

**Rocketship Dennis  
Dunkins Elementary**

**&**

**Rocketship Explore  
Elementary**

**Student/Family Handbook**

2023-2024 School Year

**Texas**

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*Please note that Rocketship may enact additional, supplemental, or alternative policies or procedures to accommodate developing circumstances related to COVID-19, to be separately distributed as needed. Families will be expected to comply with any such policies or procedures in the same manner as any policies and procedures contained in this handbook.*

*The policies in this handbook are subject to ongoing review and board approval. Rocketship will notify families if there are material changes to any of the policies contained here.*

## ABOUT ROCKETSHIP

Rocketship Public Schools Texas, an open enrollment public charter, opened its doors on August 8, 2022. The Rocketship Texas board and leadership endeavor to prepare students to be intellectually curious, high-performing, and engaged with their whole families in their community. **The vision of Rocketship Public Schools Texas is to be the leader of innovation and excellence in elementary education and positively impact communities one Rocketeer at a time.**

## OUR STORY

Rocketship Public Schools Texas was approved by the State Board of Education in **June 2021**. It was founded by a diverse coalition of respected Tarrant County leaders with expertise in education, community organizing, finance, and family engagement. Rocketship Texas is led by Superintendent SaJade Miller, formerly the Assistant Superintendent of Innovation for Fort Worth ISD. The organization is supported by Rocketship Public Schools, a nonprofit network of high-performing charter schools focused on eliminating the achievement gap. Rocketship schools consistently rank among the top 10% nationally.

The naming of Rocketship schools is an important cultural experience for founding families. It signifies parental ownership and showcases the school's values. The first campus of Rocketship Public Schools Texas was named Rocketship Dennis Dunkins Elementary (RDDE) to honor the late educator's legacy. Dennis Dunkins was a pillar of the Fort Worth educational community, advocating for school choice and promoting education excellence.

The founding families of the second Rocketship Texas school collaborated to choose the name Rocketship Explore Elementary (REX), representing their vision of providing opportunities for students to explore themselves and the wider community. Parent involvement is central to Rocketship's work, including naming the schools, interviewing teachers, volunteering, and maintaining an open campus policy.

## OUR MISSION

**The mission of Rocketship Public Schools Texas is for all students to attain their highest level of achievement in learning and life.** Rocketeers are encouraged to take initiative, be respectful, responsible, show empathy, and strive for excellence. The schools prioritize a holistic education that engages students' minds and hearts, fostering high expectations, strong support, and valuing student and family voices. The goal is to empower students to become leaders, learners, and positive contributors to their community.

Rocketship Public Schools Texas is committed to providing each Rocketeer with an **individualized, high-quality education**. They prioritize partnerships with stakeholders and **families**, and invest in the **community**. Cultural **diversity**, different backgrounds, and curiosity about the world are respected and celebrated. Together, they aim to eliminate limitations and witness Rocketeers reaching their full potential.

## OUR MODEL

Our model is based on the following three core pillars:

1. **Excellent teachers and leaders create transformational schools.** Rocketship invests deeply in training and development to ensure teachers and leaders have a profound impact on students and communities.
2. **Every child has a unique set of needs.** Rocketship meets these needs by customizing each child's schedule with a combination of traditional instruction, technology and tutoring.
3. **Engaged families are essential in eliminating the achievement gap.** Rocketship develops family leaders in our schools and communities to become powerful advocates for their children.

## OUR POLICIES

Rocketship maintains a comprehensive set of Board-approved policies, some of which are referenced in this Handbook, that govern our student services and operations. The full text of these policies is included in our [Rocketship Policy Manual](#), which is available on all school websites. Families may also request a copy at any time from the school's front office.

## DEFINITIONS

**Parent and/or guardian** are used *interchangeably* in this handbook. Parent and/or guardian is a biological, or adoptive parent, or a person who has been *legally* recognized as the parent/guardian of the student(s).

**Family** is a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption who live in the *same* home.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Rocketship Public Schools Texas  
300 E Loop 820  
Fort Worth, TX 76112  
Phone :  
Fax:

## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONTACT INFO

Superintendent - SaJade Miller, [sjmiller@rsed.org](mailto:sjmiller@rsed.org)  
Schools Leadership - Dr. Charlotte Ford, [chaford@rsed.org](mailto:chaford@rsed.org)  
Operations (Safely, Compliance, Transportation) - Chasiti McKissic, [cmckissic@rsed.org](mailto:cmckissic@rsed.org)  
External Affairs - Steve Ullibarri, [sulibarri@rsed.org](mailto:sulibarri@rsed.org)  
Special Education Services + Student Support - Dr. Christina Hanson, [chanson@rsed.org](mailto:chanson@rsed.org)  
Parent Leadership & Advocacy - Lety Gomez - [legomez@rsed.org](mailto:legomez@rsed.org)  
Family Recruitment - MarQuesha Brooks - [mabrooks@rsed.org](mailto:mabrooks@rsed.org)

## SCHOOL SITES

Rocketship Dennis Dunkins Elementary  
3520 E. Berry Street  
Fort Worth, TX 76105  
Phone: 682-339-1300  
Fax: 682-339-1399

Mrs. Shaunda Morrow  
Principal  
[smorrow@rsed.org](mailto:smorrow@rsed.org)

Mr. Rock Magis  
Assistant Principal  
[rmagis@rsed.org](mailto:rmagis@rsed.org)

Ms. Tiffany Pace Whitaker  
Student Support Coordinator  
[tpace@rsed.org](mailto:tpace@rsed.org)

Mrs. Carla Venters  
Office Manager I  
[cventers@rsed.org](mailto:cventers@rsed.org)

Ms. Adilene Correa  
Office Manager II  
[acorrea@rsed.org](mailto:acorrea@rsed.org)

Rocketship Explore Elementary

300 E Loop 820  
Fort Worth, TX 76112  
Phone: 682-339-5200  
Fax:

Mrs. Amaris Salazar  
Principal  
[asalazar@rsed.org](mailto:asalazar@rsed.org)

Mrs. Britni Cumby  
Assistant Principal  
[bcumby@rsed.org](mailto:bcumby@rsed.org)

Ms. Marcene Weatherall  
Student Support Coordinator  
[mweatherall@rsed.org](mailto:mweatherall@rsed.org)

Mr. Anthony Sanchez  
Business Operations Manager -  
[antsanchez@rsed.org](mailto:antsanchez@rsed.org)

Ms. Ana Ayala  
Office L  
[aayala@rsed.org](mailto:aayala@rsed.org)

*If your call is sent to voicemail, please leave a message and we will return your call within 24 hours.*

## WEBSITES

Rocketship Public Schools Texas' **external** website is [rocketshipschools.org/texas](http://rocketshipschools.org/texas). Here, you can find general information about Rocketship Texas. You can also navigate to each school's website, where you can find school staff contact information; parent resources, including an electronic version of this Handbook; school calendars; and other informational materials about the school.

## ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Charter schools operate independently from local school districts but require approval from the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education. These **tuition-free public** schools are open to **all students** and offer an opportunity to revitalize and improve the public education system.

Rocketship **does not** require any tests or assessments for student acceptance and enrollment. Enrollment is not limited based on factors such as sex, race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic, or athletic ability, or the child's original district. For more detailed information, please refer to Rocketship's Policy Manual, which includes the Admissions and Enrollment Policy.

