school attendance is a critical component of a high quality education. This chapter discusses the difference between excused and unexcused absences [p. 22], chronic absenteeism [p. 24], and student grades [p. 25]. Section 2.60 - Grading and Promotion, has updated information regarding our change to Standards-based Grading [p. 25].

Chapter 3: Student Fees and Meal Costs [pp. 28-29]

Beginning in 2024-2025, Open Kitchens will provide elementary school food services and Arbor Management will supply PJHS. Page 28 contains school lunch pricing information for all levels.

Chapter 4: Transportation and Parking [pp. 29-30]

District 161 provides free bus transportation for students who live more than 1.5 miles from their neighborhood school and centralized bus stops are used for efficiency. Page 29 provides general bus expectations and page 30 reviews the consequences of negative bus behaviors.

Chapter 5: Health and Safety [pp. 31-36]

Student safety is always an area of focus in District 161 and pages 30-32 cover information regarding school physicals and student medications. Page 33 addresses what to do when your child is sick and when to keep them home from school. Finally, pages 34 and 35 review school safety drills [Code Red and Code Yellow].

Chapter 6: Discipline and Conduct [pp. 36-52]

There is a lot of important information in this section and it is recommended that you review the contents closely. The list of prohibited student conduct [pp. 37-39] identifies the behaviors that must be avoided to protect student / staff safety and to provide a positive learning environment. The consequences for not following these guidelines can be located on pages 40-41. Bullying and harassment are never allowed in District 161 schools and pages 42-49 review the district expectations and responses to reports of bullying. Teen dating violence and prevention are also reviewed in this section [pp. 46-49]. Bullying, harassment, and unsafe situations should immediately be reported to a school staff member for investigation and response.

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Chapter 7: Internet, Technology, and Publications [pp. 52-56]

There is no expectation of privacy on any District 161 device or network and the appropriate use of district technology is expected at school and at home. Internet services are filtered to prevent students from accessing inappropriate content online [p. 51]. When using the Internet and various District 161 software applications, student data is protected in accordance with the Student Online Personal Protection Act [SOPPA, pp. 53-54].

Chapter 8: Search and Seizure [pp. 56-57]

This section discusses the process to search lockers and personal items [p. 56].

Chapter 9: Extracurricular and Athletic Activities [p. 57]

For elementary guidelines, review pages 72-76. PJHS information can be found on pages 77-90.

Chapter 10: Special Education [pp. 57-59]

Information on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are located on page 56.

Chapter 11: Student Records and Privacy [pp. 59-64]

Protecting our students' personal data is very important in District 161. Pages 60-63 contain detailed information regarding student records and how you can access the information in your child's student file.

Chapter 12: Parental Rights Notifications [pp. 64-71]

It is important for parents to know their rights and how they can support the academic progress of their child[ren]. Pages 65 and 66 list the topics covered for health education and sexual health in grades 5 through 8. The rest of the chapter reviews mandatory notifications and information available for District 161 families.

Chapter 13: Elementary School Specific Information [pp. 72-76]

Chapter 14: Parker Junior High School Information [pp. 77-91]