

2019-2020  
ExCEL HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE



## Parent and Student Handbook

900 Northwest Drive  
Longview, Texas 75604  
(903) 295-6753  
FAX (903) 295-6754  
Cleo Wadley - Principal  
[cwadley@ptisd.org](mailto:cwadley@ptisd.org)

# EXCEL HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE INFORMATION

*“Our mission is to continue a tradition of excellence by providing a high-quality and challenging educational environment, maximizing opportunities for the success of all students, equipping them to become responsible, involved, and productive citizens”.*

## **What is a CHOICE school?**

Some students have circumstances which prevent them from being successful in a traditional school setting. ExCEL School of Choice provides students with an opportunity to succeed in a non-traditional school setting and offers a positive option to larger secondary school settings, allows students to work at an accelerated pace on individualized curriculum to achieve a high school diploma and prepare them for their next step in life, college, workforce, specialized training, etc.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THIS PROGRAM?**

Only students currently enrolled at PTHS are eligible to enroll at ExCEL. Any enrolled student who has not completed the school year of their twenty-first birthday may be accepted to ExCEL High School of Choice if they have a compelling reason and/or meet one or more of the following requirements (appropriate documentation required):

- Extenuating family or health circumstances necessitating an accelerated education
- Students who have 5 or more credits; unless otherwise approved
- Students retained one or more grades in high school
- Over age students who have dropped out of school and are returning
- Students who are married, pregnant (must have doctor’s statement), and/or parenting teens
- Extenuating circumstances that put the student at risk of not completing their high school education
- Students wanting to accelerate their graduation plan

## **WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE THIS PROGRAM?**

- Expelled students are not eligible during the term of their expulsion
- Students withdrawn from their previous campus due to non-attendance/disciplinary issues
- Students who are not eligible for enrollment in Pine Tree ISD

## **HOW MUCH TIME WILL I HAVE TO SPEND IN SCHOOL?**

Students enter the program for a full day: 8:20 a.m. - 3:50 p.m. Every semester, options may be reviewed for a modified schedule. If the student has met expectations, they may qualify. Only students with 18 credits or more will be allowed to attend for part-day instruction from 8:20 a.m. - 12:50 p.m., and only if 3 EOC STAAR requirements have been met. Persistent absences, tardies, lack of progress, or other violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in a loss of this privilege. A minimum of 20 hours of instruction per week (4 hours per day) may be earned if the student has earned credits and is successfully completing classes. This will be discussed at your interview. Students must make a commitment to remain in the program until the end of the current school year and/or until graduation.

## **HOW WILL STUDENTS GET TO SCHOOL?**

Bus transportation is provided if needed and if you reside two miles or more from the campus. Students may also be dropped off by a parent, walk or drive with a valid student parking permit. Students may

arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. and must leave or be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the end of their school day.

#### **HOW WILL STUDENTS RECEIVE INSTRUCTION?**

Students will receive instruction through online coursework for most classes. This requires a great deal of self-discipline. Therefore, all students attending ExCEL High School of Choice must understand the expectations of completing work independently on a schedule. Students may complete lessons at home with internet access but will be required to attend school daily. Exams must be completed at school. Not all courses offered at the Pine Tree High School are available at ExCEL High School of Choice. Students have the ability to attend classes at PTHS through cross-entity enrollment; however, a minimum of 4 hours of instruction must be completed at the ExCEL High School of Choice campus daily. Per the Texas Education Code, students must be in class at least 90% of the time to avoid loss of credit.

#### **HOW CAN I BE MOST SUCCESSFUL?**

This varies for every student. On the average, students who agree to spend at least six to seven hours daily working on coursework are most successful. For students who have qualified for the opportunity to attend school for a shortened day, working before or after school hours will help them complete their courses in a timely manner. Individual student goals will be discussed and time lines will help students successfully graduate.

#### **HOW CAN I GET AN INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION?**

All students enrolled starting in the 2019-2020 school year **must** select an industry certification pathway in one of four areas: 1) Commercial drone pilot license 2) Firefighting 3) Certified Nurse Assistant 4) Construction. After completing the coursework and test in that chosen area, a student will graduate with that certification and be prepared to enter the workforce immediately.

#### **CAN I TAKE DUAL CREDIT CLASSES?**

Yes. For the first time ExCEL will offer dual credit classes online through Kilgore College. Students must meet certain academic requirements to qualify.

#### **HOW SOON CAN I GRADUATE?**

How soon a student graduates will depend upon how many credits the student has upon entering the program and how hard he or she is willing to work. (Passing required state assessments must be met for example- STAAR EOC exams to graduate)

#### **CAN I CHANGE MY GRADUATION PLAN?**

Graduation plans can only be changed under the following conditions: 1) Current or impending parenthood 2) Documented medical condition that interferes with learning 3) An overaged student not on grade level

#### **WILL I RECEIVE AN EXCEL HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ?**

All students who complete the required credits for graduation and pass the state-required assessments will receive a high school diploma granted by TEA from ExCEL High School of Choice.

**WHAT ABOUT THE STAFF'S QUALIFICATIONS?**

The staff at the ExCEL High School of Choice is made up of motivated, highly qualified, certified educators who are trained in the most effective teaching and learning techniques available. All staff have specialized training to meet the needs of our diverse students.

