



Excel
HIGH SCHOOL



2026-2027

Student Handbook

ACCREDITED & RECOGNIZED BY



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Introduction to Excel High School Texas

About This Handbook

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to support students and families as they begin and progress through their academic journey at Excel High School Texas. It outlines the essential information, policies, and resources needed to navigate our virtual learning environment successfully, from understanding academic expectations and enrollment procedures to discovering enrichment opportunities and accessing support services.

Aligned with our mission to provide a transformative online education experience that exceeds academic standards, and student-centered education to every learner, this handbook also introduces students to our virtual community, university partnerships, and career readiness programs. Whether pursuing a full-time accredited diploma, single-course recovery, or a Future Ready endorsement pathway, students will find clear guidance and support throughout each stage of their experience.

In addition to its role as a student resource, the handbook functions as the official document governing academic policies, program requirements, and accreditation standards for Excel High School Texas. Students are generally held to the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their enrollment. However, Excel Education Systems, Inc. reserves the right to modify programs or policies as needed, and when changes occur, reasonable efforts will be made to help students transition effectively and remain on track for graduation.

Reservation of Rights

Excel High School Texas reserves the right to revise, modify, or discontinue policies, procedures, academic programs, and other provisions outlined in this handbook at any time, with or without prior notice, in accordance with applicable accreditation and licensing requirements. This handbook is not a binding contract but serves as a general guide to the school's current programs and expectations. While students may be permitted to complete their academic program under the requirements in place at the time of their enrollment, revised policies may, in some cases, supersede prior guidelines. When feasible, the school will provide support to ensure a smooth transition under updated policies or academic structures.

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook applies to all students enrolled at Excel High School Texas during the 2026–2027 academic year, including students enrolled through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) program. It is organized into two parts so families can quickly find what they need.

Part I — The Excel Texas Experience. Our mission, programs, admissions, tuition, school choice, graduation requirements, the day-to-day learning experience, and how to reach us.

Part II — Policies & Procedures. Academic policies, conduct expectations, privacy, accommodations, refunds, complaints, and the formal standards Excel follows as a TEPSAC-accredited and TEFA-approved school.

This document is reviewed annually. The version in effect is published at excelhighschooltexas.com and supersedes all previous editions.

Welcome from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Excel Students and Families,

Welcome to Excel High School Texas, the Lone Star State campus of one of the longest-running and most respected accredited online schools in the country. Whether you are joining us as a middle school student building a foundation for the years ahead, a high school student earning your accredited diploma, or a family using your Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) to choose the school that fits your child best, we are glad you are here.

Excel was founded on a simple idea: every learner deserves a high-quality education delivered in a way that fits their life. For some students, that means catching up on credits while balancing work and family. For others, it means accelerating through Honors and Advanced Placement coursework to graduate ahead of schedule. And for our Future Ready students, it means choosing an endorsement area, working with a dedicated Success Coach, and stepping into the next chapter of life with real direction.

Excel High School is fully accredited by Cognia, the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC), and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA-CESS). We are also recognized as a Cognia School of Distinction. This means your education meets rigorous standards recognized by Texas public and private colleges and universities, the U.S. military, and employers nationwide.

This handbook is your go-to resource for the expectations, policies, and opportunities available to you throughout your time at Excel High School Texas. I encourage you to read it thoroughly, keep it handy for easy reference, and reach out to our Texas team anytime you have a question.

On behalf of every educator, coach, and staff member at Excel High School Texas, thank you for trusting us with your education. We are proud to walk this road with you.

Sincerely,

Heather Farmakis, Ph.D.

Chief Strategy Officer & Superintendent of Schools, Excel Education Systems

✉ hfarmakis@excelhighschool.com

☎ 800-620-3844

Introduction

We're excited to welcome you to Excel High School Texas, where flexibility, innovation, and excellence come together. Excel is a fully accredited, non-public, private online school committed to delivering a high-quality distance education that empowers Texas students to learn on their own terms, anytime and anywhere there's a stable internet connection.

Whether you're pursuing a diploma, recovering credits, or getting ahead, you'll have the support of qualified instructors and academic coaches who are invested in your success. Our interactive virtual learning environment is designed to engage, challenge, and inspire while giving you the freedom to learn at your own pace from anywhere in Texas.

This handbook is your guide to how Excel operates, what resources are available to you, and what's expected throughout your academic journey. Please take time to read it thoroughly. Your success at Excel depends on staying engaged: making consistent progress, completing assignments on time, using the support resources available, and following the guidelines that help us maintain a respectful and effective learning community.

Mission Statement

Excel High School Texas will provide an exceptional online learning experience that exceeds the highest academic standards in a nurturing, flexible, and affordable environment, accessible to every Texas student regardless of zip code, schedule, or circumstance.

Vision Statement

A Texas where every learner has a real, personalized path to graduation, college, career, and life, supported by educators who know them by name and tools designed for how today's students actually learn.

Core Values

Our Students

We put our students' best interests at the heart of every course, policy, and conversation.

Integrity

We strive to operate our school with honesty, transparency, and high ethical standards. We keep our promises and honor our commitments.

Academic Rigor

Self-paced does not mean lower expectations. We hold our coursework, our coaching, and our diploma to a standard that earns the trust of colleges, employers, and the military.

Flexibility Without Compromise

We meet Texas families where they are — and ask them to meet us at a standard worth the effort.

Continuous Improvement

We listen to students, families, and accreditors, and we use what we hear to make Excel better every year.

Part I — The Excel Texas Experience

About Excel High School Texas

Excel High School Texas is the Texas-focused campus of Excel High School, an accredited online school offering self-paced courses for middle and high school students across the Lone Star State. Our 100% online programs are built for Texas learners who want to move at their own pace, balance school with family, or finish faster than a traditional classroom allows.

Our Texas Presence

Excel High School Texas operates from Allen, Texas, in the Dallas–Fort Worth metroplex. Our Texas advisors, success coaches, and administrative team work with families across all 254 Texas counties.

ADDRESS: Excel High School — Texas 825
Watter's Creek Blvd., Building M, Suite 250
Allen, Texas 75013

PHONE & EMAIL: 800-620-3844
info@excelhighschooltexas.com
www.excelhighschooltexas.com

Legal Governance

Excel High School is organized under the laws of the State of Minnesota (statute 302A) as a non-public, accredited high school, and is a division of Excel Education Systems, Inc.

Excel High School Texas is the Texas campus of Excel High School, operating from Allen, Texas, and is accredited by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) for grades 6–12. Excel operates under the leadership of the executive team listed in the Directory & Key Contacts chapter.

Why Families Choose Excel

- Fully accredited diploma — Cognia (School of Distinction), TEPSAC, and MSA-CESS.
- Open enrollment, year-round — no waiting for a fall, spring, or summer term.
- Self-paced courses students can finish faster, with up to 12 months per full-year course.
- Affordable tuition with monthly payment plans, and tuition-free for eligible TEFA-awarded families.
- BRYTE AI Tutor available 24 hours a day, paired with human academic and success coaches.
- NCAA-approved core courses for student-athletes pursuing Division I and II competition.
- CEEB code 240707, recognized by the College Board and ACT.

Accreditation & Recognition

Accreditation is the single most important credential a school holds. It is what makes a diploma transferable, what allows credits to move between schools, and what tells colleges, employers, and the military that an institution meets recognized educational standards. Excel High School Texas is independently verified by the leading accreditors in private K–12 education, at the state, regional, and national level.

Cognia — School of Distinction

Excel High School holds a 7-year Cognia accreditation valid through 2032 and was named a Cognia School of Distinction in 2026, an honor reserved for institutions that exceed the rigorous standards Cognia uses to evaluate more than 34,000 schools worldwide.

TEPSAC — Texas Private School Accreditation Commission

Excel High School is accredited by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) for grades 6–12. TEPSAC operates in affiliation with the Texas Education

Agency, which means our Texas students can transfer credits to and from Texas public schools, and our teacher service is recognized for salary increment purposes.

Middle States Association — MSA-CESS

Excel is accredited by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS), valid through 2029. This regional accreditation, layered on top of Cognia, gives our diploma weight across Texas, throughout the United States, and internationally.

Specialized Certifications

Cognia STEM Certification

Our STEM-certified curriculum gives Texas students hands-on, integrated learning across science, technology, engineering, and mathematics — preparing them for in-demand college majors and careers in the Texas economy.

NCAA Course Approval

Excel's core academic courses are approved by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Texas student-athletes can use Excel coursework to establish and maintain eligibility for Division I and II college athletics without leaving home.

IBCCES Certified Autism Resource

Excel's digital courseware is a Certified Autism Resource through the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). This means the lessons, activities, and assessments students work through have been independently reviewed and certified to meet established accessibility benchmarks for autistic and other neurodiverse learners — including predictable navigation, clear and literal instructions, reduced sensory and cognitive load, and learner-controlled pacing. The certification applies to the design of the learning environment itself; it is distinct from special-education related services (such as speech or occupational therapy), which Excel does not directly provide.

College Board & ACT Registration

Excel High School is registered with the College Board and ACT under CEEB code 240707.

What Accreditation Means for Texas Families

- Credits transfer to and from Texas public and private schools (TEPSAC).
- Recognized by Texas colleges, universities, and community colleges, including UT, Texas A&M, Texas State, and the TACC system.

