

# Parent / Student Handbook

## 2021-2022



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Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

A-G Approved Courses

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## ABOUT BEST ACADEMY

### *Mission*

Brookfield Engineering Science Technology Academy (B.E.S.T.) will harness the power of a flexible learning environment and modern educational technology to serve learners with diverse backgrounds and goals, who seek an education alternative that stimulates and supports independent learning, provides a strong social-emotional approach, and supports STEM college and career readiness. With a standards-based online curriculum, combined with superior individualized support, B.E.S.T. will create a learning environment that empowers students to rise to the challenge of independent, self-directed learning.

### *School-wide Learner Expectations P.R.I.D.E.*

**P**roductive and self-directed learners

**R**esponsible and ethical citizens

**I**ndependent thinkers

**D**ecision-makers and problem solvers

**E**ffective communicators

### *CORE VALUES*

Innovation

Opportunity

Achievement

Collaboration

Flexibility

### *Description of Program:*

B.E.S.T. Academy was established in 2019. BEST Academy Independent Study Program is a non-classroom-based charter school for grades 3 through 12 under the auspices of the Julian Union School District. We are accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

As a virtual school, we utilize a variety of digital tools and platforms. Academic instruction occurs for each core class (Math, English, Science, History) virtually once a week. Additionally, students complete their course work independently through an online platform. Students are also provided opportunities for tutoring and clubs. We conduct parent workshops and parent-teacher meetings virtually.

### ***Benefits of Independent Study:***

- Enables the student to study at their own pace within the limits of state attendance requirements for Independent study (see appendix A)
- Provides an alternative for students to achieve competency and mastery of California Content Standards.
- Facilitates the student’s active participation in his or her education.
- Offers real flexibility in the design of an educational program.
- Offers educational choices to students and families. Enrollment in independent study must be voluntary, a choice made by the student and parent. Attendance records are based on a student's work within the terms and conditions of their written agreement and not on traditional “seat time.” Therefore, each student must be motivated to study on his or her own as prescribed by the agreement.

### ***Who Benefits from Independent Study?***

All students can benefit from independent study through B.E.S.T. Academy through our universal policies and adaptive curriculum. For example:

#### **Specialized Students**

The specialized student—one who is extraordinarily creative, talented, or gifted in a particular field— may seek independent study assistance as they develop or practice an outstanding skill. Performers in areas of physical or artistic expertise may find the flexibility and adaptability of independent study can meet their special needs.

#### **Students Who Travel**

Students who travel during the school year need a kind of correspondence–based study, which substitutes a variety of communications for face-to-face communications. The traveling student’s program is not interrupted when they are enrolled in a school-based independent study, thereby decreasing the student’s risk of falling behind.

Note: a student’s primary residence must be within the county or adjacent county in which BEST is chartered out. (San Diego, Orange, Riverside, Imperial).

#### **Student Who is Interested in Industry Certifications**

B.E.S.T. Academy offers students the opportunity of obtaining an industry certification in medical and IT career pathways.

#### **Students Who are Interested in a College Experience While in High School**

Students who demonstrate academic success will be given the opportunity of taking current college courses to gain college credits from a university while attending High School

#### **Students Who Might Otherwise Drop Out**

Many young people find out that the traditional high school program prevents them from entering “real life” fast enough. They want to combine working and specialized study with their education. Many students drop out because they feel unsupported or disconnected in a regular school setting. Moreover, they may lack the skills or self-discipline needed to succeed.

B.E.S.T. Academy can, in many cases, offer these students the opportunity of studying independently at home, at their own pace, and at a time that is convenient for them.

### **Students Who Need Additional Support**

B.E.S.T. Academy offers multiple resources catered to increasing students' English Language proficiency through differentiated instruction and specially designed curriculum apps. B.E.S.T. academy reinforces continued growth through benchmark testing and data analysis. All core curriculum is presented to students using SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English).

### **General Enrollment Requirements**

- A student must have completed the BEST enrollment process, submitted all required compliance documents, and signed a Master Agreement prior to starting courses.
- In accordance with Ed. Code 51747.3 a student must reside within the county in which BEST is authorized or a contiguous county to county in which BEST is authorized (San Diego, Imperial, Orange, and Riverside counties).
- A student may only be enrolled at BEST and NOT concurrently in another school, public or private unless there is permission given to attend a community college.

### **Master Agreement**

To attend BEST, student, Parent/Legal Guardian, and supervising teacher must sign a Master Agreement ("MA") prior to the first day of courses each school year. (Ed code 51747(g) and 51749.6) This is a legal document and must be signed, dated, and returned to BEST. No student will have access to the curriculum until the MA is signed and returned.

Failure to sign and return an MA within the first three (3) days of starting courses will result in a mandatory meeting with the school administration or designee. The signed MA is the agreement that the scholar and parent sign to demonstrate their intention to continue enrollment in BEST. All scholars enrolled in BEST must sign a new Master Agreement each school year.

An addendum, or updated MA, must be submitted if changes are made in courses, supervising teacher, or grade level during the school year. This document also requires that each student, Parent/Legal Guardian, and supervising teacher sign, thus approving the changes.

## **DESCRIPTION OF ROLES**

### **Student Expectations**

- Takes ownership of their learning
- Completes all assignments according to the school's pacing plan (see Appendix B)
- Satisfy or exceed minimum individual course expectations per all class syllabi while adhering to school grading policy (see Appendix D)
- Prepares properly and with a good faith effort participates in state assessments and

school mandatory benchmark testing (3 times a year for all core classes)

- Communicate with their subject teachers virtually, by email, and/or phone.
- Informs their teacher of any issue that interferes with learning promptly.
- Attends live synchronous classes as scheduled, prepared, and on time. All students must virtually attend each of their core class sessions weekly, at the same time as your teacher and classmates from home (see Appendix A)
- Attends office hours and tutoring as required by the teacher if passing grades are not maintained or progress does not align with mandatory requirements.
- 3 days of no work in Buzz is an attendance issue that may result in a home visit.
- An *Evaluation of Continued Enrollment* will occur if 15 assignments or more are past due. This is a multi-tiered intervention between the student/guardian/administration/teacher to determine continuance in the program in accordance with California Assembly Bill's AB 130 and 167 (see Appendix A)
- No assignments will be accepted over 10 school days past the original due date.

### **Responsibilities of Parent/Legal Guardian**

- Provides students with a conducive learning environment at home
- Understands the requirement for a student(s) to participate in local and state assessments. These include but are not limited to NWEA, STATE, PFT, and ELPAC
- Promptly communicates regularly with the teacher and returns emails and/or phone messages
- Monitor student progress weekly through the student/parent portal and analyze the weekly progress report sent through [progress@bestacademycs.com](mailto:progress@bestacademycs.com)
- Update contact (phone number, address) information by logging in to reg-online [Bestacademy.parentstudentportal.com](http://Bestacademy.parentstudentportal.com)
- Notify school: email [info@bestacademycs.com](mailto:info@bestacademycs.com) (regarding changes contact info (home address, phone number, email))
- Attends any progress meetings/conferences with teachers, success coaches, administration, and other staff as needed. These are designed to discuss growth, updates, and any other concerns that need to be addressed.
- Completes any required forms or documents sent by staff.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

- Reviews and assesses the entire body of work and assigns grades for the Learning Period
- Schedules time to assess students every week
- Hold live synchronous classes
- Provides synchronous tutoring/office hours
- Keeps detailed records of communication
- Documents student learning and assess progress at each learning period (There are ten learning periods in an academic year.)
- Advisory Teachers offer guidance with respect to curricular choices or suggest various resources to help meet a student's needs and/or style of learning.
- Aids or training as needed for families regarding online educational resources offered by the school.

- Participates and facilitates professional learning development catered to B.E.S.T. Academy
- Forwards information to parent/legal guardian concerning various B.E.S.T. Academy educational activities.
- Provides information related to B.E.S.T. Academy policies and procedures
- Responds to grading and communication from parents, students, and school staff within 24-36 hours

## PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### STATE STANDARDIZED TESTS

As a public charter school, our students participate in the following state tests:

1. \*SBAC TESTING for English and MATH: Grades 3-8, and 11 (CAASPP - California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress)
2. CAST Test for Science: Grades 5,8,11 (grade 12 only if they have not previously taken it)
3. Physical Fitness Test: grades 5, 7, and 9 (PFT)
4. English Language Learners: ELPAC Test - English language proficiency Assessment

\*All students are expected to participate in state testing.

These state tests provide BEST with critical data to assist students in promoting achievement. These tests also indicate to the state how effective BEST is at accomplishing its mission. According to ESSA (*Every Student Succeeds Act*), a public school is required to have a 95% participation rate on any state testing. Less than 95% participation will result in the state penalizing the school.

The state tests are conducted at various sites in Southern California and proctored by teachers. A testing schedule is provided to parents ahead of time.

### General Educational Development Test (GED) <https://ged.com/>

A test that may be taken by scholars 18 years of age or older to earn a California High School Equivalency Certificate. Prior to registering for the exam, contact your Success Coach.

