



# **Urban Skills Center**

***A School of The Institute for Effective Education***

**Parent/Student Handbook**

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# 1. General Information

## Contact Information

**School Name:** Urban Skills Center

**School Director:** Jen Swope, M.S.

**Address:** 2225 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108

**Phone Number:** 619-243-1325

**E-mail address:** jswope@tiee.org

## School and Program Description

Urban Skills Center, operated by The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE), is certified by the California Department of Education as a non-public school (NPS). The school provides special education services to transition-age students, ages 18-22, with moderate to severe support needs. The primary focus is coursework that aligns with the target areas for transition plans, including post-secondary education and training, employment, and independent living. Urban Skills Center is a full-day, site based school program that works with students on job exploration and job readiness, daily living skills, community access, self-advocacy, social skills, and leisure & recreation.

## Mission Statement

*The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE) is dedicated to education that is unparalleled in scope of curriculum, effectiveness of instruction, and pervasiveness of positive ambience. To achieve this goal, TIEE is committed to using the principles, methods, and facts established by behavioral science research of the highest standard in order to educate individuals, whose talents span the full spectrum of ability.*

## **2. Student Enrollment**

Urban Skills Center enrolls young adults whose educational needs can be safely met by available programs. Enrollment is provided without regard to sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry or country of origin.

At the discretion of the School Director, students may not be enrolled at Urban Skills Center if they have a history of setting fires, if they have induced serious injury to self or others, if they have brought a firearm to school, if they have committed sexual assault, and/or if they have committed a drug or alcohol offense including possession while in school.

### **Student Referrals**

Students are considered:

**NPS students:** referred and funded by public school district through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

or

**Privately enrolled students:** referred and funded by parents or guardians, including students funded through a settlement agreement

### **Enrollment Documentation**

Upon enrollment, and annually thereafter, parents/guardians must complete required paperwork including emergency and medical information, acknowledgements and approvals, and medication authorization forms as applicable.

### **Changes of Residence**

Urban Skills Center is required by its Master Contract with each student's local school district to notify the district as soon as becoming aware of a change in a student's address of residence. A change in residence does not automatically mean that your child's IEP or placement will change. When moving to a new school district, the new district has the responsibility to review your child's IEP, including placement. Failure to inform the school when you change your child's residence may result in becoming financially responsible for educational costs.

### **Aging Out of Special Education**

Students can continue to attend a transition program until one of the following:

- Student receives a high school diploma
- Student's IEP team determines they have met the criteria for exiting
- Students born in January through September will exit on the last school day of the fiscal year (on or before June 30) of the year they turn 22
- Students born in October through December will exit on the last day of instruction in the calendar year in which they turn 22

Students who are aging out of special education will have an exit IEP meeting to include appropriate post-secondary support services and agencies (e.g., Regional Center, Department of Rehabilitation). This meeting will review a student's Summary of Performance, and will typically be held within 1-2 months of their exit date. If applicable, this may align with a student's annual IEP date.

### **3. Student Transportation**

#### **Transportation To and From School**

For NPS students, transportation is determined by the IEP team and is typically provided by the school district or parent/guardian. Questions and concerns regarding district transportation, including behavior support, bus aides, healthcare plans, or scheduling, should be directed to the district case manager or transportation department.

For privately enrolled students, parents/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from school.

In rare emergency situations where a student cannot access typical transportation via the district or parent/guardian, Urban Skills Center *may* provide short-term emergency transportation at the discretion of the School Director. Transportation will be provided only by approved TIEE drivers in approved TIEE vehicles.

#### **Off-Campus Transportation**

Students may participate in off-campus activities that support instructional, vocational, recreational, or community-based learning. Transportation may include:

1. **TIEE-owned or TIEE-rented vehicles** driven by approved staff
2. **Public transit**, including buses or trolleys
3. **Contracted, licensed transportation providers**

Students may **not** be transported in private vehicles or by unapproved drivers.

## **4. Student Attendance**

### **School Calendar and Hours**

Urban Skills Center operates on a traditional calendar of 180 days plus 30 days of extended year as designated on student IEPs. Calendars are sent home upon enrollment, annually, and are available on TIEE's website.