- Accepted by all branches of the U.S. military under Tier 1 enlistment standards.
- NCAA-approved core courses for Texas student-athletes.
- Diploma honored by employers across Texas and nationwide.

Programs at a Glance

Excel High School Texas offers a complete portfolio of accredited programs spanning grades 6 through 12, plus single-course enrollment for credit recovery and summer school. This chapter gives a high-level view of each program. Detailed graduation requirements appear in the Graduation Requirements chapter.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Excel Middle School Texas delivers 100% online courses for grades 6–8, helping students build the academic skills, study habits, and confidence they need to thrive in high school and beyond. Core subjects, English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, are paired with the time management and self-discipline that high school will demand. Advanced 8th graders can take high school-level second language courses, earning credits that carry forward into their diploma program.

Standard High School Diploma

Our standard online high school program is the most flexible way to earn a regionally accredited diploma. Students work at their own pace, transfer in existing credits, and graduate ready for college, career, or military service. Twenty-two(22) credits are required to graduate.

Honors High School Diploma

The Honors Diploma is built for motivated students aiming for selective colleges and universities. Honors courses go deeper than the standard curriculum, with faster pacing, more analytical writing, and richer problem solving. Honors courses are weighted on the student's GPA and clearly indicated on the transcript. Twenty-six (26) credits are required to graduate.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Excel's online AP courses are authorized by the College Board and follow the official AP curriculum framework. With a qualifying score on the May AP exam, students can earn college credit, place out of intro classes, and strengthen their college applications. Excel offers AP courses across English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Computer Science, and World Languages. Our AP grading scale does not award grades below a C.

Future Ready Foundations — 22-Credit Texas Foundation Diploma

Future Ready Foundations is Excel High School's full delivery of the Foundation High School Program. It includes 22 Cognia/MSA-CESS accredited Texas credits, a career pathway selected by the student, a dedicated Success Coach all year, and full administrative support, including CLT coordination. Transcripts are recognized by Texas universities, out-of-state schools, employers, and the military.

NOTE Future Ready Foundations is best suited for students headed for trade school, community college, the military, the workforce, or any path that does not require Top 10% automatic admission to a Texas public university.

Future Ready Distinguished — 26-Credit Diploma with Endorsement

Future Ready Distinguished includes 26 Cognia/MSA-CESS accredited Texas credits (including Algebra II and an advanced fourth science), a completed endorsement in the student's chosen area, a career pathway mapped to the endorsement, a dedicated Success Coach, and full administrative support, including CLT coordination and endorsement tracking.

The Five Texas Endorsement Areas

- STEM — Science, technology, engineering, mathematics. Excel pathways: Technology, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Healthcare Technology, and AI Innovators. Cognia STEM Certified.
- Business and Industry — finance, marketing, accounting, hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture, information technology. Excel pathway: Business.
- Public Services — education, government, health science, criminal justice. Excel pathways: Legal Studies, Criminal Justice, Paralegal Studies.
- Arts and Humanities — world languages, fine arts, literature, social studies.
- Multidisciplinary Studies — flexible across multiple fields, for students with broad interests.

AI Innovators Pathway

AI Innovators is Excel's signature STEM career pathway, integrated into Future Ready under the STEM endorsement. The pathway introduces students to AI foundations,

generative AI, AI ethics, Python for AI, and machine learning fundamentals — building the digital fluency colleges and employers increasingly expect.

Summer School and Credit Recovery

Excel offers accredited single-course enrollment with open registration every day of the year. Students who failed a class, fell behind, transferred mid-year, or want to get ahead can enroll in a single course and earn an accredited credit that transfers back to their home school's transcript. Most students finish a semester course in 6 to 10 weeks; each single-course enrollment includes up to 6 months of access.

Dual Enrollment

Excel partners with select colleges and universities, including agreements with several Texas institutions, to offer real college courses online while students are still enrolled in high school. Dual-enrollment students earn both high school credit toward their Excel diploma and college credit at the partner institution. Dual-enrollment course availability and partner institutions may change from year to year; contact a Texas advisor for the current list.

The Excel Learning Experience

What makes Excel work for so many students is the combination of three things: a learning platform built for self-paced study, intelligent tutoring available at any hour, and real human coaches who know each student by name. Together, they form a wrap-around support system that adapts to how today's students actually learn.

The Learn Stage Platform

Excel courses are delivered through Learn Stage, Excel Education Systems' proprietary learning management and student information system. Students access courses, assignments, gradebooks, transcripts, parent communications, and the Help Desk through a single login at live.learnstage.com. Parents have dedicated portal access to monitor progress, communicate with coaches, and stay informed throughout the year.

BRYTE — Excel's AI Tutor

BRYTE is the dedicated AI tutor built into the Excel High School Texas learning experience. Friendly, patient, and always ready to help, BRYTE is available to every enrolled student 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. BRYTE helps students strengthen understanding, improve learning confidence, and receive instant academic support — whether they are stuck on a math problem, reviewing for a test, polishing an essay, or trying to make sense of a science concept for the first time.

What BRYTE Does

- 24/7 AI tutoring across every subject
- Homework assistance and guided practice with worked examples
- Concept reinforcement through adaptive mini-lessons
- Writing feedback that strengthens clarity and structure
- Math support that shows the reasoning behind the answer
- Exam preparation and study help on demand

NOTE BRYTE is designed for learning, not for completing assignments on a student's behalf. See the Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, & Policies chapter in Part II.

Academic Coaches and Success Coaches

Every Excel student has access to Excel's academic and success coaching team. Coaches work with students on pacing, motivation, course navigation, and any challenges that come up during the year. Future Ready program students receive Success Coach Pro — one-on-one access to a named Success Coach with scheduled check-ins, skill-building support, and accountability throughout the year, included at no extra cost.

The Self-Paced Model

Excel courses are fully asynchronous. There are no scheduled class periods, no required login times, and no synchronous lectures. Students log in when their schedule allows — early morning, evening, weekends, or during travel — and work through course content at a pace that fits their goals and life. Full-year courses allow up to 12 months for completion; single-course enrollments allow up to 6 months.

Help Desk and Support Hours

Texas students can request help anytime through the Help Desk in their Learn Stage portal. Academic and success coaches are available during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. BRYTE is available 24/7 for academic questions. Spanish-language support is available — see the Español option on excelhighschooltexas.com.

Admissions & Enrollment

Enrollment at Excel High School Texas is open year-round. Students can begin coursework within days of registering. Our Texas admissions team is available to review transcripts, explain TEFA voucher eligibility, and recommend the program that best fits each student's goals.

Who Can Enroll

- Middle school students — grades 6 through 8.
- High school students — ages 14 through 18, grades 9 through 12.
- Homeschool families seeking accredited supplemental courses.
- Students at other schools needing credit recovery or single courses.

How to Enroll

Step 1 — Choose a Program. Decide between Middle School, Standard, Honors, Platinum/AP, Future Ready, Single courses or Summer School/Credit Recovery.

Step 2 — Select a Tuition Plan. Choose annual payment in full, 10 monthly installments, or 5 monthly installments. Families using the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) follow the school-choice enrollment path described in the Texas School Choice chapter.

Step 3 — Complete the Online Enrollment Form. Submit the online enrollment form at live.learnstage.com/exceled/excelhighschool/register. Submit transcripts from any previous schools if you are transferring credits.

Step 4 — Begin Classes. Once enrollment is processed, students receive their Learn Stage login and can begin coursework immediately. Most students start within 24 to 72 hours of enrollment.

Transfer Credits

Excel evaluates transfer credits on an individual basis. A Texas advisor will work with each family to review the student's completed coursework, identify which credits transfer toward an Excel diploma, and map out the remaining graduation requirements. Transcripts from accredited institutions, official homeschool records, and prior Cognia/MSA/TEPSAC schools transfer most easily.

Required Enrollment Documents

- Completed Excel online enrollment form.
- Official transcript(s) from previous school(s), if transferring credits.
- Proof of student identity (once 18 years old or prior to graduation) and date of birth.
- Parent or guardian contact information for students under 18.
- TEFA award letter from the State of Texas, if applicable.

Tuition & Payment Plans

Quality online education should not break the bank. Excel offers transparent, flat-rate tuition with interest-free payment plans on every annual program. Most families using the

Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) pay nothing out of pocket — see the Texas School Choice chapter.

NOTE All tuition shown is for the 2026–2027 academic year. Total tuition does not include possible additional fees such as late payment fees or other administrative charges. Contact the Texas admissions team for current rates.

Future Ready Tuition

Future Ready is Excel's most complete program. For Texas families using the State Voucher (School Choice / TEFA), it is tuition-free. The \$10,474 TEFA allocation covers Future Ready in full.

Plan	Annual	10 Monthly	5 Monthly
Future Ready — High School	\$9,750	\$975	\$1,950
Future Ready — Middle School	\$7,750	\$775	\$1,550
Future Ready — Standard MS/HS Single Course	\$625	—	—
Future Ready — Honors HS Single Course	\$670	—	—

Plan	Annual	10 Monthly	5 Monthly
Future Ready — AP HS Single Course	\$999	—	—

High School Tuition Plans

Plan	Annual	10 Monthly	5 Monthly	Key Features
High School Silver	\$1,950	\$195	\$390	6 credits/year, standard curriculum, BRYTE AI Tutor, Academic Coach Help Desk.
High School Gold	\$2,500	\$250	\$500	Everything in Silver, plus up to 8 credits/year, 24-credit graduation track, and Honors curriculum access.