### Internet and Computers

Participation in BEST academy requires an internet connection. Basic internet service can be provided free of charge for all enrolled students who wish to use it. An internet connection is required because our program requires that students log in to their curriculum and Clever Apps daily to complete their assignments. Completing daily assignments also counts as logging in and submitting assignments is also how attendance is determined. See Appendix E for the check-out form.

BEST has computers available for loan free of charge to all students to use during the school



year. Parents who wish to borrow a computer must fill out the appropriate forms. Please be advised that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy. The computer will need to be returned to BEST when the students disenroll or graduate.

### ***Internet Safety Policy***

It is the policy of BEST to prevent access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via the internet, email, or other forms of electronic communications; prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal ID of minors; and to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

### ***First Meeting and Orientation***

In High School, At the beginning of each semester, the student and parent/legal guardian will be introduced to the individual Student Plan (HSP). The HSP will serve as the document by which academic progress will be monitored to ensure the student graduates on time.

### ***New Student Orientation***

New students and parents will attend an orientation session with a BEST Academy staff member. Students will be provided login credentials and learn how to navigate our online curriculum platforms, access email, and learn about school procedures and the importance of the Master Agreement. Teachers sent a welcome email along with a calendar invite indicating the day and time of their synchronous class.

### ***Communication Requirements***

It is crucial to the success of a student that the parent, teacher, and student are in regular communication. Time-sensitive information regarding student progress, curriculum, and testing needs to be communicated regularly. Teachers and parents are part of a team working for the educational success of the students.

The following are the recommendations for communication between parties:

- Parent/legal guardians check email once per day, Monday through Friday, and respond within 24 hours
- Students check email three times per day, Monday through Friday, and respond within 24 hours if needed
- The teacher will reply by the end of the next school day
- The teacher is available Monday – Friday 8:00 am-4:00 pm with the exception of school holidays

## GRADING POLICIES

### Grade Level Placement Policy

A student's grade level is determined upon initial enrollment and is included in the Master Agreement.

#### 3rd-8th grade

- incoming students will be placed at their age-appropriate grade level, but not below or above grade level unless the previous school has officially approved retention or promotion
- Incoming students must provide the most recent report card/progress report in enrolling during the school year to determine appropriate grade placement. Failure to do so does not delay enrollment BUT may delay the correct placement of the student into courses.
- If a student has not attended school for an entire year or more appropriate placement will be reviewed by the administration.

#### 9th-12th grade

- An incoming student must provide an official transcript, and a most recent report card/progress report. Failure to do so does not delay enrollment BUT MAY delay the correct placement into courses.
- Upon enrollment, high school students will be placed into courses according to the credits earned on their transcript from previous schools.

### Grading Policy/Scale

B.E.S.T. Academy teachers ultimately decide final grades per their syllabi. As per Ed code, as referenced on the Master Agreement

- 3 days of no work in Buzz is an attendance issue that may result in a home visit.
- A state-mandated *Evaluation of Continued Enrollment* will occur if 15 assignments or more are past due OR if less than 60% of the work has been completed in a 4 week period. This is a multi-tiered intervention between the student/guardian/administration/teacher to determine continuance in the program. It is part of our tiered intervention plan (see *Multi-tiered Academic Support* later in this document)
- No assignments will be accepted over school 10 days past the original due date.
- College level, Advanced Placement, and Honors courses are weighted on a 5-point scale for the student's transcript. Please refer to the Pacing Guide and Student Weekly Schedule Checklist in Appendix B.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%

C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

### **CURRICULUM/CLEVER APPS**

B.E.S.T. Academy utilizes multiple online curricula. In addition to the Core online Curriculum, The students will complete work in multiple CleverApps to satisfy the requirements of each class. *Clever* is a single sign-on program that students use to access all of their required curricula online. Once logged in students will be able to access all of the Clever Applications assigned to them. Students will work simultaneously and on pace with all required Apps. Please refer to Appendix C for current Clever applications.

<b>Core Online Curriculum</b>	<b>Clever Applications</b>
70% of the overall grade	30% of the overall grade

### **High School**

#### **A-G Requirements:**

If students are planning on enrolling in the UC/CSU system for college, then students are required to take A-G approved high school courses. 15 approved courses must be completed with a "C" or higher and 11 courses must be completed before their senior year. With the permission of BEST Academy, students can also take A-G courses at a Community College. Click here for a list of BEST Academy's A-G-approved courses.

<https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist/institution/5585>

In addition to A-G requirements, it is recommended that students take the SAT/ACT and subject SATs to ensure adequate learning in core subject areas. Students who follow the UC Graduation Track are NOT guaranteed acceptance into any university.

**General Education Track:** Students who plan to enter the workforce after graduation OR attend a two-year Community College will be admitted into the General Education Grad Track. A-G-approved courses are not necessary to graduate. General Education students have access to all A-G-approved courses. (See Appendix D for A-G graduation requirements)

#### **Repeat Policy/Credit Recovery**

A student has the option to retake a course to replace the previous grade of the original with the approval of their Success Coach. Retaking the course does not constitute additional credits towards graduation. Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to check the policies of the college or university of his/her choice to ensure that a D grade will transfer.

#### **Credits**

Depending on the student's personal goals, the number of credits will differ. A B.E.S.T. Academy High School student must always be enrolled in at least 20 credits per semester (4 courses) with

30 credits (6 courses) the recommended amount. If a student wants to take more than 30 credits a semester in one semester, they must get approval from their Success Coach.

### ***Incomplete Course***

If a student does not finish a course by the end of the semester, the student may receive partial credit for the work that the student *has* completed.

The decision will take into consideration student progress and learning, student's plan for next semester and beyond, as well as other B.E.S.T. Academy circumstances.

### ***High School Graduation***

Students who complete all graduation requirements prior to the date of graduation will be permitted to participate in B.E.S.T. Academy's June Graduation Ceremony.

### ***Attendance***

A student's continued enrollment at B.E.S.T. Academy is based on maintaining adequate progress in courses. **Students are required to work online in all scheduled classes, and submit assignments each day. Students who do not log in to their curriculum for 3 days will initiate a re-engagement process, which may result in a home visit. Students** are expected to complete **a minimum of 25-30 hours of study/school work each week.**

### ***Plagiarism/cheating***

As members of the B.E.S.T. Academy community, students are expected to adhere to a high level of intellectual integrity. The school community takes pride in the atmosphere of honesty and academic integrity the teachers and students maintain. Students are honor-bound to refrain from cheating or plagiarizing academic work. Those who do so can expect both grade penalties and disciplinary consequences.

Any instance of cheating or plagiarism by a B.E.S.T. Academy student is unacceptable. B.E.S.T. Academy students are expected to follow ethical and responsible academic behavior. Any instance of plagiarism/cheating is documented in the student file. The following is not tolerated at B.E.S.T. Academy:

- Cheating on tests or assessment
- Plagiarism (passing off others' work as your own)
- Copying and pasting work from online sources as your own
- Fabrication (making up sources that do not exist)
- Theft or alteration of academic materials

**First offense:** A student committing any of the above offenses one time will lose credit for assignment/assessment, and will not be given an opportunity for makeup. This offense will result in a meeting with the parent/legal guardian, student, teacher.

**Second offense:** A student committing any of the above offenses on two separate occasions in

the same course will receive a failing semester grade in that course and a meeting will be held with the parent/legal guardian, student, teacher, and administration. A student committing any of the above offenses on two separate occasions in two separate courses will result in a meeting with the above attendees, and a decision will be made regarding the next steps. This may result in a failing grade in both courses.

**Third offense:** A student committing any of the above offenses on a third-occasion will result in an immediate failing semester grade in ALL courses that have been affected by cheating/plagiarism. A meeting with the parent/legal guardian, student, teacher, and school administrator will follow, and the student's continued enrollment will be discussed. This may result in disenrollment from the program.

### ***District Level Complaints***

B.E.S.T. Academy students and their parents tend to maintain very close communication with their teachers. Such communication is vital to each student's academic success. In some cases, the student or parent may have a concern that they wish to bring to the attention of the administration. Discussing such issues with the administration will routinely result in a satisfactory resolution. Concerns not resolved at this level may be submitted in writing to the B.E.S.T. School Board. [Uniform Complaint Information](#)

### ***Conduct, Grievance, Due Process, and Communication***

**Freedom of Speech:** B.E.S.T. Academy respects students' rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands, and support causes – whether controversial or not – through their speech, writings, printed materials, and/or the wearing of buttons, badges, and other insignia. B.E.S.T. Academy will limit students' freedom of expression as allowed by law, maintain an orderly school environment, and to protect the rights, health, and safety of all members of the school community. For the purposes of this policy, "school premises" includes online (internet) as well as the School's physical premises. In addition, any venue where a school event is held, including but not limited to such places as state testing sites, field trip locations, school social event venues, school dance venues, or graduation venues, will also be considered "school premises" while that school activity is taking place and while school personnel and students are there.