## CALENDAR AND ATTENDANCE

### SCHOOL SCHEDULE

School Hours: 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM - Monday - Friday

### LAUNCH

Each Rocketship campus begins the school day with Launch, which is a time for the whole school to come together and talk about a school-wide focus. During Launch, the school may also promote a particular successful student habit, teach a new school management system, discuss progress toward achievement goals, and foster school culture and pride. The whole school, including the staff, may also learn a song or a dance together or celebrate a particular student or classroom's recent accomplishment.

**Families are welcome and encouraged to attend.**

### OFFICE HOURS

Our school office opens 15 minutes before the start of school and closes 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

**Regular Hours:** 7:15 am - 4:00 pm

The school office is closed on the days when students do not have school. These include holidays, staff professional development days, winter vacation, and spring break.

## ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

A student's **presence** is the foundation of high-quality education at Rocketship. Tardiness and absences can harm a student's academic and social progress.

- Excused absences include religious holy days, court appearances, citizenship paperwork, election clerk duties, DFPS conservatorship, health care appointments, serious illness, military dependent status, and other reasons approved by the teacher, principal, or superintendent.
- Unexcused absences will result in disciplinary action, which may include detention, suspension, or expulsion.
- Students who are absent for 10 consecutive days or more without an excuse may be withdrawn from school.

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

- All students are expected to be **on time and present in school every day**.
- Students must attend at least **3.5 hours** of the instructional school day to be considered present.
- Excused absences must be accompanied by proper notification and/or **documentation**.
- Documentation must be received within **three** days of the student's return, or the absence will be considered unexcused.
- Unexcused absences may result in **disciplinary** action.

### Excused Absences

The charts below explain the type of notification and/or documentation required to excuse absences. Notification must be provided within three days of returning to school.

Reason for Absence	Documentation Needed
Illness	Written notice from parent/guardian. A physician's note is required for three or more consecutive sick days.
Death in the family	Written notice from parent/guardian.
Religious holiday/ceremony	Written notice from the child's parent/guardian.
Exclusion due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other conditions requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons	As directed by the local health department.



Parent/guardian serving in the armed forces  <i>One day for deployment, one day for return, up to 10 days when a service member is granted temporary rest/recuperation leave..</i>	Written notice from parent/guardian. For longer absences, additional documentation may be required.
Lawful suspension	Documentation of suspension pursuant to Rocketship Suspension & Expulsion Policy.
Court appearances	Documentation from Court
Other reasons (i.e., doctor's appointment, emergencies, extra-curricular activities)	Written notice from parent/guardian. These requests will be approved at the Principal's discretion.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Some kinds of absences may not be considered excused, even with proper documentation.

These include but are not limited to the following:

- Non-documented appointments
- Sick days with no parent notification of the school
- Oversleeping
- Car problems
- Cutting classes, Errands
- Babysitting
- Vacationing outside of scheduled school breaks

The **Principal**, in consultation with his/her supervisor, when necessary, has the discretion to determine whether an absence should be excused or unexcused.

**5th Unexcused Absence:** Families will meet with the Attendance Review Committee at their respective campus.

**10th Unexcused Absence:** Student will be withdrawn and possibly referred to truancy court.

### **Notifying Parents of Unexcused Absences**

Rocketship will make reasonable and diligent attempts to make personal contact with a student's parent/guardian on the same day and each time a student has an unexcused absence, with daily follow-ups as necessary.

### **No Shows**

If a student **misses 10+ consecutive school days** without notifying the school of the reason for the absence, and Rocketship is unable to get in touch with the student’s family after reasonable and good faith efforts, **Rocketship will withdraw the student from the school’s roster and his/her space will be given to a student on the waitlist.**

Truancy Procedures : Integrate With Other Truancy Info

<b>1-3 unexcused absences</b>	The school will provide intervention to determine the reason for the unexcused absences. The school should document efforts to make personal contact with the student’s parents.
<b>5 unexcused absences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocketship will send home a written notice of compulsory attendance. The Principal will also set up a meeting with the student’s parent/guardian to discuss why the student has been absent and get a verbal agreement to improve attendance.</li> <li>• Principals must report all truant students' names to an attendance officer. Each accumulation of five absences must be reported. (Family Code 65.003(a))</li> </ul>
<b>10+ unexcused absences</b>	Rocketship may report the unlawful attendance to the Truancy Liaison, who may take legal action. (Education Code 25.003). Each successive accumulation of five unexcused absences shall also be reported to Truancy Court.

**Missed Assignments**

Students are responsible for completing all classroom assignments they missed while absent. Students are expected to get their make-up work from their teachers.

**Leaving School During the Day: Before 2:00 PM**

- Students may **not** leave school without the **permission** of a parent or guardian.
- Parents/guardians should schedule appointments **after school** whenever possible.
- If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, the student must bring a **signed note** from their parent/guardian at the beginning of the day. The note must include the reason for the partial absence, the time of departure from school, and the estimated time of the student's return to school.
- If the student has a doctor's appointment, they must bring a **note** from the doctor upon return.
- Whenever possible, students are expected to **return to school** after the appointment.

**Sick at School**

Students who become ill at school will be **escorted to the office** and remain at school until the child’s parent/guardian arrives or gives permission for the student to leave campus in accordance with Rocketship’s Student Release Policy.

## Vacations

Rocketship builds vacations into its school calendar. We suggest that family vacations should be planned around these dates. Students who take additional vacation time are not assured make-up work or credit.

## Recurrent Late Arrivals

- Students who accumulate **5 or more late arrivals** (excused or unexcused) will be asked to participate in an Attendance Expectations **Meeting** with Rocketship staff and their family.
- Students who accumulate **10 or more** late arrivals (excused or unexcused) will be asked to attend a meeting with a **School Leader** and sign an attendance contract.
- The Principal may waive the intervention requirement in rare cases, depending on the circumstances.
- If a parent/legal guardian does not show up or refuses to attend an attendance meeting, an intervention plan may still be enacted.
- A copy of the attendance contract will be sent or delivered to the student's home on file.

## SCHOOL CANCELLATION, LATE START, AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Rocketship may close schools, delay starts, or dismiss early due to severe **weather**, natural disasters, or other emergencies. The **safety** of the school community is the top priority. **Advance** notice will be given to families and staff whenever possible.

## COMMUNICATION

We want to help you stay connected to your Rocketship school. We will use multiple messaging platforms to send messages to families.

- Messages may include information about upcoming school events, emergency notifications, attendance issues, or other important information.
- Messages will be sent via **text** message, email, or phone call.
- Families can **opt out** of receiving communications by contacting their child's school.
- Teachers may also share **other communication platforms** with families.

Families can also receive information through other Rocketship Texas social communication platforms.

FB: RocketshipTexas, RocketshipExplore

IG: @rocketship\_rdde, @rocketship\_rex

## CAMPUS OPERATIONS AND SECURITY

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The safety and well-being of all our Rocketeers are our top priority. The drop-off and pick-up experience below is created with this idea in mind.

#### Drop-Off

**Rocketship allows students to be dropped off as early as 7:15 AM.** However, if a student arrives **after 7:45 AM**, they are required to visit the front office and **obtain a pass** from the Office Manager or staff member before going to class.