**HOW DO I APPLY?**

Enrollment is limited. Students may request an application from a PTHS school counselor. Once completed, the application must be turned in to the campus school counselor. The student's counselor will complete an application folder. After completion of the application and folder, a required parent/student interview with the ExCEL High School of Choice staff will be scheduled. If approved by the ExCEL High School of Choice staff, a start date will be established once there is an opening available.

**HOW DO I REMAIN IN GOOD STANDING AT ExCEL HIGH SCHOOL OF CHOICE?**

Students are expected to meet program expectations in attendance, behavior and academics. Students' progress will continually be evaluated. If there are attendance, disciplinary, and/or academic problems, a student may be removed from ExCEL High School of Choice. All students must meet program expectations to remain a student at ExCEL High School of Choice. Students are under the Pine Tree ISD Student Code of Conduct, in addition to ExCEL High School of Choice expectations. Students who apply are making a commitment to complete his/her educational journey, recover credits and/or graduate while attending ExCEL High School of Choice. To remain in good standing a student must complete 2 courses within a six weeks period.

**RETURNING BACK TO PTHS:** In order to return to Pine Tree High School students are required to have passed all EOC STAAR exams and have a minimum of 15 credits.

**SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS:**

All appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.) must be scheduled before or after your class time.

**TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES:**

Students must surrender their cell phones and other personal technology daily because the devices are prohibited during instructional time. Parents may call the office at (903) 295-6753 in case of emergencies and messages will be delivered to our students. Students' learning and success are our number one priority. Consequences will be applied for students who refuse to surrender their devices. We must focus on academics while in the learning environment.

**PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCES:**

A parent must call the office at (903) 295-6753 and leave a message before 8:30 a.m. the morning of the student's absence. The message must include the name of the student and the reason for being absent. Upon returning to school the student must have the appropriate documentation for the absence to be considered an excused absence. A doctor's note specifying the reason the student was out and the time frame that is to be excused will be required after the 3rd consecutive absence. Per the Texas Education Code, students who do not attend class 90% of the time will be denied credit.

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPONENT:**

In order to ensure students are well rounded, we have incorporated a social emotional learning component into our program. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Students at ExCEL will be required to participate in our social emotional learning program which may take the form of guest speakers, restorative justice activities, and community circles.

**ATTENDING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

All students may attend any extra-curricular events they choose outside of the school day. Students may not attend daily events scheduled at the Pine Tree High School during the regular class time, for example: pep rallies unless accompanied by ExCEL staff. Students who attend ExCEL High School of Choice will have the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities such as athletics, band, choir, etc. Breakfast and lunch can be acquired in the cafeteria at Pine Tree High School during our regularly scheduled times. Students are not allowed, under any circumstances, to be on the campus of Pine Tree High School at any other time without permission from ExCEL High School of Choice staff. This is considered out of location and a disciplinary action will be taken.

**DRESS CODE:** District Wide dress code will be followed unless otherwise approved.

***Remember that enrollment in ExCEL High School of Choice is a privilege. School leadership has the authority to use their discretion to enforce the rules and regulations should a situation arise that is not specified by these expectations, regulations, and expectations. Because of the many changes that occur during the school year regarding the interpretation of the Texas Education Code, this application packet is subject to change without written notice to parents and students. However, due process will be offered to students with regard to any changes.***

## **Student Expectations**

**ExCEL staff works collaboratively with students to establish a safe and civil learning environment. Every student is responsible for playing his/her part to ensure a positive school climate. With this in mind, every student should:**

- **Read, understand, and adhere to the Pine Tree ISD Student Code of Conduct (Students who do not adhere to the policy may receive in school suspension, out of school suspension or PACE placement.)**
- **Arrive on time and depart at the end of your assigned school day**
- **Follow your schedule**
- **Surrender personal technology daily**
- **Remain at ExCEL campus unless authorized by a school official**
- **Complete at least two courses per six weeks**
- **Attend all tutorials, pull outs, Saturday schools, and field trips as directed by school officials**

## **Parent Expectations**

**ExCEL staff encourages and promotes partnerships between home and school. This partnership thrives on communication and interaction between parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. With this in mind, every parent should:**

- Encourage his/her student to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides
- Review the information in this handbook as well as the Student Code of Conduct with his/her student
- Monitor his/her student's academic progress and contact teachers as needed
- Attend scheduled conferences and request additional conferences by contacting the school office as needed
- Review his/her student's records including attendance, test scores, grades, and disciplinary records, applications for college admissions, and state assessment instruments that have been administered
- Become a school volunteer
- Participate in our campus improvement process

**Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

I have read, or have had explained to me, this Parent/Student Handbook which contains the Rules and Regulations regarding student behavior and other District policies. I agree that I will follow these rules, and I understand that if I violate the rules, I can be disciplined. Discipline may include a loss of privileges, detention, suspension, expulsion, PACE placement or other consequences. By signing below, I demonstrate that I understand and agree to abide by the Board Policies, Rules, and Regulations contained in the Handbook.

This Handbook is only a summary of Board Policies and administrative procedures governing the District and may be amended during the year without prior notice. Board Policies are available to the public at the District office and on the District's website. Parents will receive notice via School Messenger if the Handbook is amended during the school year.

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_

*Student Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I certify that I have received and reviewed with my child the Handbook.

*Parent/Guardian Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_