Limitations on student expression include the following:

- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials which are obscene, libelous, or slanderous.
- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials, which demonstrably incite students to commit unlawful acts.
- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials, which violate school rules or substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the School.
- Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct in any school setting or activity, which for any reason materially disrupts school work or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others.
- The use of "fighting words" or epithets is not constitutionally protected if the speech, considered objectively, is abusive and insulting rather than a communication of ideas,

and the speech is used in an abusive manner in a situation that presents a danger that it

**Written Publications Code:** Students are free to post or distribute handbills, leaflets and other printed or electronic material, as long as they comply with the above guidelines, and bear the name and the address or contact location of the sponsoring organization or individual. Students may collect signatures on petitions concerning either school or out-of-school issues.

Printed materials or petitions may be distributed only:

1. Before or after any school-sponsored activity;
2. In locations that do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic to or from any school-sponsored activity; and
3. Without undue noise.

Students must not use any form of coercion to convince students or any other person to accept printed matters or to sign petitions. No funds or donations shall be collected for any material distributed.

Students have a right to express their opinions in school publications such as newsletters, written assignments, and other school publications that are distributed, but must follow the limitations listed above regarding the legally allowable limits on student expression in a school setting. If there are pupil editors of official school publications who may be responsible for assigning and editing the news, journalism advisers (school employees), remain ultimately responsible for supervising and maintaining professional standards of English and journalism.

There shall be no undue delay in publishing student materials unless there are valid concerns that the material violates these guidelines.

**Clothing/Buttons and Badges:** Buttons, badges, armbands, or clothing bearing slogans or sayings may be worn unless their message falls within the categories prohibited above. No teacher or administrator shall interfere with this practice on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

**Discipline and Appeals:** Students may be disciplined for speech or communication which violates the above policies. However, students will not be disciplined solely for activities that are considered to be constitutionally protected speech or communication.

### ***Bullying and Prohibited Behaviors***

is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not

limited to, stalking, bullying/cyberbullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as, but not limited to, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, national origin, parenting or marital status, immigration status, disability or any other category protected by state or federal law.

The following definitions are intended to guide in assessing whether a particular behavior is prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

**Harassment** - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

**Bullying** – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written, or cyber harassment, physical assault, or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

**Cyber-bullying** – the use of information and communication technologies, such as but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc. to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text, video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to, or otherwise acquiesced in the at-issue posting or other transmissions.

**Hazing** – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse, or humiliation to initiate a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at-issue behavior(s) and action(s).

**Intimidation** – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

**Violence within a dating relationship** - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological,

and/or mental abuse.

**Sexting** - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another person any photograph or video which depicts nudity and/or text message that is sexually explicit and/or is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another person as described above.

**Prohibited behaviors** include all of the above.

The School Administration and School Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, and intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, caretaker, or other third-party.

This Policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property.

This Policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that a student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation by using the Uniform Complaint Procedure found here:

When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, B.E.S.T. Academy shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to him/her. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the School shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the B.E.S.T. Academy's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position



and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in this handbook.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s)' caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification, care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, and/or dating violence.

If, after investigation, the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the school staff or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such students, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

**Retaliation** against any person who reports is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This Policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by state or federal law).

**Complaints:** Students and/or their caretakers may file formal written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by following the Uniform Complaint Procedures available on the school website. Such reports should be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports shall be promptly forwarded to the designated person for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint

Complaints regarding suspected discrimination in any school program based on the protected categories may be directed to the B.E.S.T. Academy's Title IX Coordinator. Contact information

may be found on the school website. Complaints are filed using the Uniform Complaint Procedures available on the school website

<https://www.bestacademycs.com/uniformcomplaintcompliance>.

B.E.S.T. Academy will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the B.E.S.T. Academy's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

### ***Discipline and Due Process for Students***

All students enrolled in B.E.S.T. Academy are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the B.E.S.T. Academy, and caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are outlined in this Supplement. Students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

**Suspension:** When a student is suspended, he/she is temporarily removed from class (digital curriculum) and/or other school-sponsored programs or activities. The length of a suspension is determined by administration (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing promptly and will become part of a student's school record. Please see the below Suspension (no more than ten (10) days) section for more information.

During a period of suspension as defined by the administration, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of the digital curriculum is restricted. Student access to WebMail, message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of the digital curriculum may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the caregiver is responsible for logging on to the digital curriculum and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his/her schoolwork during a suspension.

The following list of offenses may result in suspension or expulsion from the B.E.S.T. Academy. All cases recommended for expulsion will be investigated and determined on specific facts.

#### Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion [California Education Code 48915(c)]

The administration must recommend expulsion for the following:

1. Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm.
2. Brandishing a knife at another person.
3. Selling a controlled substance.
4. Committing or attempting to commit sexual assault.
5. Possession of explosives (US Code, Section 921, Title 18)

**Expulsion:** When a student is expelled, he/she is separated from the School for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. Expulsion will be documented timely

and in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia.

Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

The School will not discipline students protected under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA)*, or the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* unless the school complies with the requirements of those acts and state law.

Quasi-Mandatory/Permissive Recommendation for Expulsion [California Education Code 48915 (a)]

Administration shall recommend expulsion for the following and The Governing Board is required to make an additional finding that either of the following conditions exists:

- (a) Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or
- (b) Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.
  - 1. Causing serious physical injury
  - 2. Possession of any knife, explosive, or dangerous object of no reasonable use to a student. As used in this section, "knife" means any dirk, dagger, or other weapons with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade longer than 3 1/2 inches, a folding knife with a blade that locks into place, or a razor with an unguarded blade.
  - 3. Possession of any controlled substance
  - 4. Robbery or extortion
  - 5. Assault or battery on a school employee

Discretionary Recommendation [California Education Code 48900]

Administration may recommend expulsion for the following if:

- (a) Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or (b) Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.
  - Physical injury to another person
  - Willfully caused physical injury by force or violence upon another person
    - a. Possession of weapons, explosives, or dangerous objects
    - b. Possession or use of controlled substance, alcohol, or intoxicant
    - c. Offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell a substance represented to be a controlled

- substance
- d. Committed robbery or extortion
  - e. Vandalism to school property or private property
  - f. Theft
  - g. Possession of tobacco
  - h. Excessive use of profanity or repeated vulgarity
  - i. Possession of drug paraphernalia
  - j. Defiance or disruption of school activities
  - k. Possession of stolen property
  - l. Possession of an imitation firearm
  - m. Commit or attempt to commit sexual assault or sexual battery
  - n. Harass, threaten or intimidate a student witness
  - o. Selling Soma
  - p. Hazing
  - q. Sexual harassment
  - r. Hate violence
  - s. Intentional harassment, threats, or intimidation
  - t. Intentional terrorist harassment, threats, or intimidation against school staff or property

Jurisdiction [California Education Code 48900, 48915]

All school rules will be enforced:

- While on school grounds
- While coming to or going from school
- During or while coming to or going from a school-sponsored activity.

**Expulsion Committee:** If the Executive Director finds that a student committed an offense that may justify expulsion, the Executive Director shall refer the matter to the President of the Board of Directors. The Board President has the discretion to determine if the matter will be heard by the Board of Directors or by an Expulsion Committee. Expulsion Committee members will be appointed by the Board President.

The Expulsion Committee shall be comprised of a minimum of three members; at least one committee member will also be a member of the Board of Directors. Impartial and neutral committee members will be selected for each instance requiring review of a student's potential expulsion. If a matter is referred to the Expulsion Committee, the committee adjudicates in the place of the Board of Directors. The student shall have the right to present his/her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, and be represented by counsel. All committee decisions regarding a student's expulsion are final.

**Due Process for Students:** The following actions will be conducted by the School, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

**The suspension (no more than ten (10) days):** An informal hearing will be convened with the

student, caretaker, Director, and other staff members as appropriate. The Director will inform the student and caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his/her version of the occurrence. If the Director determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, a written notice will be provided to the student and his/her caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law. The administration has the authority to decide to suspend a student for up to 10 days.

**Suspension of more than 10 days (Expulsion):** If the Director believes that a student has committed an offense that might require expulsion, the Director may suspend the student for ten (10) days pending further proceedings and/or a Board or Expulsion Committee hearing. During this time, the Director may then request a hearing by the Board of Directors, or the appropriate Expulsion Committee, to discuss the possible expulsion of the student. If the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time, and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or caretaker have a right to review the student's school records before the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his/her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, and be represented by counsel. The Board, through the Director, will provide notification to the student and caretaker of the Board or Expulsion Committee's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board or Expulsion Committee is final.

**Discipline for Students with Disabilities:** If a student with a disability violates a code of conduct, he/she will be disciplined according to the discipline measures described above for up to ten (10) days. Upon subsequent violations that result in suspensions that exceed ten (10) days, or exceed ten (10) days cumulatively within a school year, the School will determine if the behavior manifested from the student's disability. If B.E.S.T. Academy determines that the violation is not a manifestation of the student's disability, B.E.S.T. Academy will apply the discipline procedures to the student in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities. However, if it is determined that the violation manifested from the student's disability, B.E.S.T. Academy will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior plan to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

## STUDENT SERVICES

### *Mental Health Services*

B.E.S.T. Academy recognizes that when unidentified and unaddressed, mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, and/or violence. Access to mental health services at B.E.S.T. Academy is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills

and achieve. B.E.S.T Academy incorporates Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) into our curriculum.