**Students who arrive after 7:45 AM (RDDE) + 7:30 AM (REX) will be marked as late in the school records.** Parents should refer to the Attendance and Truancy Policy for more information on disciplinary procedures for tardy students.

#### Pick-Up

- To pick up your child before dismissal, please report to the school **1 hour before** dismissal.
- To change your child from a **bus rider to a car rider**, please inform the front office by **12:00 pm**.
- To change your child from a car rider to a bus rider, there is a **24-48** hour turnaround. Not all changes will be granted.

#### Dismissal Cards

At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians are given a **Dismissal Card**. During dismissal, the child's parent/guardian (or other authorized individuals) must present this card to pick up the child. If you lose your Dismissal Card, you must show ID in the front office to obtain a temporary pick pass.

#### Reminders to Parents/Guardians for Arrival and Dismissal

- Treat all other Rocketship families, students, and staff members with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Prioritize the health or safety of everyone on campus. **Disruptive, disrespectful, and/or unsafe** behavior *during arrival and dismissal* may result in the loss of family on campus privileges.

- Student drop off **in the designated drop off zone** is **mandatory** for all families (not on the sidewalk outside or near campus).
- With very limited exceptions, **animals are not allowed** on campus during drop-off or pick-up. If you have an animal in your car, it must always remain completely inside the vehicle while on campus.
- Display your Dismissal Card or have your PikMyKid numbers ready to give to a staff member when picking up your child.
- Please remember to leave **adequate space between cars** to avoid collision
- Please **DO NOT talk or text on your phone** during this time. We need to be able to communicate with you. with you for the safety of the children

Parents who violate school rules or otherwise endanger the health or safety of Rocketship students, staff, or other families during drop-off or pick-up **may lose the right to be on campus.**

## BUS TRANSPORTATION

Free bus transportation service is available to Rocketeers based on availability and request of services.

- Rocketship prioritizes students who live **more than 2 miles from school** or cross major roadways.
- Routes are created based on **request** from **fully enrolled** students.
- Contact your campus **Business Operations Manager** for more information.

### Bus Behavior

- Bus transportation is a **privilege** that depends on safe and reasonable **behavior**.
- Unacceptable behavior on the bus poses **risks** to students, the bus driver, other passengers, motorists, and pedestrians.
- The bus driver and **monitor** are responsible for maintaining safety and discipline on the bus.
- School leaders, teachers, and the **Business Operations Manager** will support the bus driver in maintaining order.
- Parents/guardians must **review the bus rider behavior policy** and sign a contract before their child can ride the bus.

### Bus Stops

All parents must be at the bus stop at the beginning of the scheduled block for both AM and PM. This information is located on the route sheet for each bus.

### AM Pick-Up:

- Parents must be at the bus stop at the scheduled block time for both morning (AM) and afternoon (PM).
- Students should be out of their cars and standing at the bus stop when the bus arrives.

- Students need to be ready to board the bus promptly when the door opens, except during extreme weather conditions.
- Timely loading ensures that buses arrive at school on time, allowing students to participate in the launch and have breakfast before instruction begins.

#### **PM Drop-Off:**

- Parents should form a line at the bus stop and have their student's dismissal tag ready.
- Show the bus monitor the student's dismissal tag to indicate authorization for dismissal.
- The dismissal tag ensures a quick and safe departure from the bus.
- If the dismissal tag is not available, parents can provide the bus monitor with the student's ID number.
- If neither the tag nor the number is available, the child will not be dismissed, and parents will need to visit the school with proper identification to pick them up.

#### **Alternate Bus Stops**

Bus drivers are **not** permitted to drop students off at places that are **not on their scheduled** bus routes. This is for the safety of all students. If you have an issue with your stop, please **call the school directly** and ask to speak to the Business Operations Manager.

#### **Bus Routes**

Rocketship bus routes are carefully created to maximize ridership. Based on this:

- Students are **only allowed** to ride the bus route they are assigned.
- This is due to **scheduling** issues.
- Students cannot **transfer** from one bus to another.
- Schools will not allow a student to **occasionally** ride a different route.
- Students who attempt to ride another bus **without** permission may lose their riding privileges.
- All changes in routes must be made through the **Main Office**.

#### **Bus Safety Protocol**

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure the safety of all students while riding a bus to and from school. Students who violate bus rules may also be subject to Rocketship's Student Discipline policy. Please also see the Policy Manual for a copy of Rocketship's Transportation Policy.

#### **Bus Rules for Students**

- Stay seated in assigned seats
- Use positive language
- Follow directions the first time given
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself at all times
- Keep space clean-no eating on the bus
- Please note that throughout the year, the school will determine the protocol for masking on buses.

### School Bus Offenses (non-exhaustive)

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Spitting	Hanging out of the windows with any part of the body	Fighting
Excessive noise	Throwing any object in or out of the bus	Anything that seriously jeopardizes the safety of the student, other students, the bus driver, the public, or pedestrians.
Horseplay Leaving one's seat/standing without permission of the driver	Bully, threatening, or harassment of any person on the bus	Possession of an illegal substance or weapon.
Profanity or inappropriate gestures	Vandalism to the bus or any bus-related equipment (restitution will be required as well).	
Refusing to properly identify oneself to the bus driver	Unauthorized entering or leaving the bus through an emergency exit or window	
Eating/drinking/littering on the bus		

### Consequences for School Bus Offenses

Offense Level	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Class 1	Written warning, signed student reflection, and student apology	1-3 day bus suspension, and required parent conference	3-5 day bus suspension student, and required parent conference	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year
Class 2	1-3 days suspension off bus and required parent conference	3-5 days bus suspension, and require parent conference	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.	
Class 3	Up to and including permanent loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.			

Student Returned to School	Written Warning	1 day bus suspension	5-day bus suspension	Loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year
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**LATE PICK-UP**

Rocketship’s goal is to dismiss our students safely, efficiently, and responsibly. We understand that occasional family emergencies may cause a child to be picked up late from school, but **consistently** failing to pick up students **on time** is costly to the school, burdensome to the school staff, and disruptive to students’ daily routines.

**CAMPUS ACCESS AND VISITORS**

Families are **welcome** and encouraged to visit their Rocketship campus. In order to create a **safe** environment for our Rocketeers, all visitors **must check-in** to the office with a **government-issued photo ID**. In addition,

- Visitors must be respectful and orderly.
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
- Visitors who violate the policy may be asked to leave

**ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE**

An advanced video surveillance system will be used at Rocketship campuses to create a safe learning environment.

- Rocketship will abide by all state laws regarding electronic recording.
- Parents and visitors should not take photographs or make audio/video recordings of students or staff without first obtaining written consent from the parent of the student.

**FAMILY CUSTODY**

Rocketship will make every effort to ensure compliance, on the part of school staff as well as parents/guardians, with legal custody arrangements. This means that, unless otherwise prohibited by court order, Rocketship will allow **both parents or guardians to make decisions about the student's education**, including the right to:

- **Approve the educational program for the child.**
- **Review the child's educational records.**
- **Attend school meetings and conferences.**



If there is a dispute between parents or guardians about a student's education, then Rocketship may require **both** parents or guardians to **sign permission slips** or other documents, or may encourage the parents to modify their child custody arrangements in court.