High School Platinum	\$4,900	\$490	\$980	Everything in Gold, plus up to 10 credits/year, AP curriculum access, and Success Coach Pro.
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Middle School Tuition

Semester tuition is automatically calculated at half the annual rate. Tuition is free for eligible families using the Texas State Voucher (TEFA).

Plan	Annual	10 Monthly	5 Monthly	Includes
Middle School Silver	\$1,690	\$169	\$338	Full school year of accredited middle school coursework, academic coaching, BRYTE AI Tutor, and Help Desk.

Single Courses

Course Type	Tuition	Best For
Standard Single Course	\$325	Credit recovery, summer school, or adding a course to a transcript.
Honors Single Course	\$370	Students seeking a more rigorous transcript.
AP Single Course (College Credit)	\$699	Earning college credit while still in high school.
Middle School Single Course	\$325	Credit recovery or supplementing a current curriculum.

Payment Plans and Financing

Every annual program, Middle School, High School (Silver, Gold, Platinum), and Future Ready, includes interest-free installment options.

Pay in Full. Pay the annual tuition up front — the simplest option, with no monthly billing.

10 Monthly Payments. Spread tuition across 10 interest-free monthly payments aligned to the school year.

5 Monthly Payments. A shorter, semester-style schedule for families who want to finish payments faster. Tuition-Free with the Texas State Voucher. Eligible Texas families can attend Excel High School Texas at no out-of-pocket cost through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) school-choice program.

Late Payment, NSF, and Account Fees

Families on a monthly payment plan are responsible for keeping their account current. The following fees may apply to past-due or returned payments:

Returned payment (NSF). A check, draft, or money order returned for insufficient funds is subject to a non-refundable \$50 fee. The original payment amount and the \$50 fee become immediately due.

Chargebacks. Credit or debit card chargebacks are subject to a \$50 bank fee per transaction.

Early termination. Withdrawal from a full-time or semester enrollment may require a \$200 early-termination fee. Scheduled installment payments continue and the account balance remains due until the fee is paid; transcripts for the associated grade level are not released until the account is settled.

Past-due accounts. Accounts that remain unpaid for 60 days may be referred to a collections agency. Excel may suspend access to coursework until the balance, including any applicable fees, is paid in full. TEFA-funded accounts follow the funding program's rules.

Texas School Choice & TEFA

Excel High School is an approved education provider for the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) — Texas's school choice voucher program. Eligible families can direct state-funded education dollars toward an accredited, 100% online diploma at Excel.

What TEFA Is

The Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) gives qualifying Texas families access to state-directed funds that can be used for approved private education expenses, including tuition at accredited online schools like Excel High School. Rather than tying education dollars to a single public school assignment, TEFA puts the choice in the hands of parents. If your family is awarded TEFA funds, you decide where and how those funds are used, including at a fully accredited online program like Excel.

Who Decides Eligibility

The application is submitted directly to the State of Texas, not to Excel. The state determines eligibility, funding amounts, and award decisions on a limited basis each cycle. Excel is not part of the eligibility review and cannot guarantee or expedite an award.

TEFA Application Window

The State of Texas sets the TEFA application window each year and publishes the dates at educationfreedom.texas.gov. For the 2026–27 school year, the application window opened February 4, 2026 and closed March 17, 2026.

Application windows for subsequent years, including 2027–28, are established and announced by the State of Texas in advance of each enrollment cycle. At the time of this handbook's publication, the 2027–28 window had not yet been published. Families should check educationfreedom.texas.gov for current dates, or contact a Texas advisor for assistance. Excel does not set, control, or extend the application window, and cannot accept TEFA applications on a family's behalf.

How TEFA Works at Excel — Three Steps

Step 1 — Apply with the State. Parents submit the TEFA application directly to the State of Texas at educationfreedom.texas.gov within the published application window.

Step 2 — Receive Your Award. The state reviews eligibility and notifies awarded families. Funding is limited, and decisions are made by Texas — not by Excel.

Step 3 — Enroll at Excel. Once awarded, the family selects Excel High School Texas as the approved provider. Most awarded students are recommended for placement in Excel's Future Ready (Premium Support) package at no cost to the family.

Future Ready and TEFA funding

Most Texas families awarded TEFA funds choose Future Ready, and they choose it for a simple reason: it is the most robust program Excel offers and the one that provides the most individualized support. Where a standard track gives a student great courses, Future Ready wraps those courses in a full support system built to carry a student all the way to graduation and into what comes next.

Families choose Future Ready because it gives their student:

- Success Coach Pro — one-on-one access to a named Success Coach who knows the student by name, with scheduled check-ins, skill-building support, and accountability throughout the year, included at no extra cost

- Full access to Standard, Honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) coursework, so the student is never boxed out of a more rigorous path
- A guided career pathway that connects coursework to real goals, including the Texas endorsement areas
- ElevatED Enrichment Program — enrichment in mindset, resilience, and goal-setting, plus honor societies and student clubs including National Honor Society (NHS) and virtual clubs
- Self-paced scheduling with up to 12 months per full-year course, and Academic and Success Coaching during business hours
- Full administrative support on the way to a Texas-recognized, regionally accredited diploma

Programs Covered Under TEFA

Awarded students can choose any of Excel's accredited program tracks — Standard High School, Honors High School, Advanced Placement (AP), or Middle School (grades 6–8). Future Ready Foundations and Future Ready Distinguished are both fully TEFA-eligible, and the \$10,474 TEFA allocation covers each program in full for the 2026–27 cycle.

TEFA Frequently Asked Questions

Is Excel High School an approved TEFA provider?

Yes. Excel High School is an approved education provider for the Texas Education Freedom Account program for grades 6–12.

Who decides if my family qualifies for TEFA?

Eligibility, funding amounts, and award decisions are made entirely by the State of Texas. Apply directly at educationfreedom.texas.gov — Excel is not part of the eligibility review.

How much does Excel cost if my child is awarded TEFA funds?

Most Texas students who are awarded state-directed funding are recommended for placement in the Future Ready Tier package, as it provides the highest level of academic support and student services. For eligible students, the cost of the Future Ready Tier is fully covered by state-directed funds, resulting in no out-of-pocket tuition expense.

Can I still enroll if my family doesn't receive TEFA funding?

Yes. Excel offers several low cost program tiers and monthly tuition options for Texas families regardless of voucher eligibility.

Graduation Requirements

Excel High School Texas issues a single accredited diploma, recognized by Texas public and private colleges, the U.S. military, and employers nationwide. Students can earn that diploma through several pathways, depending on their goals.

Standard Diploma — 22 Credits

The standard online high school program requires 22 credits to graduate.

Subject Area	Credits Required
English I, II, III, IV	4
Mathematics — Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II	3–4
Science — Biology, Chemistry, Physics	3–4
Social Studies — World History, U.S. History, Government, Economics	3–4
Physical Education / Health	1–2
Fine Arts	1
Foreign Language	2

Subject Area	Credits Required
Electives	to reach 22 total
TOTAL	22 credits

Honors Diploma — 26 Credits

The Honors Diploma requires 26 credits and includes weighted Honors coursework in English, math, science, and social studies. Honors courses are clearly indicated on the transcript and strengthen applications to selective colleges and universities.

College Prep Track — 24 Credits

The College Prep Track is a 24-credit graduation option available at the High School Gold tier and above. Gold includes up to 8 credits per year, the 24-credit graduation track, and access to the Honors curriculum or California A–G approved courses. The track builds on the 22-credit standard requirements with additional coursework in core academic subjects and electives to strengthen readiness for four-year colleges and universities. Students should confirm their specific course plan with a Texas advisor at enrollment.

California A–G (CA-AG) Program

The University of California (UC) system requires students to complete a defined sequence of 15 year-long high school courses across core academic subjects, including

history/social science, English, mathematics, laboratory science, world languages, visual and performing arts, and a college-preparatory elective.

Excel's CA-AG Program aligns a student's academic plan with UC requirements by enrolling the student in A–G approved courses. Students in the CA-AG Program are placed on the 24-credit College Prep Track. A–G course access is available at the High School Gold tier and above. Texas students applying to University of California campuses, or transferring to or from a California institution, should confirm their course plan with a Texas advisor at enrollment.

Future Ready Foundations — 22-Credit Texas Foundation Diploma

Future Ready Foundations follows the Texas Foundation High School Program. It requires 22 Cognia/MSA-CESS accredited Texas credits and includes a student-selected career pathway plus full administrative support.

Future Ready Distinguished — 26-Credit Diploma with Endorsement

Future Ready Distinguished is the only Excel Texas graduation plan that qualifies a student for automatic admission to Texas public universities under the Top 10% rule. It requires 26 Cognia/MSA-CESS accredited Texas credits, including Algebra II and an advanced fourth science, a completed Texas endorsement in the student's chosen area, and a career pathway mapped to the endorsement.

Advanced Placement (AP) Credit

Students who complete an Excel AP course and earn a qualifying score on the official AP exam may receive college credit at participating colleges and universities. AP exam registration is the student's responsibility and may involve additional fees paid directly to the College Board.

Diploma Issuance

Upon successful completion of all graduation requirements, the Registrar's office issues an official Excel High School diploma and a final accredited transcript. Students may request additional copies of the diploma and official transcripts at any time following graduation.