### ***Human Trafficking***

California has the highest number of incidents of human trafficking in the U.S., and all scholars may be vulnerable. B.E.S.T. Academy believes it is a priority to inform our scholars about (1) prevalence, nature of and strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking, techniques to set healthy boundaries, and how to safely seek assistance, and (2) how social medial and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking.

In accordance with the California Healthy Youth Act, B.E.S.T. Academy will provide age-appropriate instruction on the prevention of human trafficking, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. You have the right to excuse your child from all or part of the instruction on the prevention of human trafficking. In accordance with the California Healthy Youth Act, B.E.S.T. Academy will provide age-appropriate instruction on the prevention of human trafficking, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. You have the right to excuse your child from all or part of instruction on the prevention of human trafficking. If you choose to opt-out your child from all or part of the instruction, send an email to your scholar’s supervising teacher stating so. Your consent for this instruction is NOT required. If we do not receive a written request to excuse your child, your child will be included in the instruction. Information and materials for parents/guardians about the curriculum and resources on the prevention of human trafficking and abuse, including sexual abuse, assault, and harassment are available on B.E.S.T. Academy’s website for your review.

### ***California Healthy Kids Survey***

The Charter School will administer the California Healthy Kids Survey (“CHKS”) to scholars in grades 5, 7, 9, and 11 whose parent or guardian provides written permission. California Education Code sections 51513 and 51938(c) specify that parent or guardian consent be granted before scholars are given questionnaires or surveys asking about personal beliefs or practices that include health behavior and risks. There are two (2) kinds of parent or guardian consent: passive and active.

- Active Consent requires that a parent or legal guardian be notified in writing and gives written permission for the scholar to participate in the survey. Active consent is required of the fifth-grade CHKS.
- Passive Consent requires that a parent or legal guardian be notified in writing about the survey and is allowed to review the survey. Parents need to notify the school if they do not want their child to participate in the survey. Passive consent is required for CHKS administered to scholars in grades seven through twelve.

The CHKS is an anonymous, confidential survey of school climate and safety, scholar wellness, and youth resilience that enables the Charter School to collect and analyze data regarding local youth health risks and behaviors, school connectedness, school climate, protective factors, and school violence.

### ***English Language Development (ELD)***

BEST Academy is committed to the success of English learners. Support for English Learners is provided within the curriculum as well. Students designated as ELD are placed into the appropriate ELD class according to the placement test they are given upon their enrollment.

BEST will meet all relevant legal requirements for ELs as they pertain to annual parent notification, identification, placement, ELPAC testing, monitoring, and reclassification to fluent English proficient status.

### **California Healthy Youth Act**

The California Healthy Youth Act requires that comprehensive sexual health education and human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) prevention education be taught to scholars at least once in middle school and once in high school, beginning no later than grade seven. Instruction and materials must be medically accurate, objective, age-appropriate, and inclusive of all scholars, as defined by law. The law requires that instruction and materials must encourage scholars to communicate with parents, guardians, or other trusted adults about human sexuality. Parents can preview the School Health course syllabus and scope and sequence by request. A parent of a scholar has the right to excuse their child from all or part of comprehensive sexual health education, HIV prevention education, and assessments related to that education through a passive consent (“opt-out”) process. The Charter School does not require active parental consent (“opt-in”) for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education. Parents and guardians may:

- Inspect written and audiovisual educational materials used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.
- Excuse their child from participation in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education in writing to the Charter School.
- Be informed whether the comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education will be taught by Charter School personnel or outside consultants. When the Charter School chooses to use outside consultants or to hold an assembly with guest speakers to teach comprehensive sexual health or HIV/AIDS prevention education, be informed of:
  - a. The date of the instruction
  - b. The name of the organization or affiliation of each guest speaker
  - c. Request a copy of Education Code sections 51930 through 51939.

Anonymous, voluntary, and confidential research and evaluation tools to measure students’ health behaviors and risks (including tests, questionnaires, and surveys containing age-appropriate questions about the student’s attitudes concerning or practices relating to sex) may be administered to students in grades 7-12. A parent or guardian has the right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey through a passive consent (“opt-out”) process. Parents or guardians shall be notified in writing that this test, questionnaire, or survey is to be administered, given the opportunity to review the test, questionnaire, or survey if they wish, notified of their right to excuse their child from the test, questionnaire, or survey, and informed that to excuse their child they must state their request in writing to the Charter School.

A student may not attend any course in comprehensive sexual health education or HIV prevention education or participate in an anonymous, voluntary, and confidential test, questionnaire, or survey on student health behaviors and risks, if the Charter School has received a written request from the student’s parent or guardian excusing the student from

participation. An alternative educational activity shall be made available to students whose parents or guardians have requested that they not receive the instruction or participate in the test, questionnaire, or survey

### ***Nondiscrimination Statement***

BEST does not discriminate against any scholar or employee based on actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

BEST adheres to all provisions of federal law related to scholars with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEA”).

BEST does not discourage students from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the Charter School for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance, disability, neglect or delinquency, English proficiency, for being homeless or a foster/mobile youth, economic disadvantage, nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. BEST shall not encourage a scholar currently attending BEST to disenroll or transfer to another school based on any of the aforementioned reasons except in cases of expulsion and suspension or involuntary removal in accordance with the Charter School’s charter and relevant policies.

BEST does not request nor require scholar records before a scholar’s enrollment. BEST shall provide a copy of the California Department of Education Complaint Notice and Form to any parent, guardian, or scholar over the age of 18 at the following times: (1) when a parent, guardian, or scholar over the age of 18 inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery; and (3) before disenrollment of a scholar.

### ***Youth Suicide Prevention Policy***

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 215, as added by Assembly Bill 2246, (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2016) mandates that the Governing Board of any local educational agency (LEA) that serves pupils in grades seven to twelve, inclusive, adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The policy shall specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers, and ensure that a school employee acts within the authorization and scope of the employee’s credential or license.

For more information on AB 2246 Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies, go to the California Legislative Information Web page at

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB2246](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2246)



For resources regarding youth suicide prevention, go to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) letter regarding Suicide Prevention Awareness Month on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr16ltr0901.asp> and the Directing Change For Schools Web page at <http://www.directingchange.org/schools/>

Additionally, the CDE encourages each LEA to work closely with their county behavioral health department to identify and access resources at the local level.

While the mandate does not apply to private schools or students below grade seven, we do encourage them to consider adopting a suicide prevention policy as a safety net for all students. This is particularly important since suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages fifteen to twenty-four. Students in earlier grades are also known to consider, attempt, and die by suicide—which is also a leading cause of death among ten to twelve-year-olds. Research demonstrates that suicidal ideation may start as early as preschool (however, suicide deaths are very rare among children nine years of age and younger). Although elementary and private schools are not legally required to adhere to AB 2246, they may want to consult with their legal staff about the advisability of adopting such a policy.

### ***BEST Academy Youth Suicide Prevention Policy***

The Governing Board of BEST Academy recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider (17 percent of high school students) and attempt suicide (over 8 percent of high school students) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. As a result, we are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing campus that minimizes suicidal ideation in students.

Recognizing that it is the duty of the district and schools to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. As it is known that the emotional wellness of students greatly impacts school attendance and educational success, this policy shall be paired with other policies that support the emotional and behavioral wellness of students.

This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors.

Empirical evidence refutes a common belief that talking about suicide can increase risk or “place the idea in someone’s mind.”

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Directors or Designee shall develop strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies shall include professional development for all school personnel in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, including substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff (afterschool), and other individuals in regular contact with students such as crossing guards, tutors, and coaches.

The Director or Designee James Mays shall develop and implement preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include the following:

### ***Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention***

Director James Mays shall involve school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and professionals, law enforcement, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district’s strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. BEST Academy must work in conjunction with local government agencies, community-based organizations, and additional community supports to identify additional resources.

To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, and updated, BEST Academy shall appoint an individual to serve as the suicide prevention point of contact for the school. This policy shall be reviewed and revised as indicated, at least annually in conjunction with the previously mentioned community stakeholders.

### ***Resources:***

The K–12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention has been created to help schools comply with and implement AB 2246, the Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies. The Toolkit includes resources for schools as they promote youth mental wellness, intervene in a mental health crisis, and support members of a school community after the loss of someone to suicide.

Additional information about this Toolkit for schools can be accessed on the Heard Alliance Web site at <http://www.heardalliance.org/>

## **Prevention:**

### **A. Messaging about Suicide Prevention**

Messaging about suicide affects suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, BEST Academy along with its partners has critically reviewed and will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide.

Resources:

- For information on public messaging on suicide prevention, see the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Web site at <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>
- For information on engaging the media regarding suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/making-headlines-guide-engaging-media-suicide-prevention-california-0>
- For information on how to use social media for suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/how-use-social-media>

### **B. Suicide Prevention Training and Education 3**

BEST Academy, along with its partners has carefully reviewed available staff training to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Training shall be provided for all school staff members and other adults on campus (including substitutes and intermittent staff, volunteers, interns, tutors, coaches).