### **School Hours**

Urban Skills Center's bell schedule (see table below) includes 1800 minutes of instruction per week during the regular school year and 1500 minutes per week during the 30 days of extended school year.

**Bell Schedule - Regular School Year**

Days	Start Time	End Time
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	8:15am	2:30pm
Tuesday	8:15am	1:15pm

**Bell Schedule - Extended School Year**

Days	Start Time	End Time
Monday - Friday	8:15am	1:15pm

### **Student Attendance**

It is the policy of the Urban Skills Center to promote regular attendance at school for all of its students and to follow all laws, regulations, and contracts concerning the recording of student attendance and absences.

Regular attendance at school is essential for student progress. This includes all school hours during the regular school year and extended school year. Families are encouraged to review the school calendar regularly, as it may differ from your local school district.

### **Short-Term Independent Study and Make-Up Days**

Short-Term Independent Study may be considered when a student is absent but able to participate in educational activities. Reach out to your School Director or Program Coordinator to determine if Short-Term Independent Study may be an appropriate option.

Additionally, programs may offer in person Make-Up days on Saturdays or during non-holiday school breaks. Families will be notified when these options are available. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities as they are offered.

Absences, tardies, or early pick ups should be reported to the front desk at (619) 243-1325 (follow the prompts for “Cook Education Center” to leave a message). Follow-up communication with teachers or the Program Coordinator is also encouraged.

## **5. Home-School Collaboration and Communication**

It is the policy of Urban Skills Center to promote collaboration between parents and professionals in the interest of the student's health, safety, and development.

### **General Communication Guidelines**

Upon enrollment, students are assigned to a case manager/teacher, who is the point of contact for regular parent/guardian communication. The contact information for the teacher will be shared with the parent prior to the student's first day of enrollment. Parent-teacher phone conversations typically occur 1-2 times per month at a regularly scheduled, mutually agreed upon time and date. These calls are generally scheduled for 15 minutes outside of student school hours (e.g., before or after school) to discuss student progress towards their IEP goals and coursework. Longer or more frequent calls may be needed for a short period of time to prepare for IEP meetings or to address specific concerns. To the extent possible, parents are encouraged to email the teacher ahead of the scheduled call if there are specific questions or concerns to add to the agenda so the teacher can be prepared to address them during the call.

Parents/guardians will be contacted by phone outside of the regularly scheduled calls to be notified of illness, emergencies, or incidents involving their student.

Parents/guardians are subscribed to the school's "Constant Contact" email list upon enrollment to receive messages from the school director, including newsletters, calendar reminders, and updates. Email communication from the school is typically used to share general information or reminders about program events. Parents are welcome to email teachers at any time to provide information, but it is strongly recommended that urgent communication be done via phone during school hours, as teachers may not have access to their email when students are present.

### **Written Reports/Notes**

Parents are welcome to send written communication (e.g., notebooks, journals, notes) to teachers; however, teachers are unable to respond to written communication or to provide written reports for parents at the end of each school day. At parent/guardian request, teachers may send home a daily "take-home" sheet to note the presence or absence of specific targeted behaviors.

### **Observations**

Urban Skills Center recognizes the value in parent/guardian observations of students during their school day. Given the school's layout, daily schedule, and the unique needs of our student population, these observations can be disruptive to our day to day operations; therefore, the following guidelines are in place for these observations:

- One observation is allowed per quarter per student. This includes parents, advocates, and other private providers at the parent's request.
- Observations are limited to 1 hour.

- Observations must be scheduled at least 1 week in advance at a mutually agreed upon time.
- All visitors must check in with the program coordinator and sign the visitor’s log when they arrive, and wear a “visitor” nametag for the duration of their visit. Additionally, visitors must sign out when leaving the school site.
- Observers must be accompanied at all times by a staff member qualified to explain events.
- Observers must not interact with students, disrupt lessons, or attempt to participate in behavior management.
- Observers must leave at once if requested to do so by the teacher in charge.