This policy is in line with state and federal law. The Texas Family Code states that both parents or guardians have the right to make decisions about their child's education, unless there is a court order that specifically limits one parent's or guardian's rights. The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also states that schools must allow **both parents** or guardians to access their child's educational records.

## VOLUNTEER CLEARANCE

Families and other community partners are strongly encouraged to volunteer at their Rocketship school. The process to volunteer **will** include:

- A thorough **background check**: This may include a criminal background check, a sex offender registry check, and a child abuse registry check.
- An **interview** with the volunteer: A staff member will discuss the volunteer's experience working with children, their motivations for volunteering, and their understanding of the school's policies and procedures.
- A **reference** check: This will be conducted with at least **two** people who can speak to the volunteer's character and suitability for working with children.
- [A written agreement](#): The volunteer may be asked to sign a written agreement that outlines their responsibilities and expectations.

Rocketship will review and update volunteer clearances on a regular basis. This will help to ensure that the school is only working with volunteers who are safe and trustworthy.

## FIELD TRIPS

**Field trips are an important part of the Rocketship curriculum.** Chaperones must comply with [volunteer clearance](#) and transportation requirements. Chaperones **may not bring other children without permission**. Chaperones may be expected to use the same **transportation** as the class.

## SCHOOL MEALS

**Brilliant minds inside growing bodies need proper nourishment.** That's why food and nutrition are so important at Rocketship Texas.

### **Breakfast & Lunch**

Rocketship will provide **every** student present at school with a **free** breakfast & lunch meal. Studies have shown that students who eat breakfast and lunch have more energy, do better in school, and eat healthier throughout the day. Students are **not** required to eat the breakfast & lunch provided by the school.

### **Food Allergies**

If your child has a known food allergy or dietary restriction, parents/guardians should let school staff know. In some cases, it may be possible to accommodate a child's dietary needs in Rocketship lunch orders, but a doctor's note will be required. Parents/guardians should work with the school's Business Operations Manager to make arrangements.

### **Food Brought From Home**

Rocketship partners with our **local food vendor** to provide our Rocketeers a healthy daily lunch. Students are allowed to bring their own food from home for lunch or snacks, but junk food is not allowed on campus.

### **Restricted Foods**

Rocketship Public Schools Texas follows the [Texas Public Schools Nutrition Policy](#). Here are foods that are **discouraged**:

- Chips (*unless included in a complete lunch, i.e., along with a sandwich, fruits, vegetables, etc.*)
- Cookies
- Gum
- Candy
- Fast Food
- Soda

Foods that are encouraged:

- Salads
- Carrots
- Celery Sticks
- Apple slices and peanut butter
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole Grains
- Healthy snack pack

### **Birthday Celebrations:**

We understand how important birthdays are for most of our students. We all want to celebrate and make our Rocketeers birthday feel special. We must not forget their academics have to come first.

### **48-Hour Notice**

Here are a few rules in regard to celebrating birthdays:

1. You must give teachers **at least 48 hours** notice
2. Celebrations have to be done at the end of the day
3. No balloons or flowers are allowed to stay at school
4. **Any** food brought to the school has to be **store-bought, not homemade.**

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating

in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027), found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
- (2) fax: (202) 690-744
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

## ACADEMICS

### CURRICULUM

Rocketship Texas offers a well-rounded curriculum that meets or exceeds Texas state standards. Students take regular assessments, and teachers use data to personalize instruction. Parents receive ongoing feedback, and they are welcome to contact teachers at any time.

Students will be exposed to a well-rounded curriculum that includes:

- Reading
- Writing
- English language development
- Math
- Science
- Technology
- Physical Education
- Enrichment courses (art, music, theater, gardening, etc.)

The curriculum follows all required Texas state academic performance standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Teachers will use regular assessments to measure students' progress toward mastery. Rocketship Texas shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a

parent's or guardian's written request to school officials to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of the state assessments shall be granted.

### **Data: We Measure and Pivot**

We use knowledge about student skills to shape whole-class instruction, small-group work, and small-group tutoring. Using individual student **data**, instruction can be targeted to better meet individual student needs.

### **Parent Feedback**

Teachers will give students and parents ongoing **feedback** about student performance. Teachers will often send work home for parents/guardians to sign, and teachers will contact parents/guardians if they see a significant slip in academic performance or a special skill that needs extra practice at school and home. Parents/guardians will also regularly receive progress reports and report cards. You should feel free to contact any of your child's teachers regarding his/her progress at any time.

## **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY**

Each Rocketship Public School student will be assigned an **electronic device** as a learning tool. **Families** must sign Rocketship's technology agreement ahead of receiving technology, stating that they understand that the device is the **property of Rocketship** and they agree to be responsible stewards. Families are **responsible** for keeping their devices intact and working while in their care. Students are required to **return** the device at the end of the school year.

## **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Rocketship's grading policy is consistent with state requirements and uses standards-based report cards to assess student **mastery of knowledge and skills**. Supplementary reporting is provided through **parent-teacher conferences** and interim progress **reports**.

The grading scale for our foundational grades, preK and Kindergarten is as follows:

- B (Beginning progress toward mastery) - The student understands and grasps a few to some of the Student Expectations related to the Knowledge & Skills Statements or preK guidelines
- A (Approaching mastery of standard or guideline) - The student understands and grasps most of the Student Expectations related to the Knowledge & Skills Statement or preK guideline
- M (Mastery of standard or guideline) - The student demonstrates independent achievement and mastery of all the Student Expectations related to the Knowledge & Skills Statement or preK guideline

**For grades 1- 4, the grading scale is as follows:**

1. Area of Concern
2. Making Progress Toward Meeting State Standard
3. Meets State Standard
4. Exceeds State Expectations

Grades are assigned based on four levels: **Area of Concern**, **Progress**, **Meets**, and **Exceeds**. Area of concern indicates that the student requires significant assistance to complete tasks. Progress indicates that the student is making progress towards meeting standards, but still needs some support. Meets indicates that the student has mastered the standards. Exceeds indicates that the student has mastered the standards and is able to apply their knowledge in new and creative ways.

There are six reporting periods - three each semester. Grades are spread out evenly over the grading period. Teachers are responsible for assessing each student and assigning grades. However, there is no requirement to assign a grade for each assignment. Assignments made in a particular grading period will be utilized to assess content mastery for that grading period, unless designated otherwise by the teacher.

Conduct grades will be as follows:

E - Excellent behavior in the classroom

S - Satisfactory behavior in the classroom

N - Behavior is in need of improvement

U - The behavior is unsatisfactory and disruptive to the learning environment

### **Make-Up Work**

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Long-term projects are due upon the student's return to class.

For example

<b>Length of absence</b>	<b>Days allowed for makeup work</b>
One-day absence	Two days after return to school
Two-day absence	Three days after return to school
Three-day absence	Four days after return to school,
Four-day absence	Five days after return to school
Five-day absence	Six days after return to school

Six or more days absence	Seven days after return to school unless prior approval is given by the principal or designee
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Students **absent** the day before a major test/assignment may be required to complete the test/assignment as scheduled provided the test/assignment date has been announced in the student's presence. Unless students make up the work missed within the allotted time, the student may receive a **zero** for incomplete or missing work.