Academic Calendar & Pacing

Excel does not follow a traditional academic calendar. Enrollment is open every day of the year, and students begin and complete courses on schedules that work for them. This chapter explains how pacing works in practice and what is expected of students.

Open Enrollment, Year-Round

Students can enroll any day of the year and begin coursework within days of registering. We offer middle school, standard high school, Honors, AP, Future Ready (with full Texas Foundation and Distinguished diploma plans), summer school, credit recovery, and dual-enrollment opportunities, all delivered through Learn Stage, our proprietary learning platform.

School Hours of Operation

The Learn Stage platform is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year-round, so students may work at any time. The school office operates Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. U.S. Central Time. During these hours academic coaches, instructors, and support staff are available. The office is closed on weekends and nationally recognized holidays; coursework remains accessible and Help Desk tickets may be submitted at any time. BRYTE is available 24/7.

Observed Holidays

Excel observes the following U.S. holidays. When a holiday falls on a weekend, it may be observed on the nearest weekday:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

Students can enroll any day of the year. There are no fall, spring, or summer start dates. Once enrollment is processed, students typically receive their Learn Stage login and begin coursework within 24 to 72 hours.

Course Completion Windows

- Full-year courses — up to 12 months from enrollment to complete each course.
- Single-course enrollments — up to 6 months from enrollment to complete the course.
- Most students complete a single semester course in 6 to 10 weeks of part-time study.

Full-Diploma Time to Completion

Most full-diploma students complete the Excel program in 1 to 4 years. The maximum window for completing a full diploma is up to 6 years from initial enrollment.

Pacing Expectations

Self-paced does not mean unpaced. Students enrolled in Future Ready or with a Success Coach receive scheduled check-ins, milestone-based pacing guides, and accountability support. Students in Silver or Gold tiers are expected to maintain consistent progress and may be contacted by an Academic Coach if they fall significantly behind.

Breaks, Vacations, and Travel

If a student anticipates an absence due to travel, personal obligations, or other commitments, they should notify the school at least one week in advance. In the event of illness or emergency, the student or guardian should notify the school as soon as possible. Notifications may be submitted through the Learn Stage Help Desk. The course completion window does not pause for travel, breaks, or family events — students remain responsible for managing their pacing within the published windows.

Student Support Services

Excel's support team is one of the school's most distinguishing features. Students are not navigating online learning alone, they have human coaches, an AI tutor, a Help Desk, and a dedicated Registrar's office behind them.

Academic Coaches

Academic Coaches are state-licensed educators and former classroom teachers available to help students with subject-matter questions, coursework strategy, and study planning. Coaches are available by request during business hours through the Learn Stage Help Desk.

Success Coaches

Success Coaches are assigned to students enrolled in the Future Ready program and those on the Platinum tier, providing personalized, proactive support throughout the school year. Each student is paired with a dedicated Success Coach who serves as their primary point of contact, building a strong relationship by getting to know the student, their goals, and their individual needs.

BRYTE AI Tutor

BRYTE is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to every enrolled Excel student. See the Excel Learning Experience chapter for details.

Help Desk

The Help Desk is the single channel for students to request academic or technical support. Submit requests through the Help Desk widget in the Learn Stage portal.

Student Services Team

The Student Services team handles enrollment questions, payment-plan adjustments, voucher coordination, and general administrative requests. Reach Student Services at 800-620-3844 or info@excelhighschooltexas.com.

Registrar and Records

The Registrar's office manages transcripts, graduation processing, credit transfers, and diploma issuance. Transcript requests can be submitted through the Learn Stage portal.

Spanish-Language Support

Spanish-language support is available. Families can select the Español option on excelhighschooltexas.com or request a Spanish-speaking advisor at enrollment.

Accommodations and Accessibility

Excel is an IBCCES Certified Autism Resource, and its digital courseware meets formal accessibility benchmarks for neurodiverse learners. Students with documented IEPs, 504 Plans, or other accommodation needs are encouraged to contact Student Services at the time of enrollment.

Communication & Contacts

This chapter consolidates the contact information families need most often. Additional staff listings appear in the Directory.

General Contact

Excel High School — Texas

825 Watter's Creek Blvd., Building M, Suite 250

Allen, Texas 75013

Phone: 800-620-3844

Email: info@excelhighschooltexas.com

Website: excelhighschooltexas.com

Learn Stage Login

Students and parents log in at live.learnstage.com/exceled/excelhighschool/login.

Social Media

- Facebook — facebook.com/ExcelHighSchoolOnline
- X (Twitter) — x.com/ExcelHighSchool
- Instagram — instagram.com/excelhighschool
- YouTube — youtube.com/@ExcelHighSchoolOnline

Texas Admissions

Phone: 800-620-3844

Part II — Policies & Procedures

Grading, GPA & Transcripts

Excel uses a standard percentage-based grading scale with grade-point equivalents that translate to Texas and national norms. Honors and AP coursework is weighted to reflect its increased rigor on the transcript.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Standard GPA	Honors GPA	AP GPA
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A	90–100	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	80–89	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	70–79	2.0	2.5	3.0
D	60–69	1.0	1.5	0.0
F	Below 60	0.0	0.0	0.0

Additional Grade Marks

In addition to the letter grades above, the following marks may appear on a transcript:

P — Pass (60–100%). Issued for pass/fail courses. Indicates the student met the minimum requirements for course completion. Does not affect GPA. Credits earned through the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway are recorded separately as “Passed without Grade.”

IN — Incomplete. Indicates that major coursework remains unsubmitted. The grade is withheld until the missing assignments are completed. An F is assigned if the work is not resolved.

W — Withdrawn. Assigned when a student withdraws more than 30 days after the course becomes available, or completes coursework up to the midterm and then discontinues progress.

Credit is awarded upon successful completion of a course with a passing grade of D or higher, or “Pass” in pass/fail courses, provided the student also meets the standards described under Minimum Performance Requirements for Credit.

Withdrawn and Failing Grades Policy

Withdrawal deadline. Courses must be dropped within the first 30 days of availability to avoid a record of completion status. Courses not dropped within this period are subject to grading policies based on completion and progress.

Failing grades. A course is recorded as “Failed” on the transcript if the student attempts the midterm, or completes lessons beyond the midterm, but leaves remaining assignments unfinished by the course deadline.

Withdrawn grades. A course is recorded as “Withdrawn” if the student completes little or no coursework, or any amount up to the midterm, and then discontinues progress without completing additional assignments.

Single-course students. The same drop, transfer, incomplete, withdrawn, and failing grade rules apply to single-course enrollments.

Semester courses (0.5 credit). Incomplete grades are not permitted for semester courses. Any semester course with unfinished assignments by the deadline is recorded as a failed course.

GPA Weighting Policy

Excel calculates both an unweighted GPA (4.0 scale) and a weighted GPA reflecting Honors and AP courses. Both appear on the official transcript. Cumulative GPA is calculated across all Excel coursework included on the diploma transcript.

Transcripts

Official transcripts are issued by the Registrar's office. Students and graduates can request official transcripts through the school's website. Unofficial transcripts are available to students at any time inside their Learn Stage portal.

Grade Appeals

Students who believe a grade was recorded in error may appeal under the Academic Grade Appeal Procedure in the Complaints, Grievances & Academic Appeals chapter. Appeals begin with the instructor and must be raised within ten (10) calendar days of the grade being posted.

AI-Assisted Grading & Grade Review

Excel Education Systems uses approved AI-assisted grading tools to evaluate certain assignments. These tools are designed to apply assignment rubrics consistently and provide timely, meaningful feedback. Grades issued through an approved AI-assisted grading system are official course grades for eligible assignments. AI-assisted grading is an approved part of the school grading process and is used to support consistent, rubric-aligned evaluation; it does not remove human oversight, which remains available through the review process described below.

Requesting a Grade Review

Students or parents/guardians may request a review of an AI-assisted grade when they identify a specific concern, such as:

- The wrong file or submission appears to have been graded.
- The submitted file may not have processed correctly.
- The feedback does not appear to match the submitted work.
- A technical issue may have affected the grade.
- A specific rubric category appears to have been evaluated incorrectly.
- The assignment instructions, rubric, or feedback appear meaningfully misaligned.

General dissatisfaction with a grade is not, by itself, a valid reason for review. A review request will not be approved solely because a student disagrees with the grade or objects to the use of AI-assisted grading.

To request a review, submit a Learn Stage Help Desk ticket that identifies the course name, the assignment name, the grade or feedback being questioned, a specific explanation of the concern, and the rubric category, submission issue, feedback issue, or technical issue to be reviewed. Students or parents/guardians who call or email with a grade review concern will be directed to submit a Help Desk ticket so the request is formally documented.

How Reviews Are Handled

Grade reviews are targeted to the specific concern raised rather than an automatic full re-evaluation of the assignment. A full regrade occurs only when the concern cannot be resolved through a targeted review. After review, the original grade may be upheld, increased, or escalated for additional academic or technical review. Requesting a review does not guarantee a grade change; if the review confirms the original grade was reasonable, rubric-aligned, and free from technical or processing error, the grade remains in place.

A student-initiated or parent/guardian-initiated grade review will not result in a lowered grade. This applies to grade reviews only. It does not apply to grade changes resulting from an academic integrity violation, which is handled separately under the Academic Integrity policy and may result in a reduced or zero grade.