## **6. Individualized Education Planning and Progress Reports**

### **NPS students**

Per Ed Code, all students placed via their school district will have, at minimum, an annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting with the Urban Skills Center team, student, parent/guardian, as well as representative(s) from their school district. The Urban Skills Center team will use teacher observations, curriculum based assessments, and the program scope and sequence to draft the following components of the IEP document with student/parent/guardian input:

- Progress on goals
- Present levels of performance
- New proposed goals
- Individualized transition plans (ITP)
- Behavior intervention plans (BIP)
- Service recommendations

Draft documents are sent home to students/parents/guardians in advance of the meeting to allow for meaningful participation. During the IEP meeting, all IEP components will be discussed and modified as appropriate prior to final team approval.

The Urban Skills Center team collaborates with the referring district for assessments associated with eligibility for special education services (e.g., triennial review).

Use this link to access [Procedural Safeguards](#) regarding Special Education students.

### **Private Enrollment**

Urban Skills Center considers a student with special needs to be privately enrolled when the parents enroll their child and the public school district of residence has not participated in the enrollment. Urban Skills Center does not honor and will not implement any of the instruction and services requirements of a privately enrolled child's IEP; however, the Urban Skills Center team will develop a plan for the child's education that involves parent/guardian collaboration. Parents/guardians of privately enrolled children agree to waive all rights under Special Education law and regulations, including the right of "stay put."

### **Progress Reports**

Progress Reports are published quarterly. Progress Reports provide a summary of progress on IEP goals and grades/citizenship in assigned classes. Progress Reports are mailed out 2 weeks following the close of the quarter as indicated on the school calendar.

## **7. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports**

### **Positive Programming**

Upon enrollment, the instructional team utilizes effective instructional strategies with all students. Examples of such strategies include antecedent management (e.g., small group instruction, task-presentation at an appropriate instructional level for each learner), consequence management (e.g., extinction procedures, high rates of praise and pay-offs for desirable behavior), and teaching appropriate skills (e.g., school-wide procedures). These strategies often have a positive effect on student behavior with minimal additional programming.

### **Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)**

Students who present with significant challenging behaviors, including behaviors that pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of themselves or others, require the development of more intensive individualized behavior plans. Problem behavior function is identified through the use of Functional Assessment and/or Functional Analysis. Once the function is identified, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is developed, and includes a plan for teaching functionally-equivalent replacement behaviors. An Escalation Cycle Management Plan (ECMP) outlines de-escalation strategies for staff members to implement with students who engage in severe problem behavior, and may be used as a Behavior Support Plan or as a component of a Behavior Intervention Plan.

### **Behavior Emergencies**

In the event a student displays a severe problem behavior which presents a clear and present danger of serious physical harm to the student or to others AND can not be prevented by a less restrictive response the school's staff members may use interventions aligned with current educational code and best practices including restraining a student and/or calling the police. The school will contact parents before the end of the day to share details of the incident in the event that such methods were necessary. For NPS students, the school district will also be notified of the incident.

## **8. Suspension, Expulsion, and Termination of Placement**

Decisions to suspend or terminate enrollment are made by the school director on a case by case basis in collaboration with the instructional team (e.g., teachers, behavior intervention case managers, program coordinators).

### **Suspension**

It is the policy of Urban Skills Center to suspend a student from school if the student displays problem behavior of sufficient intensity and/or duration that providing a safe environment for that student and/or others is not currently possible, and the behaviors can't be managed by less-restrictive responses. It is a goal of Urban Skills Center to maximize the amount of time students are in their respective programs and, therefore, to reserve suspension from the program for the few cases in which safety warrants it and/or student progress requires it. For NPS students, the school district will be notified of the suspension and the details of the incident leading to the decision to suspend.

There are a number of reasons that a student may be suspended from school. These include, but are not limited to:

- Significant problem behavior that is not safely managed with current behavioral programming
- Significant injury to another person or explicit, credible threats to cause injury
- Possession of or use of controlled substances
- Harassment of any kind including threats and attempts to commit harassment
- Significant disruption to learning and/or the learning environment of self and others

Suspension is the removal from school for a period of time not to exceed 5 days per suspension, 10 days in a semester, and 20 days per year as a means to maintain safety of the student or others in attendance. In the event that these limits are reached, the school's Director shall request an Individualized Education Plan meeting to discuss the incident, review and/or revise the student's BIP, and discuss the possible need for a change of placement.