## HOMEWORK

Families and students **may expect homework** each weekday evening.

### Homework

#### Teacher Responsibility:

- Use as part of the learning process and to assess student understanding.
- Give **clearly defined instructions** and return promptly with evaluation.
- Choose a variety of activities and accommodate different learning styles.
- Coordinate with other teachers to avoid a homework overload.
- Be **family-friendly** when giving assignments over weekends/holidays.

#### Student Responsibility (Grades 2 - 5):

- Write down the assignment.
- Understand the requirements before leaving the classroom.
- Complete assignments on time and makeup missed work.
- Seek help from school resources if needed.

#### Parent/Guardian Responsibility:

- Provide appropriate levels of supervision.
- Actively communicate with the school.
- Assist with establishing a work environment conducive to learning and encourage the development of time management skills.
- Encourage students to keep homework, assignment sheets, and notes organized.

## RETENTION, ACCELERATION, AND PROMOTION

Rocketship's instructional model is organized so that each student's learning plan is **individualized** in order to account for individual **differences** and promote academic and social growth. Schools will typically allow students to progress to the next grade. Furthermore, we believe that **retention**

**should only be used in rare and exceptional circumstances** when the student’s family is given notice well in advance and is fully in support of the retention decision.

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: CHILD FIND ACTIVITIES

Rocketship provides a **free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities** according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible for special education services, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for one or more of the following disabilities as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (the federal law which outlines legal responsibilities related to special education):

- Autistic-like Behaviors
- Blindness/Visual Impairment
- Deaf Blindness
- Deafness/Hearing Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury

**Rocketship has systems in place that assist the school in determining whether a student may have a disability.**

These include a specific **Child Find form** that families complete upon enrollment in a Rocketship school. This also includes a **Student Study Team (SST), or pre-referral, process** in which school teams analyze data to identify students who are struggling academically, socially, or behaviorally and develop interventions to support the student.

Rocketship has additional evidence-based interventions that are made available to students who require it; these include both differentiated instruction in the classroom and supplemental interventions in the learning lab and classroom. School teams monitor the progress of every child who receives intervention services in order to be able to identify any student who is not responding to interventions. Students who don’t respond adequately to pre-referral interventions are referred for a more intensive level of support, which may include a formal evaluation to determine if the student is eligible to receive special education services as a child with a disability.

**If you have a concern regarding your child’s academic or social functioning, talk to his or her classroom teacher or a school leader at your school campus.**

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

### ROCKETEER CODE OF CONDUCT

**Safety, order, and student discipline** are fundamental to learning at Rocketship. Rocketship expects all students to behave in a way that fosters a safe and welcoming environment for other students, Rocketship staff, and community members.

The Rocketship Code of Conduct includes the following non-negotiable expectations for our Rocketeers:

- Adherence to the Rocketship Commitment to **Excellence**
- Adherence to the Rocketship Core **Values**: Respect, Responsibility, Persistence, Empathy
- Adherence to the **Rocketship Creed**:

**Rocketship Dennis Dunkins Elementary:**

I am a Rocketship Rocketeer  
At home, at school, and in my community,  
I am **respectful** of myself, my neighbors, and the environment  
I am **responsible** for my learning and actions.  
I have **hope** for myself, my family, and my community.  
I have **empathy** for our world, and  
I am **persistent** in attaining excellence  
Together, we are all Rocketship Rocketeers!

**Rocketship Explore Elementary:**

I am a Rocketship Rocketeer  
At home, at school, and in my community,  
I am **respectful** of myself, my neighbors, and the environment  
I am **responsible** for my learning and actions  
I model **integrity** by doing what is right, even when no one is watching.  
I have **empathy** for our world and  
I am **persistent** in attaining excellence.  
Together we are all Rocketship Rocketeers

## STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Rocketship promotes positive behavior at school and aims to create learning environments that are consistent, **predictable**, positive, and safe. Our educators and campus leaders **clearly** define behavioral expectations and consequences, create systems for recognizing and reinforcing **positive** behaviors, and provide our students with social-emotional learning.

Students will be subject to **disciplinary action** if they engage in prohibited conduct while **on school property** when attending any school-sponsored activity, or while in transit going to or coming from a Rocketship campus. Students may also be subject to disciplinary action for **off-campus** behavior if it substantially disrupts the school environment or interferes with another student's ability to participate in the school program.

Rocketship **classrooms** also use a variety of management systems to address **behavioral** issues. These may include reinforcement systems and other tiered consequences. Rocketship may take alternative in-school disciplinary action if students do not respond to our positive behavior supports or classroom management systems.



## BULLYING PREVENTION

**Bullying is not tolerated at Rocketship.** It is harmful to everyone involved.

Bullying includes discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, or perceived characteristics.

All bullying should be reported immediately to a trusted adult. There will be no retaliation for reporting bullying.

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

**All students are expected to wear the Rocketship uniform to school every day.**

**Student uniforms** help minimize disruption during the school day, promote respect for oneself and others, and foster school/community spirit.

The Rocketship uniform consists of a khaki bottom (pants, shorts, dress, skirt, or skorts) and a dark purple collared shirt. Students may also wear a Rocketship polo shirt or t-shirt, which can be purchased from [Academic Outfitters](#). Shirts must always be tucked in, which Rocketship considers being “*dressed for success*.”

Students should also wear **closed-toe** shoes. Sandals or Crocs are **not** considered safe or appropriate for school.

Rocketship Texas takes being “dressed for success” **seriously**.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Students are not allowed to have the following items at school:

- Personal electronic devices
- Weapons (including toy weapons)
- Gum
- Soda
- Matches or any flammable item
- Chips, candy, or other junk food
- Hats
- Any illegal substance
- Toys, stuffed animals, dolls, or marbles

Students who bring these items to school will have them **confiscated** and may face disciplinary action.

## TELEPHONE USE

Students may **not** use cell **phones** or other personal electronic **devices** during school.

Students must keep cell phones in the front office. They may **only** use school phones in case of emergency or to contact a parent/guardian, with teacher permission.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Rocketship is committed to the **health** of its students. We will administer medication in accordance with state law. Families must complete a **medication authorization form** to have medication kept or administered at Rocketship. When this occurs, there will be **documentation** of the specific Rocketship staff member, date, time and how much medication is given.

The medication must be **prescribed** by a healthcare provider, be for a condition that requires **regular** administration.

Here is our [full Student Health and Wellness Policy](#).

### IMMUNIZATIONS

Rocketship **requires students to be vaccinated** against diphtheria, rubeola, rubella, mumps, tetanus, poliomyelitis, pertussis, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, and varicella. Students may be **exempt** for medical or religious reasons. Students who have begun the required immunizations may be **provisionally** admitted or enrolled.

### HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND SCREENINGS

Rocketship requires students to undergo **vision and hearing screenings** as soon as possible after admission. Students enrolled in **prekindergarten, kindergarten, or first grade** must be screened each year **within 120 days** of enrollment. Students enrolled in other grades may be **exempt** from screening **if** they have a recent professional examination or if their parents submit an affidavit.