Review requests are typically completed within 3 to 5 business days, and students may continue progressing in their course while a review is pending unless otherwise directed by the school. If a concern requires escalation, full regrade approval, or technical investigation, additional time may be required and the school will communicate expected follow-up timelines.

Repeat Review Requests

Students may receive one targeted review per assignment. Additional review requests for the same assignment may be denied unless the student or parent/guardian provides new evidence of a grading error, rubric misapplication, feedback mismatch, submission issue, or technical issue.

Coaching Sessions

Students who want help understanding their grade or feedback may instead request a coaching session with an Academic Coach. Coaching sessions help students understand the rationale for a grade, identify areas for improvement, and apply feedback to future work. They are not a separate grade appeal.

After the permitted targeted review and any applicable escalation, the grade review process is considered exhausted unless new evidence is provided. Further concerns may be raised through the Academic Grade Appeal Procedure in the Complaints, Grievances & Academic Appeals chapter.

Attendance, Pacing & Progress

Because Excel is fully asynchronous, attendance is measured by progress and engagement rather than seat time.

Progress Expectations

Time Expectations by Course Type

- Full grade level (two semesters) — 12 months to complete.
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses — 5 months per semester, 10 months total.
- Individual standard courses — designed to be completed within 6 months.
- Course extensions — available for an additional \$200 fee, subject to approval (see Course Extension Policy).

To stay on track, students should plan to spend approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour per course, per day, five days per week.

Participation Requirements

Students are expected to maintain a minimum of 20 hours of academic engagement per week across all active courses, log in regularly, and demonstrate substantive participation — completing assignments, taking assessments, and communicating with academic staff. Failure to meet these expectations may result in an academic warning, account review, or administrative withdrawal. Students who do not participate for 30 consecutive days or more may receive a Notice of Intent to Withdraw, and their enrollment may be subject to cancellation in accordance with the school's non-participation policy.

Students are expected to make consistent, measurable progress through enrolled courses. Inactivity may trigger outreach from an Academic Coach, Success Coach, or Student Services representative.

Course Pacing Windows

Full-year courses must be completed within 12 months of enrollment, and single-course enrollments within 6 months. Because Excel is fully asynchronous, this completion window does not pause for travel, breaks, or family events — students are responsible for managing their pacing within the published windows.

Course Extension Policy

In rare circumstances, a student who has made reasonable progress but needs additional time may request a one-time, two-month course extension per grade level. To be considered, the request must:

- Be submitted through the Learn Stage Help Desk before the completion window closes;
- Include a legitimate, documented reason signed by the student and a parent or guardian; and
- Reflect reasonable progress already made toward course completion.

Qualifying reasons include unforeseen family emergencies, personal or medical emergencies, and natural disasters. A lack of time to log in, communicate, or participate is not considered a valid reason. Extension requests are reviewed and approved by the Registrar or a designated school representative.

A two-month course extension carries a \$200 fee, payable before the extension is applied.

Academic Progress for TEFA-Awarded Students

Students enrolled through TEFA may be subject to additional state-mandated progress reporting requirements. Excel coordinates required progress reporting with the State of Texas and notifies families if additional documentation is needed.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, & Policies

A diploma from Excel High School Texas is meaningful precisely because the work behind it is the student's own. Academic integrity is non-negotiable.

What Counts as Academic Dishonesty

- Submitting another person's work as your own (plagiarism).
- Copying answers from another student or from an external source without attribution.
- Using AI tools to generate complete assignments and submitting them as original work.
- Sharing test or quiz content with other students.
- Submitting the same work for credit in multiple courses without instructor approval.

- Falsifying records, identification, or test conditions.

Responsible Use of AI Tools and BRYTE

BRYTE and other AI tools are powerful learning aids. They are designed to help students understand, practice, and build skills, not to complete assignments on a student's behalf. Acceptable uses include asking BRYTE to explain a concept, walk through a worked example, suggest a study plan, or give feedback on a draft. Unacceptable uses include having BRYTE write essays, solve assigned problems verbatim, or generate test responses.

Academic integrity at Excel High School Texas is governed by Excel Education Systems Policy EES-POL-2026-003 (Academic Integrity in Online Education). To protect the authenticity of student work, the school may screen submissions with plagiarism and AI-content detection tools, verify student identity through secure login and other proportionate measures, and, particularly on capstone or high-stakes assignments, ask a student to verbally explain or walk through submitted work. These tools support, but never replace, human judgment, and where AI assistance is permitted and materially contributes to a submission, students must disclose and cite that use.

Consequences

Excel High School Texas applies the academic-integrity standards and tiered response framework established in Excel Education Systems Policy EES-POL-2026-003 (Academic Integrity in Online Education), which expressly governs Excel High School Texas. Consequences are proportionate to the nature, severity, and recurrence of the violation:

Tier 1 — Educational. A first, minor, or apparently unintentional violation: a coaching conversation, an opportunity to resubmit, and targeted integrity education.

Tier 2 — Corrective. A clear violation or repeated Tier 1 conduct: a reduced or zero grade on the assessment and a documented academic warning.

Tier 3 — Serious. A severe violation, including identity fraud or contract cheating: course failure, academic probation, and a formal record.

Tier 4 — Terminal. Egregious or repeated serious violations: suspension or dismissal, subject to review by leadership.

Detection tools and learning analytics are investigative indicators only; a qualified staff member makes the final determination after human review. A student found to have committed academic misconduct may appeal the finding through the school's published Complaints, Grievances & Academic Appeals process.

Code of Conduct

Excel High School Texas is a learning community. Every student, family member, and staff member is expected to engage with one another respectfully, in messages, in discussion forums, in coaching calls, and in every interaction inside the Learn Stage platform.

Behavioral Expectations

- Communicate respectfully with peers, coaches, teachers, and staff.
- Avoid language, imagery, or behavior that is harassing, threatening, discriminatory, or harmful.
- Protect the privacy of fellow students. Do not share personal information without consent.
- Comply with all applicable laws while using Excel platforms.
- Honor the academic integrity standards in the Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, & Policies chapter.

Anti-Bullying & Non-Discrimination

Excel does not tolerate bullying, harassment, or discrimination in any form. This applies to interactions among students, between students and staff, and in any communication using Excel platforms.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Excel High School Texas admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Technology & Acceptable Use

Excel courses run on commonly available consumer devices. Most students use a laptop or desktop, though many course activities also work on tablets.

Minimum Technology Requirements

Computer Specifications

Component	Minimum Requirement
Operating System	Windows 10 or later, or macOS 10.15 or later

Internet Browser	Google Chrome (recommended), Firefox, Safari, or Edge
RAM	4 GB or more (8 GB recommended)
Internet Speed	Broadband recommended for optimal use
Webcam & Microphone	Built-in or external, for select courses and live sessions
Display	Minimum resolution of 1024×768

Some courses open external resources in new windows. Allow pop-ups in your browser settings for full functionality.

- A reliable internet connection (broadband recommended).
- A modern web browser (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari, updated to a recent version).
- A laptop, desktop, or tablet capable of running modern web applications.
- Audio output for video lessons (built-in speakers or headphones).
- A working email address for school communications.

Acceptable Use of Learn Stage and BRYTE

All use of the Learn Stage platform and BRYTE must comply with Excel's Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity policy. Students must not attempt to circumvent platform security, share login credentials, or use Learn Stage for any purpose unrelated to enrolled coursework.

Account Security

Students are responsible for keeping their Learn Stage credentials secure. Login credentials may not be shared with any other person, including family members, tutors, or peers. Suspected account compromise should be reported to the Help Desk immediately.

Accommodations, IEPs & Section 504

Excel welcomes students with documented learning differences and works with families to provide reasonable accommodations within the online learning environment. Excel is an IBCCES Certified Autism Resource and has invested in courseware that meets formal accessibility benchmarks for neurodiverse learners.

Requesting Accommodations

Families with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or other documented learning differences should provide that documentation to Student Services

at the time of enrollment. Excel reviews each request individually and works with the family to determine which accommodations are feasible in the online environment.

Scope of Accommodations Excel Can Provide

Excel may, at its discretion, support the implementation of certain components of a student's existing IEP or Section 504 Plan, provided those accommodations are reasonably aligned with the self-paced, asynchronous format of our courses, are logistically feasible in a virtual setting, and do not require modifications to curriculum, assessment standards, or learning outcomes.

Within the online learning environment, Excel works with families to provide reasonable accommodations that support access to coursework. Because Excel's digital courseware is an IBCCES Certified Autism Resource, many accessibility features are built into the platform itself. Accommodations Excel can typically support include:

- Flexible, self-paced scheduling and extended time on assignments and assessments.
- Predictable, consistent course navigation and clearly structured lessons.
- Reduced sensory and cognitive load in the digital courseware.
- Compatibility with assistive technology such as text-to-speech and screen readers.
- Adjusted pacing plans and additional check-ins with an Academic or Success Coach.
- Coordination with families on documented IEP or Section 504 goals that can reasonably be met online.

Excel reviews each accommodation request individually and works with the family to determine what is feasible in a fully online setting. Some accommodations available in a brick-and-mortar school do not transfer to a virtual environment; in those cases, Excel will discuss alternatives with the family.

Family-Provided Services

Excel does not directly provide special education services such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, or other related services. Families using TEFA funds may be able to apply those funds toward outside service providers, confirm directly with the State of Texas TEFA program.