### **Expulsion**

Urban Skills Center is not permitted to expel a student that is placed at the NPS by their school district through an IEP without conducting a Manifestation Determination.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

It is the policy of Urban Skills Center to terminate the enrollment of students when appropriate and as consistent with law, regulation, and/or contractual agreement with the school districts. It is the goal of Urban Skills Center to work collaboratively with each student's IEP teams to develop and adjust positive programming as appropriate to maintain enrollment.

There are a number of reasons that a student's enrollment may be terminated. These include:

- The student requires services beyond the capacity of Urban Skills Center's certification

- or level of staffing
- The student's continued presence materially and adversely affects the provision of services to other students
  - The student presents a safety risk to other students and/or staff
  - The acts or omissions of the student's parent, guardian, or advocate/designee materially interfere with Urban Skills Center in the IEP formulation or delivery of services to the student or other students.

### **Action to terminate non-public school enrollment**

Terminating the enrollment of NPS students shall be the responsibility of the school Director. As per our NPS contract, the school director will communicate to the student's contracting school district, by way of a 20-day notice, that the student's enrollment has been or is in need of termination. If termination of the student's enrollment requires the decision of an Individualized Education Planning (IEP) team, the meeting of the team shall be scheduled as soon as possible. The school Director shall represent Urban Skills Center at the meeting and shall state the rationale for termination of the student's enrollment.

### **Action to terminate privately-funded enrollment**

Privately-funded enrollment may be terminated for any of the reasons cited above in the judgement of the school's Director who shall inform the parents in writing of the reason(s) for termination.

## **9. Student Health and Wellness**

Urban Skills Center's objective is to create an environment conducive to learning including proactive strategies for preventing illness and injuries. Student health policies and medication administration are overseen by TIEE's Medical Director who consults with Urban Skills Center; however, there is no full-time medical professional onsite during school hours.

### **Student Medications**

Parents/guardians have the opportunity to authorize administration of Tylenol for minor ailments (e.g., headache, toothache, menstrual cramps) on the Student Medical and Emergency Information Form. Parents/guardians will be notified when Tylenol is administered including dose and reason for administration.

In order to administer any other medications (e.g., daily medications, emergency seizure or allergy medication) at school safely, it is necessary to have a written request from the student's parent/guardian and a written authorization from a California licensed health care provider (M.D., D.O., DDS., P.A., or N.P.). Please contact your child's teacher or the school administrative assistant to get the required form, "Authorization for Medication to be Taken During School Hours".

### **Student Illness**

The following recommendations are based on public health guidelines with the goal of helping limit the spread of illness and help students recover from illness. A student who comes to school ill or becomes ill during the school day must be sent home. Please use the following guidelines:

- The student is too ill for any reason to participate in all school activities: remain home until recovered.
- Fever of 100.4°F or more (without being on acetaminophen or ibuprofen which lower the temperature artificially).
- "Pink eye" or conjunctivitis: remain home if has drainage from the eye, fever, or behavior changes. Return once afebrile and able to participate fully.
- Green or yellow nasal drainage, significant coughing or difficulty breathing such as rapid breathing or wheezing: can return when recovered.
- Pertussis (whooping cough): must be treated with antibiotics for 5 days before returning to school.
- Rash of unknown cause: remain home until resolved or determined to be non-contagious by the child's doctor.
- Chicken pox: remain home until all blisters are scabbed over and there are no signs of fever or illness (usually approximately 6 days after onset of rash).
- Diarrhea or vomiting more than twice in the past 24 hours - keep home until resolved at least 24 hours.
- Ringworm: return to school after treatment is started. If it is in an exposed area, cover with bandage and/or clothing when returning to school.

- Cold sores: can be passed from one person to another, but only through direct contact. Children who drool or place objects in their mouths should stay home until the sore is resolved.
- Skin sores that are weeping or draining: may return to school if sore can be covered with a waterproof dressing.
- Hepatitis A virus infection: remain home until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice.
- Lice – may return after treatment and there are no live lice present. Treatment is typically the use of a pediculicide and removal of all lice and as many nits as possible. If nits are still present and your child has been treated and all live lice are gone, your child can return to school.
- Scabies – may return after the first treatment given.