Training:

- At least annually, all staff shall receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention.
- All suicide prevention training shall be offered under the direction of school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, or social workers) who have received advanced training specific to suicide and may benefit from collaboration with one or more county and/or community mental health agencies. Staff training can be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.

- At a minimum, all staff shall participate in training on the core components of suicide prevention (identification of suicide risk factors and warning signs, prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention) at the beginning of their employment. Previously employed staff members shall attend a minimum of one-hour general suicide prevention training: *Assisting In Suicide Prevention*. Core components of the general suicide prevention training shall include:
  - Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
  - How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide;
  - How to respond appropriately to the youth who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and an immediate referral for a suicide risk assessment;
  - Emphasis on immediately referring (same day) any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide for assessment while staying under constant monitoring by a staff member;
  - Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide;
  - Review the data annually to look for any patterns or trends of the prevalence or occurrence of suicide ideation, attempts, or death. Data from the California School Climate, Health, and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) should also be analyzed to identify school climate deficits and drive program development. See the Cal-SCHLS Web site at <http://cal-schls.wested.org/>.
- In addition to initial orientations to the core components of suicide prevention, ongoing annual staff professional development for all staff should include the following components:
  - The impact of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health;
  - Common misconceptions about suicide;
  - School and community suicide prevention resources;
  - Appropriate messaging about suicide (correct terminology, safe messaging guidelines);
  - The factors associated with suicide (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors);
  - How to identify youth who may be at risk of suicide;
  - Appropriate ways to interact with a youth who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal. Specifically, how to talk with a student about their thoughts of suicide and (based on district guidelines) how to respond to such thinking; how to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide and appropriately respond and provide support based on district guidelines;
  - District-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk (including multi-tiered systems of support and referrals). Such procedures should emphasize that the suicidal student should be constantly supervised until a suicide risk assessment is completed;
  - District-approved procedures for responding to the aftermath of suicidal behavior (suicidal behavior postvention);

- Responding after a suicide occurs (suicide postvention);
- Resources regarding youth suicide prevention;
- Emphasis on stigma reduction and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide;
- The emphasis is known that any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide is to be immediately referred (same day) for assessment while being constantly monitored by a staff member.
- The professional development also shall include additional information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Youth affected by suicide;
  - Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts;
  - Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders;
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth;
  - Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care;
  - Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences;

#### Resources:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) teaches a 5-step action plan to offer initial help to young people showing signs of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care. YMHFA is an 8-hour interactive training for youth-serving adults without a mental health background. See the Mental Health First Aid Web page at <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/course-types/youth/>
- Free YMHFA Training is available on the CDE Mental Health Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/projectcalwell.asp>
- Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is a gatekeeper training that can be taught online. Just as people trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. See the QPR Web site at <http://www.qprinstitute.com/>
- SafeTALK is a half-day alertness training that prepares anyone over the age of fifteen, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide alert helper. See the LivingWorks Web page at <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/safetalk/>
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their

immediate safety. See the LivingWorks Web page at

<https://www.livingworks.net/programs/asist/>

- Kognito At-Risk is an evidence-based series of three online interactive professional development modules designed for use by individuals, schools, districts, and statewide agencies. It includes tools and templates to ensure that the program is easy to disseminate and measures success at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. See the Kognito Web page at <https://www.kognito.com/products/pk12/>

### **Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services**

Employees of the BEST Academy and their partners must act only within the authorization and scope of their credentials or license. While it is expected that school professionals can identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, and prevent the immediate risk of suicidal behavior, treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools can provide.

### **Specialized Staff Training (Assessment)**

Additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to mental health professionals (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses) employed by BEST Academy.

Resource:

- Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) is a one-day training workshop for behavioral health professionals based on the latest research and designed to help participants provide safer suicide care. See the Suicide Prevention Resource Center Web page at <http://www.sprc.org/training-events/amsr>

### **Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education**

- To the extent possible, parents/guardians/caregivers should be included in all suicide prevention efforts. At a minimum, schools shall share with parents/guardians/caregivers the BEST Academy suicide prevention policy and procedures.
- This suicide prevention policy shall be prominently displayed on the BEST Academy Web page and included in the parent handbook.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers should be invited to provide input on the development and implementation of this policy.

- All parents/guardians/caregivers should have access to suicide prevention training that addresses the following:

Resource:

- Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
- How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide;
- How to respond appropriately to the student who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and referral for an immediate suicide risk assessment.
- Parents as Partners: A Suicide Prevention Guide for Parents is a booklet that contains useful information for parents/guardians/caregivers who are concerned that their children may be at risk for suicide. It is available from Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE). See the SAVE Web page at <https://www.save.org/product/parents-as-partners/>

### **Student Participation and Education**

BEST Academy along with its partners has carefully reviewed available student curricula to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Under the supervision of school-employed mental health professionals, and following consultation with county and community mental health agencies, students shall:

- Receive developmentally appropriate, student-centered education about the warning signs of mental health challenges and emotional distress;
- Receive developmentally appropriate guidance regarding the district's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures.
- The content of the education shall include:
  - Coping strategies for dealing with stress and trauma;
  - How to recognize behaviors (warning signs) and life issues (risk factors) associated with suicide and mental health issues in oneself and others;
  - Help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school-based and community resources and refer peers for help;
  - Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.

Student-focused suicide prevention education can be incorporated into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, freshman orientation classes, science, and physical education).

BEST Academy will support the creation and implementation of programs and/or activities on campus that raise awareness about mental wellness and suicide prevention (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Weeks, Peer Counseling Programs, Freshman Success Programs, and National Alliance on Mental Illness on Campus High School Clubs).

Resources:

- More Than Sad is school-ready and evidence-based training material, listed on the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center’s best practices list, specifically designed for teen-level suicide prevention. See the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Web page at <https://afsp.org/our-work/education/more-than-sad/>
- Break Free from Depression (BFFD) is a 4-module curriculum focused on increasing awareness about adolescent depression and designed for use in high school classrooms. See the Boston Children’s Hospital Web page at <http://www.childrenshospital.org/breakfree>
- Coping and Support Training (CAST) is an evidence-based life-skills training and social support program to help at-risk youth. See the Reconnecting Youth Inc. Web page at <http://www.reconnectingyouth.com/programs/cast/>
- Students Mobilizing Awareness and Reducing Tragedies (SMART) is a program comprised of student-led groups in high schools designed to give students the freedom to implement suicide prevention on their campus that best fits their school’s needs. See the SAVE Web page at <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/smart-schools-program-2/>
- Linking Education and Awareness for Depression and Suicide (LEADS) for Youth is a school-based suicide prevention curriculum designed for high schools and educators that links depression awareness and secondary suicide prevention. LEADS for Youth is an informative and interactive opportunity for students and teachers to increase knowledge and awareness of depression and suicide. See the SAVE Web page at <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/leads-for-youth-program/>

#### **Intervention, Assessment, Referral A. Staff**

- Two BEST Academy staff members who have received advanced training in suicide intervention shall be designated as the primary and secondary suicide prevention liaisons. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student’s suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary designated suicide prevention liaison. If this primary suicide prevention liaison is unavailable, the staff shall promptly notify the secondary suicide prevention liaison.



- Under normal circumstances, the primary and/or secondary contact persons shall notify the directors, another school administrator, school psychologist, or school counselor, if different from the primary and secondary contact persons. The names, titles, and contact information of multi-disciplinary crisis team members shall be distributed to all students, staff, parents/guardians/caregivers and be prominently available on school and district Websites.
- James Mays, Director and Daniel Crook, Curriculum Director, The director, another school administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, or nurse shall then notify, if appropriate and in the best interest of the student, the student's parents/guardians/caregivers as soon as possible and shall refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community. Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.
- If the student is in imminent danger (has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911.
- Whenever a staff member suspects or knows a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary or secondary suicide prevention liaisons.
- Students experiencing suicidal ideation shall not be left unsupervised.
- A referral process should be prominently disseminated to all staff members, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources. The Director or Designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications if a suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a student or adult on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.
  - **Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers:**  
A referral process should be prominently disseminated to all parents/guardians/caregivers, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources.
  - **C. Students**  
Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt.