Disclosure and Documentation

Families must disclose any diagnosed learning disabilities or support needs during the enrollment process. To be considered for discretionary support, parents/guardians must submit the student's most recent IEP, Section 504 Plan, or professional evaluation, along with any formal accommodation documentation from a public or private school. Excel reviews these materials and determines, in consultation with the family, whether Excel is an appropriate fit and which supports may be offered.

Making an Informed Enrollment Decision

Because Excel is a school of choice, families should evaluate whether an asynchronous, college-preparatory curriculum represents the student's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Excel will always strive to support student success, but families should make an informed decision about fit before enrolling.

Privacy — FERPA, COPPA & Data

Excel takes student data privacy seriously. We are SOC 2 compliant and follow industry best practices for protecting student records, learning data, and parent communications.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Excel High School Texas retains student records only as long as needed to serve the student, meet accreditation and legal obligations, and support TEFA program requirements. Records are stored securely within Learn Stage and Excel Education Systems' SOC 2-compliant systems.

- Official academic transcripts and diploma records are retained permanently so graduates and alumni can request records at any point in the future.
- Other education records — including coursework, assessments, gradebooks, communications, and accommodation documentation — are retained following a student's graduation or withdrawal, after which they are securely destroyed unless a longer retention period is required by law, accreditation, or the TEFA program.
- TEFA program records are retained for the period required by the State of Texas, including any audit or program-integrity window, which may exceed the standard retention schedule above.

Parents of students under 18, and students 18 and older, may request to inspect education records as described in the FERPA section above. Requests to correct or delete records are handled in accordance with FERPA and applicable Texas law.

COPPA (For Students Under 13)

For middle school students under the age of 13, Excel follows the principles of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Parents and guardians provide consent at enrollment for the collection and use of the student's information necessary to deliver educational services.

SOC 2 Compliance

Excel's parent organization, Excel Education Systems, maintains SOC 2 Type II compliance covering security, availability, processing integrity, confidentiality, and privacy controls applicable to student data.

Online Wellbeing & Safety

Online learning happens in a student's home environment, which means online safety, digital wellbeing, and the ability to ask for help are part of the school's responsibility.

Internet Safety and Study Skills

Excel offers an Internet Safety & Study Skills course for middle school students as part of the standard middle school catalog. The course covers safe online behavior, identifying credible sources, managing screen time, and building academic study habits.

Mental Health and Crisis Resources

Excel is not a mental health provider. Students and families experiencing a mental health crisis should contact appropriate local or national resources, including 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) or local emergency services. Excel staff who become aware of a student in crisis will follow Excel's safety-response protocols.

Mandatory Reporting

The safety of every student is Excel High School Texas's highest priority. Under Texas law, all Excel staff are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Texas Family Code § 261.101 requires any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been, or may be, abused or neglected to report it immediately. Professionals, including teachers, coaches, and school staff, must make a report no later than 48 hours after first suspecting abuse or neglect, and a professional may not delegate that duty to another person or rely on someone else to report. Failure to report is a criminal offense under Texas law.

How a report is made:

- Emergency / immediate danger: Call 911 first, then report to the Texas Abuse Hotline.
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- Online (non-emergency): www.txabusehotline.org

The identity of a person who reports is confidential under Texas Family Code § 261.201. Because Excel is an online school, staff may become aware of safety concerns through coursework, messages, coaching calls, or virtual interactions; any such concern is taken seriously and handled in accordance with this duty and Excel's internal safety-response protocols. This reporting duty exists independently of, and in addition to, any concern raised through the school's Complaints, Grievances & Academic Appeals process.

Withdrawal, Refunds & Re-Enrollment

Families who need to withdraw from a program may do so at any time by contacting Student Services in writing.

Withdrawal Process

To withdraw, submit a request through the Learn Stage helpdesk or contact the school.

Course Withdrawal and Drops Policy

Prerequisite requirement. A student may request a course drop or replacement if the necessary prerequisites have not been met — for example, Algebra II without Algebra I, or Chemistry without Biology and Algebra I.

Drop window. Students have 30 days from the date a course becomes available to request a course drop or transfer. This option is available only if the student has not completed coursework past the midterm. Requests outside the 30-day window are handled at the school's discretion and may result in a grade of W as described under Additional Grade Marks.

Refund Policy

Excel High School Texas offers a clear, consistent refund window for families who pay tuition directly. Families funded through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) follow a separate process described under *TEFA Compliance & Reporting → Refunds and*

Returned Funds , because those funds are public funds and must be handled according to State of Texas rules.

Standard Refund Window (Self-Pay Families)

- Within 10 calendar days of the initial enrollment date: A full refund of tuition paid is granted, less a 3% payment-processing fee.
- After 10 calendar days: Tuition is non-refundable.

Refunds apply to tuition only. Administrative fees, including the returned-payment (NSF) fee, chargeback fee, and early-termination fee described under *Tuition & Payment Plans*, are non-refundable and remain due. Single-course and summer/credit-recovery enrollments are non-refundable once course access has been issued.

How to Request a Refund

Submit a Learn Stage helpdesk request or written refund request to Student Services at info@excelhighschooltexas.com. Approved refunds are returned to the original method of payment within 30 days of approval. Transcripts and diplomas for the associated grade level are released only after the account is settled in full.

Re-Enrollment

Students who withdraw and later wish to return may re-enroll at any time. Credits earned previously at Excel remain on the student's record and apply toward the diploma. A new enrollment form and tuition arrangement are required.

Complaints, Grievances & Academic Appeals

Excel High School Texas is committed to providing a fair, respectful, and responsive educational environment. Students and parents/guardians have the right to raise concerns regarding school policies, procedures, services, academic decisions, or administrative actions without fear of retaliation. This chapter establishes the procedures for resolving grievances and academic grade appeals in a timely, equitable, and consistent manner.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Administrative decisions affecting a student's educational experience
- The application or interpretation of school policies or procedures
- Student services and support
- Customer service concerns involving school personnel

- Academic grade appeals, as described below

This policy does not apply to:

- Allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation prohibited by law (see Anti-Bullying & Non-Discrimination and the Harassment, Bullying, and Discrimination Policy)
- Matters governed by federal or state law requiring a separate complaint process
- Challenges to school-wide academic policies approved by administration

General Student Grievance Procedure

Step 1 — Informal Resolution

Students and parents are encouraged to first discuss concerns with the staff member or department involved. Most concerns about coursework, pacing, grades, or communication are resolved directly with the student's Academic Coach or Success Coach. If the concern is not resolved at the coach level, contact Student Services at 800-620-3844 or info@excelhighschooltexas.com.

Step 2 — Formal Grievance

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a written grievance may be submitted within 30 calendar days of the incident or decision. The grievance should include the student name and student ID, a description of the concern, the date(s) involved, the individuals involved, supporting documentation, and the requested resolution.

Step 3 — Administrative Review

The school will acknowledge receipt within five (5) business days. A designated administrator will investigate the matter, which may include reviewing documentation, interviewing relevant individuals, and requesting additional information. A written determination will normally be issued within fifteen (15) business days.

Step 4 — Appeal

If dissatisfied with the determination, the student may submit a written appeal within ten (10) business days to the Chief Operating Officer. The decision issued at this level is final.

Academic Grade Appeal Procedure

Excel High School Texas recognizes the professional judgment of its instructors and academic staff in evaluating student performance. Students may appeal a final course grade or an individual assignment grade when they believe a grading error has occurred. A grade appeal may be based on one or more of the following:

- Mathematical or clerical error in calculating the grade
- Failure to apply the grading criteria published in the course syllabus or grading rubric
- Inconsistent application of grading standards
- Technical errors affecting the recording of grades
- Failure to consider submitted work due to administrative or technical error

A grade appeal may not be based solely on disagreement with an instructor's academic judgment or evaluation of the quality of a student's work.

Step One — Instructor Review

Students should first contact the instructor within ten (10) calendar days of the grade being posted. The instructor will review the submitted work, the applicable course syllabus and grading rubric, grade calculations, and course records, and will provide a written response explaining the determination.

Step Two — Academic Review

If the matter remains unresolved, the student may submit a written appeal to the Director of Academics and Curriculum within five (5) business days of receiving the instructor's decision. The Director of Academics and Curriculum may review course records, assignment submissions, the course syllabus and grading rubrics, instructor feedback, Learn Stage activity, and other relevant documentation, and may consult with the instructor and other academic personnel before issuing a written decision.

Step Three — Final Appeal

If the student believes the Director of Academics and Curriculum failed to follow established grading policies or procedures, a final written appeal may be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer within five (5) business days. The Chief Operating Officer will review whether established school policies and procedures were properly followed, and will not re-evaluate the academic quality of student work unless there is evidence of procedural error, bias, or misapplication of grading standards. The Chief Operating Officer's decision is final.

Grades issued through an approved AI-assisted grading system follow the review process described under AI-Assisted Grading & Grade Review; concerns that remain after that review may be raised through this grade appeal procedure.

Confidentiality

All grievances and grade appeals will be handled as confidentially as reasonably possible while allowing the school to conduct a fair review.

Protection from Retaliation

Excel High School Texas prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a grievance or academic appeal in good faith, or who participates in an investigation under this policy.

Record Retention

The school maintains records of formal grievances, grade appeals, investigations, supporting documentation, and final determinations in accordance with applicable record retention requirements.