Students who are placed on antibiotics for impetigo and bacterial conjunctivitis should be on antibiotics for a full 24 hours before returning to school. Students with strep throat need to have completed 12 hours of antibiotics.

If at any time you are unsure if your child's illness is contagious, you may want to call your child's primary care provider.

### **Chronic Medical Conditions**

For students with chronic medical conditions (e.g., severe allergies, seizure disorders, feeding tubes), Urban Skills Center requires an individualized student health plan (ISHP) as a part of their IEP. This plan will provide information regarding the specific condition, procedures, and protocols to be followed.

### **Student Accidents & Injuries**

Should an accident or injury occur during the school day, Urban Skills Center's team is trained in basic first aid techniques. Many staff members have received additional training in emergency medication administration (e.g., epi-pen, emergency seizure medications), CPR, and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Appropriate emergency personnel will be contacted as deemed necessary to attend to more severe injuries or illnesses.

In the event that a student requires emergency medical care, it is Urban Skills Center's policy to rely on community professionals who are trained in emergency procedures. Staff from Urban Skills Center will provide emergency response personnel with any available student medical information that has been provided to the school. Familiar staff members will make every effort to provide reassurance to the student and to facilitate communication and behavioral support as necessary.

Urban Skills Center staff members will make reasonable efforts to contact the parent/guardian and/or emergency contacts so they may be involved in medical decisions. If parents/guardians are not present to make medical decisions, those decisions will be left to the emergency response personnel. If a student requires hospitalization, a staff member from Urban Skills

Center will accompany the student in the ambulance and stay with the student until a parent/guardian or emergency contact arrives.

### **Nutrition**

Urban Skills Center has a number of options to meet the nutrition needs of our students. Students are welcome to bring their own snacks and lunches to school. Refrigerators and microwaves are available for storage and heating of food. We contract with San Diego Unified School District to provide daily breakfast/snack and lunches. Please contact our Administrative Assistant for menus and options.

## **10. Dress Code and Personal Belongings**

### **General Guidelines**

It is recommended that students dress casually and comfortably for school. Students participating in off-campus apprenticeships for vocational training may be provided with TIEE logo shirts to wear to their work training sites.

### **Prohibited Dress**

Clothing, jewelry, or other possessions that depict sexual themes, violence, weapons, drugs or the taking of drugs, smoking, drinking, or any behaviors generally recognized to be associated with street gang activity are inappropriate for a school environment and are not allowed on the Urban Skills Center campus. The school also recommends against students wearing expensive clothing and/or jewelry because such items may be lost or ruined during the course of school activities.

Every effort will be made at school to correct violations of the above prohibitions. In some instances, it may be necessary to confiscate items and/or contact the parents/guardians in order to resolve the problem.

### **Personal Belongings**

Urban Skills Center recognizes the value of having access to certain preferred items for student use during the school day. However, certain items that are not essential to achieving student goals are at high risk for theft and breakage. The school assumes no responsibility for keeping these or other personal belongings intact or free from theft. Consequently, it is recommended that such items not be brought to school.

### **Extra Clothing/Personal Hygiene Products**

Students may require extra changes of clothing and/or personal hygiene products during the day. The school keeps a minimal stock of items on hand in case of emergencies; however, families are expected to provide the hygiene products and clothing items that are routinely needed by their child. For some students, it may be recommended to keep at least one full change of clothing at school. All items sent from home should be sent in a bag labeled with the child's name.

Students who participate in off-campus vocational apprenticeships may be provided with a TIEE-logo t-shirt to wear to their job site.

## **11. Technology Use and Cell Phones**

Urban Skills Center's objective is to create an environment conducive to learning, where technology is used responsibly and effectively.

### **Acceptable Use of Technology**

Technology, including laptops, tablets, and smartphones, may be used for academic purposes such as research, completing assignments, or accessing educational resources. Social media, games, and other non-educational content should not be accessed during class time, unless specified by the teacher as part of an assignment. Students are expected to demonstrate respect for others when using technology, including refraining from using technology to bully, harass, or disrupt the school community.