### **Parental Notification and Involvement**

BEST Academy shall identify a process to ensure continuing care for the student identified to be at risk of suicide. The following steps should be followed to ensure continuity of care:

- After a referral is made for a student, school staff shall verify with the parent/guardian/caregiver that follow-up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be required to provide documentation of care for the student.
- If parents/guardians/caregivers refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at-risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the suicide point of contact (or other appropriate school staff member) will meet with the

parents/guardians/caregivers to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build an understanding of the importance of care. If follow-up care for the student is still not provided, school staff should consider contacting Child Protective Services (CPS) to report neglect of the youth. (LEA to Insert CPS Contact Information). LEA to include crisis intervention procedures, including counseling and other support systems

### **Action Plan for In-School Suicide Attempts**

If a suicide attempt is made during the school day on campus, it is important to remember that the health and safety of the student and those around him/her are critical. The following steps should be implemented:

- Remain calm, remember the student is overwhelmed, confused, and emotionally distressed;
- Move all other students out of the immediate area;
- Immediately contact the administrator or suicide prevention liaison;
- Call 911 and give them as much information about any suicide note, medications are taken, and access to weapons, if applicable;
- If needed, provide medical first aid until a medical professional is available;
- Parents/guardians/caregivers should be contacted as soon as possible;
- Do not send the student away or leave them alone, even if they need to go to the restroom;
- Listen and prompt the student to talk;
- Review options and resources of people who can help;
- Be comfortable with moments of silence as you and the student will need time to process the situation;
- Provide comfort to the student;
- Promise privacy and help, and be respectful, but do not promise confidentiality;
- Students should only be released to parents/guardians/caregivers or to a person who is qualified and trained to provide help.

### **Action Plan for Out-of-School Suicide Attempts**

If a suicide attempt by a student is outside of BEST Academy property, it is crucial that the LEA protects the privacy of the student and maintain a confidential record of the actions taken to intervene, support, and protect the student. The following steps should be implemented:

- Contact the parents/guardians/caregivers and offer support to the family;

- Discuss with the family how they would like the school to respond to the attempt while minimizing widespread rumors among teachers, staff, and students;
- Obtain permission from the parents/guardians/caregivers to share information to ensure the facts regarding the crisis is correct;
- Designate a staff member to handle media requests;
- Provide care and determine appropriate support to affected students;
- Offer to the student and parents/guardians/caregivers steps for re-integration into school.

### **Supporting Students after a Mental Health Crisis**

Careful steps must be taken to help provide mental health support for the student and to monitor their actions for any signs of suicide. The following steps should be implemented after the crisis has happened:

- Treat every threat with seriousness and approach with a calm manner; make the student a priority;
- Listen actively and be non-judgmental to the student. Let the student express his or her feelings;
- Acknowledge the feelings and do not argue with the student;
- Offer hope and let the student know they are safe and that help is provided. Do not promise confidentiality or cause stress;
- Explain calmly and get the student to a trained professional, guidance counselor, or designated staff to further support the student;
- Keep close contact with the parents/guardians/caregivers and mental health professionals working with the student.

### **Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt**

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well-planned re-entry process ensures the safety and wellbeing of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment. The following steps shall be implemented upon re-entry:

- Obtain a written release of information signed by parents/guardians/caregivers and providers;
- Confer with student and parents/guardians/caregivers about any specific requests on how to handle the situation;
- Inform the student's teachers about possible days of absences;

- Allow accommodations for students to make up work (be understanding that missed assignments may add stress to students);
- Mental health professionals or trusted staff members should maintain ongoing contact to monitor student's actions and mood;
- Work with parents/guardians/caregivers to involve the student in an aftercare plan.

Resource:

- The School Reentry for a Student Who Has Attempted Suicide or Made Serious Suicidal Threats is a guide that will assist in school re-entry for students after an attempted suicide. See the Mental Health Recovery Services Resource Web page at [http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted\\_suicide\\_resources\\_for\\_schools-9/](http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted_suicide_resources_for_schools-9/)

### **Responding After a Suicide Death (Postvention)**

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on students and staff. Therefore, we must be prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. LEA to Insert Primary and Secondary Suicide Prevention Liaisons] for BEST Academy] shall ensure that each school site adopts an action plan for responding to a suicide death as part of the general Crisis Response Plan. The Suicide Death Response Action Plan (Suicide Postvention Response Plan) needs to incorporate both immediate and long-term steps and objectives. Suicide Postvention Response Plan shall:

- Identify a staff member to confirm death and cause (school site administrator);
- Identify a staff member to contact the deceased's family (within 24 hours);
- Enact the Suicide Postvention Response Plan, including an initial meeting of the district/school Suicide Postvention Response Team;
- Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification).
- Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:
  - Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death;
  - Emotional support and resources available to staff;
  - Notification to students about suicide death and the availability of support services (if this is the protocol that is decided by administration);
  - Share information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose.
  - Prepare staff to respond to needs of students regarding the following: Review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment;
  - Talking points for staff to notify students;

- Resources available to students (on and off-campus).
- Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitative behavior;
- Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitative behavior;
- Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death;
- Consider funeral arrangements for family and school community;
- Respond to memorial requests in a respectful and non-harmful manner; responses should be handed in a thoughtful way and their impact on other students should be considered;
- Identify a media spokesperson skilled to cover the story without the use of explicit, graphic, or dramatic content (go to the Reporting on Suicide.Org Web site at [www.reportingonsuicide.org](http://www.reportingonsuicide.org)). Research has proven that sensationalized media coverage can lead to contagious suicidal behaviors.
- Utilize and respond to social media outlets:
- Identify what platforms students are using to respond to suicide death
- Identify/train staff and students to monitor social media outlets
- Include long-term suicide postvention responses:
  - Consider important dates (i.e., anniversary of death, deceased birthday, graduation, or other significant events) and how these will be addressed.
  - Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of deceased
  - Consider long-term memorials and how they may impact students who are emotionally vulnerable and at risk of suicide

#### Resources:

- After a Suicide: A Toolkit for School is a comprehensive guide that will assist schools on what to do if a suicide death takes place in the school community. See the Suicide Prevention Resource Center Web page at <http://www.sprc.org/comprehensive-approach/postvention>
- Help & Hope for Survivors of Suicide Loss is a guide to help those during the bereavement process and who were greatly affected by the death of suicide. See the Suicide Prevention Resource Center Web page at <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/help-hope-survivors-suicide-loss>
- For additional information on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, see the Mental Health Recovery Services Model Protocol Web page at [http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted\\_suicide\\_resources\\_for\\_schools-9/](http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted_suicide_resources_for_schools-9/)
- Information on school climate and school safety is available on the CDE Safe Schools Planning Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>

- Additional resources regarding student mental health needs can be found in the SSPI letter Responding to Student Mental Health Needs in School Safety Planning at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr14ltr0212.asp>.

**Note:** This model policy is considered exemplary and is not prescriptive, per EC Section 33308.5:

(a) Program guidelines issued by the State Department of Education shall be designed to serve as a model or example, and shall not be prescriptive. Program guidelines issued by the department shall include written notification that the guidelines are merely exemplary and that compliance with the guidelines is not mandatory.

(b) The Curriculum Director shall review all program guidelines prepared by the State Department of Education before issuance to local education agencies. The director shall approve the proposed guidelines only if he or she determines that all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The guidelines are necessary.

(2) The department has the authority to issue the guidelines

(3) The guidelines are clear and appropriately referenced to and consistent with, existing statutes and regulations.

### **Homeless Youth Policy**

#### **Definitions**

The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes children and youth who are: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);

- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

If a child or youth’s living situation does not fall into the situations described above, the school should refer to the McKinney-Vento definition of “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence” and consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis. Note that incarcerated children and youth and children and youth in foster care are *not* considered homeless.

*Unaccompanied Youth* means a youth, not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as defined above. The more general term youth also includes unaccompanied youth.

*Enrollment* and *enrollment* mean attending school and participating fully in all school activities.

*Immediate* means without delay.

*School of Origin* means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

*Local Liaison* is the staff person(s) designated by our School organization as the person(s) responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the local homeless education liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Co-Director James Mays [jmays@bestacademy.com](mailto:jmays@bestacademy.com)

**Identification:** Homeless children and youth will be identified. Data will be collected on the number of enrolled students identified as homeless children; where they are living; their academic achievement (including state and local assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

**School Selection:** Each homeless child and youth has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend any school that houses students who live in the attendance area or area of eligibility in which the child or youth is living. As a charter school, B.E.S.T. Academy is a school of choice, and the eligibility of students to attend depends on student age and the county in which the student resides or has permanent residency. Therefore, in selecting a school, homeless children and youth will remain at their school of choice to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent's or youth's wishes. Eligibility for homeless students enrolling for the first time in the school will be based on the location of the student at the time of enrollment. At the time of first enrollment, the student must be residing in a county served by one of the B.E.S.T. Academy. Once enrolled, students may remain at their school of choice the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. This also applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing during the summer, in which case eligibility and continued enrollment are based on the location that was last documented for the student when they were deemed eligible to enroll. Homeless students who become permanently housed during the school year or the summer before the school year starts will only be able to attend B.E.S.T. Academy at the start of that following school year if the location of the permanent housing is in a county served by B.E.S.T. Academy. Services that are required to be provided, including services under federal and other programs, will not be considered in determining feasibility. Because continued eligibility for homeless students is determined in accordance with federal law, the school will claim state pupil funding for any homeless student who decides to remain enrolled even if they are not residing in a county served by B.E.S.T. Academy, but as long as they are still residing in the state of California.

**Enrollment:** The school shall immediately enroll the eligible homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as

previous academic records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The Master Agreement is required by California law and will be collected as part of the application process. School staff will expedite the collection of the Master Agreement so that it does not delay enrollment.