### HEAD LICE

Head lice are a **nuisance**, not a health hazard. Students with live lice can **stay** in school and be treated **after** school. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT CARDS

During enrollment, families provide the school with a **list of emergency contacts** who can be reached if their child has an emergency. This list is kept on file in the Front Office.

## SAFETY PLANS

We take safety **seriously**. We train staff, hold safety team meetings, walk the campus, and drill regularly. Every school has a detailed Health and Safety Plan with emergency response plans for earthquakes, fire, severe weather, and lockdowns.

### Emergencies

In an emergency, we will communicate with families via **automated calling**. Please keep your **contact information** up-to-date. If there is an incident on or near campus, **stay home** and wait for instructions. We may need to change dismissal procedures and ask for **photo ID**. If campus is not safe, students may be dismissed from secondary evacuation site.

## WEAPONS AND FIREARMS

Rocketship Public Schools **prohibits** all weapons, including **imitation** firearms, on school grounds and at off-campus school-related activities.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

Rocketship Public Schools Texas is committed to a **drug-free campus**. **Smoking, alcohol, and illegal drugs are prohibited on school grounds**. Students found in possession of these substances will be subject to **disciplinary** action, up to and **including** suspension or expulsion.

## INTERNET SAFETY

Rocketship uses online education technology to provide **personalized instruction** for all students. We adhere to the federal CIPA requirements, which limit our Internet system to educational purposes. Acceptable activities include classroom activities and high-quality research. Rocketship computers are **not** to be used for **entertainment** unless specifically authorized by a staff member.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

**All Rocketship staff are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect.** Under Texas law, mandated reporters must file a report when they have a reasonable suspicion of any of the following:

- **Physical abuse:** Any act that intentionally causes physical harm to a child, such as hitting, kicking, burning, or shaking.
- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual act or contact with a child, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and child pornography.

- **Emotional abuse:** Any act or omission that causes significant emotional harm to a child, such as verbal abuse, threats, isolation, or neglect.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, or education.

No Rocketship staff member, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who **fails to report** suspected child abuse or neglect incidents is subject to punishment under Texas law.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

### ROCKETSHIP'S COMMITMENT

#### *Rocketship Commitment*

At Rocketship, we fully commit to our families and students in the following ways:

- We will create a safe and supportive learning **environment** for your child.
- We will respect your child's background, **culture**, and individuality.
- We will **communicate** regularly with you about your child's progress.
- We will hold high **expectations** for all students.
- We will work hard to help your child feel **successful** and increase their sense of self-worth.
- We will provide your child with the academic and moral **foundation** they need to succeed in college and beyond.
- We will provide **support** to you and your child as you determine their educational path after Rocketship.

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS' COMMITMENT

#### *Family Commitment*

We, the family of [student name], commit to supporting our child's education and helping them succeed in school.

We will:

- Help our child arrive at school on time and remain at school until the end of the day.
- Follow all school arrival and dismissal regulations.
- Make sure our child follows the school dress code.
- Ensure that our child is reading or being read to every night.
- Check our child's homework every night and sign their agenda.
- Meet regularly with teachers to discuss our child's progress.
- Participate in as many school activities as reasonably possible.
- Strive to contribute as many partnership hours to the school community as reasonably possible.
- Be responsible for our child's behavior at school.

We understand that our child's success is **our responsibility**, and we are committed to doing everything we can to help them reach their full potential.

## PARENT PARTNERSHIP: 20 HOURS

Rocketship encourages families to participate in **20 Parent Partnership Hours** each year. This can be done by supporting or participating in various school activities. **There is no penalty** if families do not reach 20 hours, but we believe that engaged families are a core pillar of our model and critical to our students' long-term success.

When families are involved in their children's education, they become integrated into the fabric of the school community. This benefits both students and families. Students see their families on campus and feel supported by their families. Families gain a deeper understanding of our model and are able to reinforce our core values at home.

## HOME VISITS

**Rocketship teachers will visit each student's home at the beginning of the school year** to build a relationship with the family and discuss the student's learning goals.

Home visits typically last for about **one hour** and may include:

- Collaborative academic and personal **goal-setting** for the student
- Discussion of the student's (and the family's) hopes and **dreams**
- Discussion of the student's **interests** both inside and outside of the classroom
- Discussion about **communication preferences** during the school year
- Explanation about Rocketship's **policies** and procedures
- Talking about the **history** of Rocketship and the mission of the network and school
- Conversations about why the **family** chose Rocketship, how long they have lived in their community, etc.
- Invitation to an upcoming **event** at the school
- Conversation about the **teacher's** background
- **Tour** of the house, including the space where the child will do homework
- Show-and-tell of an artifact that is important to the student

Home visits are an important opportunity for **families and teachers to come together as partners** and build a strong foundation for the student's success.

## PARENT OPPORTUNITIES ON CAMPUS

We offer many opportunities for you to stay involved in your child's education. These include:

- **Mandatory Orientation Day:** All families must attend this event to learn about our school procedures and policies.

- **Conferences:** Meet with teachers to discuss your child's progress.
- **Community Meetings:** Stay informed about school happenings and get involved in school decisions.
- **Parent/Family Meetings:** Attend meetings with your child and other families to learn about school programs and activities.
- **Leadership Groups:** Get involved in school leadership by joining a Parent Leadership group, School Site Council, or other parent group.

Rocketship strongly encourages you to take advantage of these opportunities to stay involved in your child's education. Your involvement is essential to their success.

## FAMILY RIGHTS AND ASSURANCES

### PRIVACY: STUDENT INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the **privacy** of student education records. Under FERPA, **families** have the right to:

- **Inspect** and review their child's educational records.
- Request that their child's educational records be amended if they believe the records are **inaccurate** or misleading.
- **Consent** to the disclosure of their child's educational records.

Schools may disclose student education records **without** parental consent only in certain limited circumstances, such as:

- To school **officials** who have a legitimate educational interest in the records.
- To comply with a lawful subpoena or **court** order.
- To protect the **health** or safety of the student or others.

Schools must provide families and students with a copy of their FERPA rights at least **once a year**. If you have any questions about FERPA, please **contact the school principal**.

#### Questions or Concerns?

Parents have the right to file a complaint with the **U.S. Department of Education** concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202

## Opt Out

If you do **not** want Rocketship to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Rocketship in writing using the form below at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment.

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### FERPA DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT-OUT FORM

Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

#### NOTICE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION OPT OUT

*In accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a student's education records are maintained as confidential and, except for a limited number of special circumstances listed in that law, will not be released to a third party without the parent/student's prior written consent. The law, however, does allow schools to release student "directory information" without obtaining the prior consent of the parent/student. If you do not want the release of certain types of directory information without your prior consent, you may choose to "opt-out" of this FERPA exception by signing this Form. Directory information of a student who has opted-out from the release of directory information, in accordance with this policy/procedure for opting out, will remain flagged until the parent/guardian requests that the flag be removed by completing and submitting a revocation of the opt out to the School.*

TO: [School Name] \_\_\_\_\_ I request the withholding of personally-identifiable information identified as Directory Information under FERPA. I understand that upon submission of this Form, my information cannot be released to third parties without my written consent or unless the School is required by law or permitted under FERPA to release such information without my prior written consent; and that the directory information will not otherwise be released from the time the School receives my Form until my opt out request is rescinded. I further understand that if directory information is released prior to the School receiving my opt out request, the School may not be able to stop the disclosure of my directory information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## UNHOUSED STUDENTS

Rocketship Texas is committed to a high-quality education for all, **including unhoused students.**

We are happy to comply with the McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing **homelessness.**

The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees that children and youth experiencing homelessness have the **same educational rights** as other students. This policy outlines the specific procedures that Rocketship Public Schools follows to ensure that homeless students are able to **access** a quality education.