### **Prohibited Uses**

Using technology to cheat, plagiarize, or engage in dishonest behavior is strictly prohibited. The use of cell phones or other electronic devices to record, photograph, or share images of students, staff, or school events without permission is forbidden. Accessing inappropriate content, including explicit material or websites not related to educational activities, will result in disciplinary action.

### **Cell Phone Use During School Hours**

Cell phones should be turned off or set to silent mode throughout the school day. Students may access/use cell phones during breaks with teacher approval. Use should be moderate and not disrupt the school environment. Students are responsible for the security and privacy of their own devices. The school is not liable for any loss, damage, or theft of personal technology. Students must not share passwords or allow others to use their devices.

### **Emergency Situations**

In cases of emergency, students should inform a teacher or staff member before using their phone. Parents should contact the school directly for urgent matters.

### **Devices That Record and/or Transmit Confidential Information**

Devices which track your child's whereabouts but do not transmit or record sound, pictures, or video are permitted in school; however, devices that **do** record and/or transmit sound, pictures, or video are not permitted in school unless approved by the Director. We recommend that such devices not be brought to school; however, if they are brought to school, they must be surrendered to the school administration or they must be disabled during the school day.

### **Google Workspace for Education**

At Urban Skills Center, we use Google Workspace for Education. Google Workspace for Education is a set of education productivity tools from Google including Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Classroom, and more. At Urban Skills Center, students will use their Google Workspace for Education accounts to complete assignments, communicate with their teachers, and sign into

their Chromebooks. Accounts will be issued to all students upon enrollment with parent/guardian permission. For more information, please see the Notice to Parents and Guardians regarding Google Workspace for Education in your enrollment packet.

### **Internet**

Urban Skills Center provides internet access for educational purposes and, in order to protect its students from websites that present offensive and harmful material, the school has an extensive filtering system, which is upgraded on an intermittent basis in order to maintain a level of security that the school feels is essential to accomplishing its goals for its students.

## **12. Harassment and Bullying**

It is the policy of Urban Skills Center that harassment, including bullying and sexual harassment of employees or students by TIEE, its employees, its students, its supervisors, or agents is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Each staff member and student must be sensitive to the feelings of others and must not act in a way that might be considered offensive by others, even if the staff member or student involved would not consider it offensive. Specifically, no supervisor shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding that employee's employment, wages, advancement, assigned duties, working hours or any other condition of employment or career development.

### **What to do if you have been harassed**

Any student who believes he/she has been harassed or bullied by a staff member, student, supervisor, or client of TIEE must immediately report the facts of the incident or incidents and the names of the individuals involved to his/her supervisor, teacher, or school Director who will in turn report the complaint to the Human Resources Director or the Executive Director. In the event that the student is uncomfortable for any reason about talking to his/her supervisor or teacher, the student must report the matter to the Human Resources Director or the Executive Director. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent permitted by the circumstances.

### **What the TIEE Administration will do**

Complaints of harassment that are forwarded to the TIEE administration will receive prompt and thorough attention. Within three working days of a report, a preliminary investigation will be completed either by the Executive Director or by the Human Resources Directors. If warranted, the President of the Board of Directors may convene a special meeting of the entire Board for purposes of a formal investigation of the allegation.

### **Disciplinary action**

Disciplinary action up to and including job termination and disenrollment will be taken against those who it is determined have engaged in harassment. The perpetrator may also have personal legal and financial liability.

### **No retaliation**

Employees or students who report harassment will suffer no retaliation or intimidation as a result of filing a complaint using any of the above procedures.

### **13. School Safety**

Urban Skills Center has a variety of safety procedures and protocols for emergencies and safety hazards, including fire, earthquake, and environmental or community threats. These procedures are reviewed and practiced regularly with both staff and students. In the event of a school safety emergency, school personnel will be responsible for all students in their care. In such an event, parents/guardians will be contacted via emergency systems with information pertaining to the event and clear directions for response.

#### **Visitors**

All visitors must check in with the program coordinator and sign the visitor's log when they arrive, and wear a "visitor" nametag for the duration of their visit. Additionally, visitors must sign out when leaving the school site.