External Complaints

Students are encouraged to use this internal grievance process before seeking external review. Nothing in this policy limits a student's right to file a complaint with an appropriate governmental agency or accrediting organization when permitted by law. Families who believe Excel has not adequately addressed a concern may contact Excel's accreditors — Cognia, TEPSAC, and MSA-CESS — or, for TEFA-related concerns, the State of Texas TEFA program directly.

Records & Transcript Requests

Excel maintains official academic records in accordance with applicable accreditation and state requirements.

Active Student Records

Active student records include enrollment information, course completions, grades, communications, and accommodation records. These are maintained throughout the student's enrollment.

Transcript Retention After Graduation

Excel High School Texas retains official academic transcripts permanently. Graduates and alumni may request official or unofficial transcripts at any point after graduation — there is no time limit on transcript requests.

Official transcripts are issued by the Registrar's office and can be requested through the Learn Stage portal or by emailing the Registrar. Unofficial transcripts remain available to students inside the Learn Stage portal. Other (non-transcript) education records are retained according to the schedule described under [Privacy — FERPA, COPPA & Data](#) → FERPA .

Requesting an Official Transcript

Current students and alumni can request official transcripts through the Learn Stage portal or by emailing the Registrar. Unofficial transcripts are available to students at any time in their Learn Stage portal.

TEFA Compliance & Reporting

As an approved Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) provider, Excel High School Texas complies with all reporting, audit, and program-integrity requirements established by the State of Texas.

Provider Obligations

As an approved Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) provider for grades 6–12, Excel High School Texas commits to:

- Maintaining its accreditation (Cognia, TEPSAC, and MSA-CESS) and its status as an approved TEFA education provider in good standing.
- Delivering the accredited programs and services for which TEFA funds are applied.
- Reporting enrollment, and any required academic-progress or participation information, to the State of Texas on the timelines the program establishes.
- Cooperating fully with State of Texas audits, program-integrity reviews, and documentation requests.
- Safeguarding TEFA funds, applying them only to approved educational expenses, and maintaining accurate financial and academic records.
- Protecting the privacy of student records in accordance with FERPA, COPPA, and applicable Texas law.

Where the requirements of the TEFA program conflict with a provision of this handbook or an Excel enrollment agreement, the rules of the State of Texas TEFA program take precedence.

Family Obligations

Tuition and Financial Responsibility

Tuition for students participating in TEFA may be paid in installments or disbursements according to the schedule established by the State of Texas or its designated funding

manager. Regardless of the payment schedule, the family remains responsible for ensuring that Excel receives the full tuition due for the enrollment period.

Attendance Tracking and Verification

State-funded programs may require documented proof of participation as a condition of continued funding. Families must comply with any attendance, engagement, or verification protocols required by the State of Texas. Because Excel is asynchronous, participation is evidenced by course activity and measurable progress rather than seat time, and extended inactivity may be reported to the program.

Parent and Guardian Reporting Obligations

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that all required documentation is completed and submitted to the appropriate state agency to maintain the student's enrollment and funding status. Reports must be submitted according to the deadlines the program establishes. Excel provides records and documentation on request but cannot submit family-side reporting on a family's behalf.

State-Funded Program Acknowledgment

By enrolling at Excel High School Texas through TEFA or another state-funded program, parents or guardians acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of the terms of this policy. Participation signifies agreement to meet all program requirements, including participation, assessment, and reporting obligations.

In the event that state funding is suspended, reduced, or discontinued, the parent or guardian agrees to assume full financial responsibility for tuition in order to maintain the student's enrollment at Excel High School Texas.

Noncompliance with any component of this policy may result in suspension of state funding, restricted access to coursework, or administrative withdrawal from Excel High School Texas. For program-specific obligations, families should contact the State of Texas TEFA program directly.

State-Funded Program Resources and Support

Excel's Student Services team assists families in understanding and navigating TEFA requirements, including documentation, proof of enrollment, and progress reporting. Families needing assistance should contact Student Services at 800-620-3844 or info@excelhighschooltexas.com.

Families enrolled through TEFA are responsible for completing the State of Texas application accurately, providing required documentation to Excel for enrollment, and complying with any progress-reporting or attendance requirements set by the State.

Refunds and Returned Funds

Because TEFA funds are public funds, refunds and returned funds for TEFA-enrolled students are handled differently from self-pay refunds.

- Any refund that becomes due on a TEFA-funded enrollment is returned to the State of Texas TEFA program , not to the student, parent, or guardian.
- Refund and withdrawal amounts are determined in accordance with the State of Texas TEFA program's rules, which take precedence over the standard refund window in *Withdrawal, Refunds & Re-Enrollment* .
- If a student withdraws, or if funds are disbursed that the program later determines must be returned, Excel will coordinate the return of those funds directly with the State.
- Families remain responsible for completing required documentation and cooperating with Excel and the State to resolve any funding shortfall, delay, or returned-funds situation.

Academic Records & Credit Policies

Academic Records Policy

Excel High School Texas maintains accurate academic records for every enrolled student, including enrollment information, course completions, grades, communications, and accommodation documentation. Students and parents/guardians of students under 18 may request to inspect academic records, and may request correction of records believed to be inaccurate, in accordance with FERPA and applicable Texas law. Official transcripts are issued by the Registrar and reflect all coursework included on the diploma transcript. Records are stored securely within Learn Stage and Excel Education Systems' SOC 2-compliant systems.

Homeschool & Unaccredited School Credit Transfer Policy

Excel High School recognizes the value of homeschool education and provides a structured process for awarding high school credit to students who have completed coursework through a homeschool program or an unaccredited private school, online school, learning center, tutorial program, or other non-accredited educational program. Students educated through homeschool programs anywhere in the world may also be eligible to participate in this process.

Students seeking credit for previously completed homeschool or unaccredited school coursework must enroll in the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway, an optional

credit-by-examination program available for a one-time non-refundable fee of \$500. This pathway is not a traditional transcript evaluation or placement test. Enrollment in the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway must occur during the initial enrollment process into an eligible standard diploma program (Silver, Gold, NCAA, California A-G, Platinum, or Future Ready).

Students participating in the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway must submit an official homeschool transcript or official academic records documenting completed coursework, grades earned, and credits awarded. Students may only test out of courses that are documented as completed on the official records submitted. Courses that were only partially completed through homeschool or an unaccredited school, including individual semester coursework, are not eligible for credit-by-examination. If a student completed one semester of a course through homeschool or an unaccredited school and the remaining semester at an accredited institution, the homeschool or unaccredited portion is not eligible for transfer credit and must be completed through Excel High School or an approved equivalent.

Students may select up to 15 eligible high school courses for credit-by-examination. Eligible courses include designated core academic courses and select elective courses as published by Excel High School. Students receive two attempts on each selected test-out exam, and the higher score will be recorded. Test-out exams are open-book and open-note. A minimum score of 70% is required to earn credit. Students who successfully complete a test-out exam will receive the applicable high school credit with a transcript notation of "Passed without Grade." Credits earned through the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway are awarded as "Passed without Grade" and are excluded from the calculation of the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Students who fail to achieve a passing score, choose not to complete a selected test-out exam, or do not complete testing within the required timeframe will not receive transfer credit for that course and must complete the course or an approved equivalent to satisfy graduation requirements.

All selected test-out exams must be completed within 21 calendar days of enrollment into the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway. Any testing not completed within this period is forfeited and may not be completed at a later date.

The Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway is available only at the time of enrollment for coursework completed prior to that enrollment. Students must identify all courses they wish to test out of during their initial enrollment in the pathway. Courses not selected at that time are not eligible for future test-out. If a student subsequently withdraws from Excel High School, completes additional homeschool or unaccredited school coursework, and later re-enrolls, the student may enroll in a new Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway to seek credit only for the newly completed coursework.

Students entering grades 6 through 9 who have no high school credits to transfer are not required to submit homeschool transcripts or academic records. These students will be enrolled directly into their grade-level core and elective courses. Schedule adjustments may be requested through the student's assigned Success Coach after enrollment.

Students entering Grade 9 who have completed high school-level coursework, including but not limited to Algebra I, Geometry, or a world language, through homeschool or an unaccredited educational program and who wish to receive high school credit must complete the Homeschool Credit Transfer Pathway. If these courses were completed at an accredited institution, an official transcript from the accredited school must be submitted for evaluation under Excel High School's standard transfer credit policy.

Guidelines for International Students

Excel High School Texas enrolls students internationally as a fully online, non-public school. Excel does not issue Form I-20 and does not sponsor student visas; enrollment in Excel does not confer immigration status. International students are responsible for ensuring a stable internet connection, for any costs of translation or credential evaluation of prior coursework, and for confirming that an Excel diploma meets the requirements of their home country or intended college. Coursework, assessments, and communication are conducted in English; see the English Proficiency and Multilingual Learner Support section for available language support.

Minimum Performance Requirements for Credit

To earn credit for a course, a student must achieve a final exam score of 60% or higher, a final overall course grade of 60% or higher, and a minimum score of 60% on all required written assignments or projects, where applicable. For Advanced Placement (AP) and University of California A–G (CA-AG) approved courses, students must meet higher standards: a final exam score of 70% or higher, a final overall course grade of 70% or higher, and a minimum of 70% on required written assignments or projects. Failure to meet these minimum requirements results in no credit being awarded for the course.