**Transportation:** Homeless children and youth will be provided with transportation services as the need arises and on a case-by-case basis if extraordinary barriers or circumstances exist that would otherwise impair the student's successful participation in academically required or meaningful opportunities.

**Services:** Students experiencing homelessness must be provided with services that are comparable to the services offered to other students not experiencing homelessness. These services include educational programs or services such as programs for children with disabilities, programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational education, and programs for gifted and talented students, for which a student experiencing homelessness meets the eligibility criteria. Homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services.

**Training:** The local liaison(s) will participate in, and share information with staff, regarding McKinney-Vento Title X requirements and sensitivity/awareness regarding homeless issues.

**Coordination:** A local liaison(s) will be appointed as the school's primary contact between homeless families, school personnel, and other service providers. The liaison is responsible for coordinating services to ensure that homeless students enroll in school and have an opportunity to succeed academically. The liaison(s) shall also collaborate and coordinate as needed with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and community personnel who work with these students and their families.

**Disputes:** If there is a dispute regarding any issue covered in this policy, the student will have the rights of a homeless child or youth to all appropriate educational services, transportation, and Title I, Part A services while the dispute is pending. The school will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision regarding any dispute, and the right to appeal, and will refer the parent or unaccompanied youth to the appropriate local liaison immediately.

Such notice will be in a language the parent or unaccompanied youth can understand, and include a summary of the dispute resolution process. Detailed dispute resolution procedures are included in the school's Homeless Education Procedures. Complaints about how the school is generally complying with or adhering to the legal requirements for homeless students are handled through the Uniform Complaint Procedures, found on the school website.

### ***Student Work Permits***

Students under 18 years of age must obtain a work permit from BEST Academy after receiving an employment opportunity. The work permit can be found in the student portal and must be signed by a school administrator. Contact your Success Coach for assistance in completing.



### ***Community College and University Concurrent Information***

Students may enroll in **community college and/or university concurrent** courses with the approval of the B.E.S.T. Academy while taking and *maintaining weekly progress* in a minimum of four B.E.S.T. Academy classes (20 credits). Contact your Success Coach for the appropriate paperwork.

For courses that B.E.S.T. Academy does not offer (including additional a-g courses for UC bound students), students may enroll in such courses at a Community Colleges for dual credit if the student meets the following circumstances:

1. Must be in good standing with B.E.S.T. Academy academically.
  - a. Have received a 3.0 GPA in his/her most recent semester.
  - b. Have received a minimum of 20 credits in his/her most recent semester.
2. Demonstrates good attendance/progress in assigned B.E.S.T. Academy courses.
3. Must be enrolled in a minimum of 20 credits with B.E.S.T. Academy.
4. High school credit will be awarded on a 5-point GPA rating scale

### ***Financial Aid***

BEST will ensure that every student receives information on how to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) appropriately, at least once before the scholar enters 12th grade.

Click here for the FAFSA form and information <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

### ***Transcript and student records requests***

The middle school and high school transcript is the official, permanent record of each student's academic accomplishments. To request an official transcript please complete the form online at <https://www.bestacademycs.com/request-student-records-transcripts> Include your name, date of birth or ID number, and the address where you want the transcripts sent. Please allow up to 14 days to complete a transcript request.

### ***Transcripts and Records from Previous Schools:***

The Registrar will add high school courses, grades, and units based on documentation from another high school's official transcript. It is the student/parent's responsibility to contact the previous school and request the official transcript to be sent to the Registrar for posting to the student's B.E.S.T. Academy transcript.

### ***College Transcript submission***

B.E.S.T. Academy policy allows for college-level courses to be posted on the high school transcript once the Registrar has received the Official Transcript from the college. College and university courses are posted at the request of the student/parent and it is not required that all college courses be posted on the student's high school transcript. It is the student's responsibility to request an official transcript to be sent directly to the Registrar.

## Multi-tiered Academic Support and Intervention (evaluation of continued enrollment)

A student's continued enrollment at B.E.S.T. Academy is based on maintaining adequate progress in courses. Students are expected to log in and submit assignments each day and to complete a **minimum of 25-30 hours of work each week**. As per Ed code 51747 If one or more of the following occurs then the following multi-tiered support process will begin to determine if the student is a good fit for an independent study school.

1. 15 assignments missing in 20 days
  2. Completing less than 60% of assigned work over four weeks
  3. Failure to submit any assignments in 3 school days.
- A. **Tier 1 Warning Letter** – The student is sent a warning letter outlining support that will be provided and identifying what needs to be improved and given 1 week to get back on track. A meeting between parent and teacher must occur.
  - B. **Tier 2 Danger Letter/Contract** – After 1 week if a student has not improved, a 2nd letter is sent and the student is provided additional support to get back on track. The student is required to attend tutoring for two weeks. A meeting between parent and teacher must occur.
  - C. **Tier 3: Alternative Options Letter/contract--** After 2 weeks if a student has not made adequate progress as outlined in the contract then a parent-pupil conference will be scheduled to determine if the student is a good fit for independent study. Parents, students, teachers, and administrators/designees should be present at this meeting. Possible outcomes of this meeting could include the following:
    - A. 2 more weeks of tutoring and academic support
    - B. Removal from BEST Academy program

**Failure to attend the pupil-parent meeting**– If the parent/guardian or a student fails to attend the meeting with school administration, or if they fail to contact the school to reschedule the meeting, the school will attempt once more to make contact with the student and parent(s) to determine the reason for missing the meeting and reschedule. If no contact is made via email, phone, or video conference a member of the school staff will conduct a home visit to verify address and contact information and a continued evaluation of enrollment will be made.

**Notice of disenrollment** – If a student is not meeting the contract requirements, by the 3rd Tier Alternative Options then the student may be removed from the school.

## SPECIAL MANDATES

### California law mandates the following:

- No student shall be required to participate in an independent study (Education Code Section 51747)
- No individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Ed. Code Section 56026, may participate in the independent study unless his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation (Ed. Code Section 51745)
- No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code Section 48026.3 through independent study (Ed. Code Section 51745).
- B.E.S.T. will follow all county and state guidelines and mandates in regards to Covid-19, as directed.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Legal Requirements and Special Mandates

#### CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY BILLS:

[CA AB 130](#)

[CA AB 167](#)

## Appendix B: Pacing Plan

		Semester 1																			
		Sept			Oct					Nov			Dec			Jan				Feb	
Academic weeks	Date	Sept 10th	Sept 17th	Sept 24th	Oct 1st	Oct 8th	Oct 15th	Oct 22nd	Oct 29th	Nov 5th	Nov 12th	Nov 19th	Dec 3rd	Dec 10th	Dec 17th	Jan 7th	Jan 14th	Jan 21st	Jan 28th	Feb 2nd	
<b>Accelerate &amp; BrightThinker</b>		4.0%	9.6%	15.2%	20.2%	25.8%	31.4%	37.0%	42.6%	48.2%	53.8%	59.4%	65.4%	71.0%	76.6%	82.2%	87.7%	92.7%	98.3%	100.0%	
<b>DreamBox (1 lesson a day)</b>		0	1	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	80	lessons
<b>PowerUp (units)</b>																					
	Word Study	0	0	0	5	9	14	19	23	28	32.5	37	41.5	46	50.5	55	59.5	64	70	70	Units
	Grammar	0	0	0	10	16	22	28	34	40	46	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	85	Units
	Comprehension	0	0	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	165	170	Units
<b>Core5</b>			0	0	10	20	35	55	75	95	115	135	155	175	195	215	235	255	275	280	units
<b>LexiaEnglish (Units)</b>		0	0	27	54	81	108	135	162	189	216	241	268	295	322	349	376	403	430	435	units
<b>Beable (2 articles a week)</b>		0	0	2	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	16	18	20	21	23	25	27	29	30	articles

		Semester 2																		
		Feb				March			April					May				June		
Academic weeks	Date	Feb 4th	Feb 11th	Feb 18th	Feb 25th	March 4th	March 11th	March 18th	April 1st	April 8th	April 15th	April 22nd	April 29th	May 6th	May 13th	May 20th	May 27th	June 3rd	June 10th	June 15th
<b>Accelerate</b>		2.0%	7.5%	13.0%	18.5%	24.0%	29.5%	35.0%	40.5%	46.0%	51.5%	57.0%	62.5%	68.0%	73.5%	79.0%	84.5%	89.5%	95.0%	100.0%

## Appendix C: Curriculum Providers and Course Offerings

Core Class	Required Clever Application programs
English	Lexia Core 5 (grades 3-5) Lexia Power Up (grades 6-12)
Math	Dreambox
History	Beable
Lexia English	Students in English Language Development class (ELD)

### 2021-2022 Curriculum Providers

#### Accelerate Education: (6<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Core)

Accelerate Education is a digital curriculum provider for virtual schools looking to deploy effective and rich content that is used for 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Accelerate Education's courses increase educational opportunities available for today's learners and increase student achievement through a rich and flexible individualized student learning experience. Accelerate Education's online curriculum offers rich and engaging content that has been carefully designed to meet state and national standards. Students are engaged in a variety of activities and assessments appropriate to the courses being studied, including labs, journals, written assignments, discussions, projects, formative assessments, objective tests, and written exams.