### Contact for Help

If you are a homeless student or know of a homeless student who needs help, please **contact Rocketship Texas' Designated Homeless Liaison, Dr. Christina Hanson, (817) 937-1677.**

### Homeless Definitions

Homeless children and youth are those who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.** This includes children and youth who are:

- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- Unaccompanied youth are those who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- A child or unaccompanied youth shall be considered homeless for as long as he/she is in the living situation described above.

Our Homeless Liaison is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth have access to the educational services they need to succeed. This includes:

- Identifying homeless students and their families
- Enrolling homeless students in school
- Providing referrals to other services



- Ensuring that parents are informed of their rights
- Mediating enrollment disputes
- Providing transportation assistance
- Providing professional development
- Assisting unaccompanied youth
- Obtaining immunizations
- Collaborating with other agencies

### **All Students Will Be Treated With Honor**

Rocketship Public Schools provides the following general assurances to homeless children and youth:

- Homeless students will **not** be **segregated** from other students or stigmatized.
- Homeless students will receive the **same** services as other students, including transportation, Title 1 services, and programs for students with disabilities.
- Homeless students will have **access** to district funds set aside for serving homeless students.
- Rocketship will provide homeless students with the **support** they need to meet the same academic standards as other students.

### **Transportation, Identification, and Reporting**

Rocketship will identify and enroll homeless students in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. Homeless students will have the right to select the school they wish to attend, and they will be provided with **transportation** to and from school. If there is a dispute about a student's enrollment or services, Rocketship will follow a dispute resolution process that ensures the student's right to an education is protected.

### **Specifics**

1. Unhoused students will be identified through **self-identification**, school personnel recommendations, and **coordinated** activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students will be allowed to apply for enrollment **even if they cannot** provide the school with all of the required records.
3. Homeless students will be **given priority in the enrollment lottery** if they self-identify as homeless.
4. Homeless students will be provided with **transportation** to and from school, if feasible.
5. If there is a dispute about a student's enrollment or services, Rocketship will immediately enroll the student in the school of **their choice and provide them with transportation** until the dispute is resolved.

## Dispute Resolution Process

1. The dispute resolution process begins when **Rocketship challenges the right of a parent or guardian, or an unaccompanied youth, to enroll a child or youth in school**, to continue enrollment in school, or to receive services such as transportation assistance.
2. Rocketship must provide **notice of the challenge** to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, through the Homeless Education Liaison, on the day of the challenge.
3. Rocketship must provide notice of the **right to appeal** the challenge to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. This notice must include a form to be completed by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth should he or she decide to appeal Rocketship's decision.
4. The Homeless Education Liaison will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with written notice in clear, **easy-to-understand** language detailing the dispute resolution process.
5. Rocketship will have **three working days** to review its initial decision and make a final decision as to the position taken (i.e. whether it will continue to challenge the right of the student to be enrolled). The decision must state all factual information upon which it is based and the legal basis in support thereof.

### Summary

Rocketship is committed to ensuring that **all students, including homeless students**, have access to a quality education. The policies and procedures outlined **above** are designed to ensure that homeless students are identified, enrolled, and provided with the services they need to succeed in school.

## FAMILY VOICE: COMPLAINT PROCESS

Rocketship values the concerns of our community and takes all complaints **seriously**. We have a complaint **process** in place to ensure that complaints are investigated **promptly** and **thoroughly**.

### Informal Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint, you are encouraged to **first** discuss it with your student's teacher or the school principal. You do **not** have to discuss your complaint with the alleged **harasser** or **perpetrator**. This is often the **best** way to resolve the issue **quickly** and **informally**.

If you are not comfortable discussing your complaint with someone you know, you can file a formal complaint. The complaint form will be available on our **website**.

### Who can file a complaint?

Any employee, student, parent, or visitor can file a complaint.

### **How do I file a complaint?**

You can file a complaint in person, online, by mail, or by email.

### **What happens after I file a complaint?**

The school principal and/or the Director of Schools will investigate your complaint. The investigation will be confidential.

### **What if I am not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation?**

You can appeal the decision to the principal's supervisor. If you are still not satisfied, you can appeal to a Review Committee.

### **What if I am retaliated against for filing a complaint?**

Rocketship will not retaliate against anyone who files a complaint. If you are retaliated against, you should contact the school principal or the Human Resources Department.

Here are some additional tips for filing a complaint:

- Be as **specific** as possible when describing the complaint.
- Provide any **documentation** that you have, such as video, photos, emails, letters, or witness statements.
- Be **patient**. The investigation process can take some time.
- If you have any **questions** about the complaint process, please contact the school principal or the Human Resources Department.

### **Details: 3 Step Complaint Process**

Complaints should follow the steps below when they wish to file a formal complaint described in Section I above. This process is available to complaints against employees, students, parents, or visitors.

1. Fill out a **Complaint Form, available on the school website or the front office**. In the Complaint Form, complainants should describe the nature of the complaint and any steps taken so far to resolve the issue. The Complaint Form should be submitted to the school Principal. Complaint Forms must be submitted **within 90 days** of encountering the issue that is the subject of the complaint.
2. The **Principal** will immediately initiate an adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of the complaint. This will include interviewing witnesses, obtaining any relevant documents, and allowing parties to present evidence. The investigation is considered highly confidential and is not to be revealed or discussed by any participant with persons not directly involved with the decision-making process.
  - The investigation will be concluded **within 150 school days** of receiving the complaint unless “exceptional circumstances” justify a more expedited response.

The amount of time granted for an exceptional circumstance will be determined on an individual case basis.

- Upon receiving a complaint, the Principal shall also promptly notify the designated Rocketship **Regional Director**.
3. The Principal will prepare a final report with a recommendation for resolving the complaint. The final report will give the name of the party bringing the complaint, the nature of the complaint, a summary of the investigation, the recommended resolution, and the reasons for recommendation. The Principal should keep the final report on file and provide a copy of this report to the complainant. The **Principal should report** any incident found to be discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying based on membership in a protected class, along with the results of the investigation, to [compliance@rsed.org](mailto:compliance@rsed.org) within 24 hours of the conclusion of the investigation.

If the complainant is **not** satisfied with the Principal's response, he/she may appeal to the Principal's **direct supervisor**. All appeals must be in **writing** and include the reason for appeal. Appeals must be submitted to the appropriate party **within 15 school days** of receiving the response.

The Principal's supervisor will conduct an investigation upon receiving the appeal. This process may include an interview with the decision-maker to discuss the rationale. **The supervisor will issue a written resolution within 15 school days of receiving the appeal.**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the supervisor's resolution, he/she may file a **final appeal** to a **Review Committee** to be composed of one Board member, the Regional Director, and the Chief Operating Officer. The Review Committee will conduct an investigation upon receiving the appeal. This process may include an interview with the decision-maker to discuss the rationale. The Review Committee will issue a written resolution **within 15 business days** of receiving the appeal. Any decision of the Review Committee shall be final. The Review Committee shall hear appeals in its reasonable discretion.

If the original complaint pertains to the school Principal, complainants should begin by filing their complaint with the **Principal's direct supervisor** as described in Steps 4-5 above. Appeals will go to the review committee as described in Step 6.

### **What Else?**

This complaint process does not bar complainants from filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by **state and federal law**.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Rocketship is committed to providing a **diverse and inclusive environment** for all students, staff, and volunteers. We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or any other personal characteristic.

We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind, including bullying, intimidation, and retaliation. We take all complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously and investigate them promptly and thoroughly.

If you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed, please contact the school principal or the human resources department. You can also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

We believe that a diverse and inclusive environment is **essential** for a high-quality education. We are committed to creating a school community where **everyone** feels welcome and valued.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Rocketship is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, have equal access to a high-quality education. We follow the guidelines of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

If you believe your child may have a disability that qualifies them for accommodations under Section 504, please contact the school principal. The principal will work with you to assess your child's needs and develop a plan to provide appropriate accommodations.

## SCHOOL-FAMILY COMPACT

### ROCKETSHIP'S ROLE

Rocketship has a responsibility to provide **high-quality curriculum and instruction** in a **supportive and effective learning environment** that enables participating students to achieve the **state's student academic achievement standards**.

### FAMILY'S ROLE

Families can support their children's learning by:

- Monitoring **attendance**, homework **completion**, and **screen time**.
- Completing **20 Parent Participation Hours**.
- Attending school community meetings and other school events.

- Participating in **decisions** related to their children's education.

## COMMUNICATION

Rocketship believes in the importance of communication between families and the school.

We communicate with families regularly through:

- Parent-teacher **conferences**.
- **Frequent** reports on student progress.
- Opportunities to **volunteer** and participate in the classroom.
- Two-way communication in a **language** that families can understand.
- Opportunities to attend school community **meetings** and other school-sponsored **events**.

## PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Pursuant to Section 1112(e)(1)(A-B) of the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, a student's parent may request, and Rocketship will provide the parents upon request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the **professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers**, including at a minimum the following:

- Whether the teacher has met **State** qualifications for grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other professional **status** that the State has waived;
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the **field** of discipline of the certification of the teacher;
- Whether the child is provided services by **paraprofessionals** and if so their qualifications.

## COPPA

Rocketship schools use several computer software applications and web-based services, operated not by schools in our network, but by third-party vendors. We use these tools to provide students with the most effective software and web-based services for learning. In accordance with the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**, Rocketship consents to the vendors' collection, use, and disclosure of **information obtained directly from students**. Rocketship gives this consent on behalf of parents.

Under COPPA, each software provider or website operator is bound to maintain the **confidentiality** of the information collected, and must provide parental notification and obtain parental consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. The law permits schools such as ours to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of all of its students, thereby eliminating the need for individual parental consent given directly to

the web site operator. For more information on COPPA, please visit <http://www.ftc.gov/privacy/coppafaqs.shtm>.

A complete list of the software and services used by RSED, with the privacy policy for each, can be found on our network website at: <https://www.rocketshipschools.org/<link to list of programs>>.

**Upon request from Rocketship**, vendors must provide the school a description of the types of personal information collected; an opportunity to review a child's personal information and/or have the information deleted; and the opportunity to prevent further use or online collection of a child's personal information.

**Parents** retain the right to **request review of their child's personal information** and/or have information deleted. Families also have the right to **opt their child out** of participating in educational activities that involve the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information collected from their child.

## POLICIES

As referenced throughout this Handbook, Rocketship maintains a robust set of Board-approved policies in its Policy Manual. These policies set forth parameters, requirements, and procedures for Rocketship operations and student services.

Each official Rocketship policy is assigned a number upon Board approval, indicated in the parenthesis below. While this handbook serves to notify parents of policies annually, The Policy Manual may be updated throughout the school year as necessary to comply with ongoing legal requirements.

A complete and up-to-date version of the Policy Manual is available to all Rocketship families on the school **website**.

Families may also request a **printed** copy of the Policy Manual from the **front office of the school at any time**.

The list below includes many of the relevant policies that are contained in the Policy Manual.

### **Governance/Management Policies**

General Complaint Policy (#1-10.TX)\*

### **Academic Policies**

Retesting Policy and Assessment Code of Ethics (#2-03)

End of Course Assessments Policy (#2-04.TX)

Academic Testing Programs Policy (#2-05.TX)  
Accelerated Instruction for Unsatisfactory Performance Policy (#2-06.TX)

### **Schools Operations Policies**

Campus Access and Visitor Policy (#3-01.TX)\*  
Field Trip Policy (#3-02)  
Student Release Policy (#3-03)  
Late Pick-Up Policy (#3-04)  
Staff and Parent Driver Policy (#3-06)  
Electronic Recording Policy (#3-07)  
Volunteer Clearance Policy (#3-09.TX)  
School Closure Policy (#3-10)  
Animals on Campus Policy (#3-11)  
Public Solicitation on School Grounds Policy (#3-12)  
School Social Media Policy (#3-13)  
Attendance Accounting Policy (#3-15.TX)  
Emergency Plans Policy (#3-16.TX)  
Crisis and Trauma Response Policy (#3-17.TX)

### **Student Services Policies**

Admissions and Enrollment Policy (#4-01.TX)

Discrimination, Retaliation, Harassment, and Title IX Policy (#4-03.TX)  
Student Discipline Policy (#4-04.TX)  
Student Dress Code (#4-06.TX)  
Compulsory Attendance Policy (#4-07.TX)  
Family Custody Policy (#4-08)\*  
Bed Bug Policy (#4-09)  
Head Lice and Communicable Disease Policy (#4-10.TX)  
Internet Safety Policy (#4-11.TX)  
Local School Wellness Policy (#412.TX)  
Medication Administration Policy (#413.TX)  
Immunization Policy (#414.TX)  
Education of Homeless Children and Youth Policy (#4-17)\*  
Pupil Fee Policy (#4-18.TX)  
School Publications and Literature Policy (#4-19.TX)  
FERPA Policy (#4-20)\*  
Educational Records and Student Information Policy (#4-21.TX)  
Home Visit Policy (#4-23)  
Parent Partnership Policy (#4-24)  
Concussion Policy (#4-28)  
Suicide Prevention Policy (#4-29.TX)  
Equal Educational Opportunities Policy (#4-31.TX)



Prohibited Bullying Policy (#4-32.TX)  
Student Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Policy (#4-33.TX)  
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy (#4-34.TX)  
Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Policy (#4-35.TX)  
Anaphylaxis and Seizure Management Policy (#4-36.TX)  
Health Screenings and Physical Examinations Policy (#4-37.TX)  
School Safety Transfers Policy (#4-38.TX)  
Personal Electronic Devices Policy (#4-39.TX)  
Student Activities Policy (#4-40.TX)  
Interrogations and Searches Policy (#4-41.TX)  
Accommodations for Transgender Students Policy (#4-42.TX)  
Mental Health Services Guide