#### Bright Thinker (3rd-5th grade Core)

Bright Thinker's customizable program allows students to work at their own pace. Moreover, the classwork is catered to different learning styles, so the curriculum is always challenging, stimulating, and beneficial. Bright Thinker's precision, the mastery-based learning system is engineered to build on a student's strengths in a modern, engaging fashion. The dynamic program uses multi-media tools, a cutting-edge curriculum, and a personalized approach.

#### Core5 (3rd-5th Grade English Language Arts supplemental)

Core5 Reading provides students—from at-risk to on-level and advanced—a systematic and a structured approach to six areas of reading, from phonological awareness to comprehension. The program creates personalized learning paths for each student through an adaptive placement and scaffolded activities that align to rigorous state standards. Students focus on: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Structural Analysis, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

### **PowerUp** (6th-12th Grade Language Arts Supplemental)

PowerUp Literacy allows students to work at their own pace to develop skills essential to success in both literacy and content-area learning. After automatically placing students at just the right level, PowerUp guides students through an expertly crafted scope and sequence. In PowerUp, students are automatically placed at the proper skill level where they can work independently. Through a system of explicit instruction, adaptive learning, and scaffolding, PowerUp gradually releases responsibility to students as they demonstrate greater proficiency. Students work independently on tasks that adapt based on their responses, providing real-time personalization. If students struggle in a particular activity, PowerUp provides immediate feedback before delivering direct instruction. Once students demonstrate understanding of the skill taught, they could try the initial activity again. If students continue to struggle, the teacher is notified and provided with an offline lesson to deliver that targets that specific skill.

### **DreamBox** (3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Supplemental)

DreamBox is a Harvard researched digital math program. The rigorous and interactive lessons adapt to each student providing the ultimate personalized learning experience. DreamBox keeps students engaged and learning, whether filling some learning gaps or acceleration. Students build math confidence as they strengthen positive mindset skills – skills that include grit, perseverance, and goal setting.

### **Beable:** (3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Literacy)

Beable is a multi-dimensional system that identifies and closes the literacy and opportunity the gap with greater speed and certainty. It's the first comprehensive system that advances the whole student by intertwining literacy acceleration, intervention response, core content mastery, English language acquisition, career development, and ACT/SAT prep.

### **BrainPop:** (3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade all Subject Supplemental)

BrainPop is engaging in learning games, animated movies, and activities. Learning is made visible through tools that challenge students to reflect, make connections, and engage in deeper, curiosity-driven learning.

### **Lexia English:** (All English Language Learners)

RosettaStone English is an adaptive blended learning program that supports students' English Language development through academic conversations. The program integrates speaking, listening, and grammar in the subjects of math, science, social studies, general knowledge, and biographies.

### **PointFull Education:** (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Electives and CTE)

PointFull Education provides a digital Career Technical Education online curriculum. PointFull Education offers a learning experience packed with engaging content, interactives, videos, graphics, discussion boards, activities, and projects. Curriculum ignites a passion for learning with a curriculum that features unique and relevant topics, prepares students for future-focused careers, and equips them with industry knowledge of new and emerging technologies.

## **BEST Academy Course Catalog**

See the BEST Academy Course catalog for a complete listing of our courses and their descriptions.



## APPENDIX D: GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### Graduation Requirement Chart

SUBJECT CATEGORY	B.E.S.T. Academy Graduation Requirements 210 credits	College Prep/A-G Requirements 220 credits
<b>English</b>	<b>30 credits</b>	<b>40 credits</b>
English 9 A/B	10 Credits	10 Credits
English 10 A/B	10 Credits	10 Credits
English 11 A/B	10 Credits	10 Credits
English 12 A/B	10 Credits *Exception Possible: with alternate proficiency, substitute with 10 elective credits.	10 Credits
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>20 credits</b>	<b>30 credits</b> (must include Algebra II)
Algebra I A/B	10 credits	10 credits
Math (Algebra equivalent or higher.)	10 credits	10 credits-Geometry A/B
Algebra II A/B		10 credits-Algebra II A/B
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>30 credits</b>	<b>30 credits</b>
Wld History A/B (grade 10)	10 credits	10 credits
US History A/B (grade 11)	10 credits	10 credits
Am. Government (grade 12)	5 credits	5 credits
Economics (grade 12)	5 credits	5 credits
<b>Science</b>	<b>20 credits</b>	<b>20 credits</b>
Biological/Life Science	10 credits	10 credits –must be Bio Lab
Physical/Earth Science	10 credits	10 credits-Phys or Chem -

		must be lab
<b>Physical Education</b>	<b>20 credits</b>	<b>20 credits</b>
<b>Foreign Language <u>or</u> Visual/Performing Arts</b>	<b>10 credits</b>	<b>30 credits</b> –2 yrs same Foreign Lang <b>and</b> 1 yr Visual Perform Art
<b>Electives</b>	<b>80 credits</b>	<b>50</b> , 10 credits UC “A-G” approved elective credits
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>220</b>

## APPENDIX E: Technology Use and Checkout Form

Electronic equipment (including Chromebooks, other electronic devices, and associated accessories) that are issued by B.E.S.T. Academy (the school) is the property of the school and is provided to students for a period of time as deemed appropriate by the school.

B.E.S.T. Academy allows students to check out Chromebooks as a productivity tool for curriculum access and enhancement, research, school-related business, and communications. Students will act in accordance with B.E.S.T. Academy's Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP), regarding the appropriate use of school computers, electronic devices, and accessories.

It is the parent's/guardian's sole responsibility to monitor the student's use of the Chromebook at home. B.E.S.T. Academy will not be liable for any inappropriate or illegal activity of students on Chromebooks at home. The School is not able to filter and monitor all internet use on the Chromebooks.

### Suggested Precautions for General Chromebook Use

- Keep drinks and food far away from your Chromebook. Protect it from spills, dirt, and rain.
- Extreme temperatures can damage a Chromebook. Don't leave your Chromebook in a vehicle.
- When using your Chromebook, keep it on a flat, solid surface. This will allow air to circulate through it. For example, using a Chromebook directly on a bed can cause damage due to overheating.
- Know where your Chromebook is at all times. Don't leave your Chromebook unattended or loan it to a friend or family member

Students must comply with and agree to the following conditions before being issued a Chromebook:

- Within three days of issuance, students will verify that Chromebooks are in proper working condition and will notify B.E.S.T. Academy of any damage or problems.
- Students will not install any additional software or change the configuration of the assigned equipment in any way without prior consultation with the school's IT Department.
- Students are held personally and monetarily responsible for any loss or damage caused by intentional vandalism or negligence concerning assigned district electronic devices.
- Students will not be held responsible for manufacturing defects, technical problems resulting from regular school-related use, or reasonable wear and tear.
- Students will use Chromebooks primarily for academic and school-related activities and will abide by B.E.S.T. Academy's Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP).
- Activities on the Chromebook, including, but not limited to, viewing of websites and downloading files, can and may be monitored by the school.
- Students must provide access to any electronic equipment and/or accessories they have been assigned upon the school's request.
- Upon withdrawal from the school, students must promptly return the assigned Chromebook and associated accessories to the school in the same condition in which it was issued (excluding normal wear and tear).

B.E.S.T. Academy reserves the right to update and/or modify these procedures at any time.

**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

I agree that I have read and understood the School's Chromebook Use Policy. I agree to follow the rules contained in the policy. I understand that if I violate the Chromebook Use Policy or the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, my access privileges may be revoked and I may face other disciplinary measures.

Student Name (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT**

As a parent or guardian of the student signing above, I have read and understood the School's Chromebook Use Policy. I hereby grant permission for him/her to have access to the Technology resources and privileges provided by the District. I recognize that student Internet use on Chromebooks will not always be filtered or monitored. I will not hold the district responsible for materials acquired on the Internet. I understand that individuals and families may be held responsible for the consequences of violations of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that we are held responsible to reimburse the District for damage, repairs, or replacement of a Chromebook computer, electronic devices, and/or related equipment and accessories assigned to my student due to intentional vandalism or negligence.

Parent/Guardian Name(s) (PLEASE PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**EQUIPMENT/ITEMS:** *To be completed by School Administration or IT Department*

Brand/Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Serial Nbr: \_\_\_\_\_ Tag/ID Nbr: \_\_\_\_\_

**ISSUED** Condition: (Overall condition, scratched, dented, bent, missing keys, missing parts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Charger included (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ Case/bag included (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Issue Date: \_\_\_\_\_ IT Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN** Condition: (Overall condition, scratched, dented, bent, missing keys, missing parts)

\_\_\_\_\_

Charger included (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ Case/bag included (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_ IT Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## B.E.S.T. ACADEMY HANDBOOK CONFIRMATION PAGE

I have received and read the B.E.S.T. Academy Handbook and agree to comply with the aforementioned policies and procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Teacher

Once signed this document will be placed in the student's file.