Instructional Time and Credit Equivalency

Excel awards credit based on mastery of content, demonstrated performance, and completion of the instructional time associated with each course. One full credit reflects the equivalent of a full-year high school course, and one-half credit reflects a one-semester course. Because Excel is self-paced and asynchronous, students may complete the required instructional time faster or slower than a traditional calendar, but credit is awarded only when mastery and performance requirements are met.

Diploma Credit Residency Requirement

To receive an Excel High School Texas diploma, a student must earn a minimum number of credits directly through Excel rather than by transfer. All students must complete at least 25% of the credits required for their diploma track through Excel High School Texas to be eligible for graduation — 5.5 credits on the 22-credit track, 6.0 credits on the 24-credit College Prep Track, and 6.5 credits on the 26-credit Honors and Future Ready Distinguished tracks. This residency requirement ensures that the diploma reflects meaningful coursework completed under Excel's accredited program. Students transferring in substantial prior credit should confirm their residency status with a Texas advisor at enrollment.

Credit Granting Policy

Academic credit is awarded based on mastery of content, completion of instructional hours, and demonstrated performance on key assessments, as described under Minimum Performance Requirements for Credit. Excel does not offer course forgiveness. All course attempts, including retakes, are included in the student's official academic record and calculated into the cumulative GPA. When a course is repeated, both the original and the repeated grade appear on the transcript and both are factored into the GPA.

Course Load Policy

Excel's self-paced model allows flexibility in how many courses a student carries at one time, but students are encouraged to enroll in a manageable load that supports steady progress and mastery. Students typically enroll in five to six courses at a time, depending on their academic goals and graduation plan, and courses are sequenced intentionally to support cumulative learning and skill development. Full-time high school students typically carry the equivalent of a full course schedule for their grade level; middle school students carry their core subjects plus electives. A Texas advisor or Academic Coach can help families set an appropriate course load based on the student's goals, pacing, and graduation timeline.

Concurrent Enrollment Policy

Students enrolled in Excel High School Texas's diploma program may not be concurrently enrolled in another full-time high school program; a student must be enrolled in only one full-time high school at a time. Students enrolled full-time elsewhere may still take Excel courses on a part-time basis for credit recovery, advancement, or enrichment. Before enrolling, families should confirm their enrollment status and consult the Registrar with any questions about full-time or part-time eligibility.

Enrollment Status

Excel High School Texas supports both full-time and part-time students. Enrollment status is selected at the time of enrollment.

Part-time students. Students enrolled in a single course or credit-recovery enrollment, taking between 1 and 3 credits, are considered part-time.

Full-time students. Students enrolled in a full-year or half-year program are considered full-time. Four credits meet the minimum for full-time status; students typically carry six credits to remain on track for graduation. Students enrolled full-time at Excel may not be concurrently enrolled full-time at another school, as described under Concurrent Enrollment Policy.

Age-Based Graduation Policy

Excel High School Texas serves students in grades 6–12. Students who meet all graduation requirements are eligible to graduate subject to the residency requirement, minimum performance standards, and the under-17 testing benchmarks described below.

Graduation Eligibility for Students Under Age 17

Excel High School requires that students be at least 17 years of age to be awarded a diploma. If a student has completed all academic requirements but has not yet turned 17, they must also meet one of the following standardized testing benchmarks:

SAT score of 1270 or higher or ACT composite score of 26 or higher This policy ensures academic maturity and post-secondary readiness for early graduates. Standardized test scores should be submitted directly to Excel High School and will become part of the student's permanent academic record.

Students may also provide official verification of enrollment in a post-secondary program (e.g., enrollment verification letter or official acceptance into a degree or certificate program) in order to meet the requirements of the age-based graduation policy.

Please contact the school office for assistance with graduation planning, transfer evaluations, or to determine which diploma track is the best fit for your educational and career goals.

Attendance, Testing & Academic Standing

State Compulsory Attendance Laws

Students under the age of 18 are responsible for complying with Texas compulsory attendance requirements. Excel High School Texas operates as a self-paced,

asynchronous online school and measures engagement through course activity and progress rather than traditional seat time; it does not monitor or enforce state attendance requirements on a family's behalf. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring their student meets applicable Texas education obligations. For students funded through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA), regular participation is required, and extended inactivity may be reported as required by the program.

Truancy, Engagement & Communication

Because Excel is asynchronous, “truancy” is understood as a sustained lack of measurable progress and engagement rather than missed class periods. A student may be considered truant if they fail to participate in required instructional activities, without a valid excuse, for an extended period — for example, 7 or more consecutive days, or 15 days total within an academic year. Students are expected to log in regularly, make consistent progress, and respond to outreach from their coaches. Extended inactivity triggers outreach from an Academic Coach, Success Coach, or Student Services. Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring their student's engagement, responding to school communications, and notifying the school of circumstances that affect participation. Sustained non-engagement, particularly for state-funded students, may affect standing and may be reported to the funding program.

Standardized Testing

Norm-Referenced Testing (CLT)

Excel High School Texas does not administer the STAAR or other state standardized assessments. Where a nationally norm-referenced assessment is required as a condition of state-directed funding, Excel coordinates the Classic Learning Test (CLT) for enrolled students. Students funded through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA) are required to complete any assessment mandated by the program during the designated testing window, and results are reported as required by the State of Texas. Students who need to sit the CLT should contact Excel before registering for the exam. Excel's school code must be entered at the time of registration so that official results are reported directly to the school, and Excel must receive the official score report. This is required for students funded through the Texas Education Freedom Account (TEFA), whose results may be reported to the State of Texas as a condition of continued funding. Contact Student Services for the current school code.

Excel is registered with the College Board and ACT under CEEB code 240707, and students may use this code when registering for the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, AP exams, ACT, or the Classic Learning Test (CLT). A growing number of colleges and universities accept CLT scores as part of their admissions criteria. Excel does not administer state standardized assessments on-site; students sit national exams at approved testing

centers. Families pursuing NCAA eligibility, selective college admission, or AP credit should plan their testing timeline with a Success Coach.

Students using state-funded programs, Education Savings Accounts, or vouchers — including TEFA — may be subject to assessment or progress-reporting requirements established by the State of Texas. Excel coordinates any required reporting with the program and notifies families when additional documentation or testing is needed.

End-of-Course Survey

At the conclusion of each course, students may be invited to complete a short end-of-course survey. Feedback is confidential, is used to improve curriculum, coaching, and the learning platform, and supports Excel's continuous-improvement commitments to its accreditors. Participation is encouraged but does not affect a student's grade.

Academic Probation

A student who is not making adequate academic progress, who repeatedly misses pacing expectations, or who commits a serious academic-integrity violation may be placed on academic probation. Probation is accompanied by a documented improvement plan developed with a Success Coach, with defined expectations and a review period. Students who meet the plan return to good standing; students who do not may face additional consequences up to and including dismissal, as described under Policy Enforcement and Grounds for Dismissal.

Access to Final Exams

To ensure sufficient instructional engagement:

Middle school and high school-aged program students: Final exams remain locked until at least 60 days after the course start date. The course start date begins when the student is assigned the course.

Single course students: Final exams remain locked until at least 30 days after the course start date. The course start date begins when the student is assigned the course.

All students are permitted a maximum of two attempts to successfully pass a final exam. If both attempts are unsuccessful, the course must be retaken. In such cases, a new final exam attempt will not be made available until 30 days have elapsed.

Conduct & Discipline

Progressive Discipline Policy

Excel High School Texas is a learning community, and every student, family member, and staff member is expected to interact respectfully across messages, discussion forums, coaching calls, and all activity in the Learn Stage platform. Conduct that is harassing, threatening, discriminatory, dishonest, or disruptive is not tolerated.

Excel uses a progressive approach to discipline that is proportionate to the nature, severity, and recurrence of the conduct:

- Step 1 — Coaching conversation. A first or minor concern is addressed through direct conversation with a coach and clear expectations going forward.
 - Step 2 — Documented warning. A repeated or more serious concern results in a documented warning and, where relevant, a corrective plan.
 - Step 3 — Probation or restriction. Continued or significant violations may result in academic probation or restricted platform access pending resolution.
 - Step 4 — Suspension or dismissal. Egregious conduct, or repeated serious violations, may result in suspension or dismissal, subject to review by school leadership.
- Serious safety threats, harassment, or unlawful conduct may move directly to a higher step without progressing through the earlier ones.

Excel High School Netiquette Guidelines

Because nearly all interaction at Excel happens online, students are expected to follow basic standards of respectful digital communication, including:

- Use respectful, school-appropriate language in all messages, forums, and coaching interactions.
- Write clearly and professionally; avoid all-caps, sarcasm that may be misread, and disrespectful tone.
- Respect the privacy of classmates and staff and never share another person's personal information.
- Do not post or share content that is harassing, threatening, discriminatory, sexually explicit, or otherwise harmful.

- Keep platform interactions focused on coursework and learning, and report concerns to a coach or Student Services.

Policy Enforcement and Grounds for Dismissal

Excel reserves the right to enforce the policies in this handbook and to dismiss a student for serious or repeated violations. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, repeated or egregious academic-integrity violations; harassment, bullying, or threats toward students or staff; misuse of the Learn Stage platform or attempts to circumvent its security; falsification of identity or records; and non-payment of tuition or fees where applicable. Dismissal decisions are reviewed by school leadership, and the family is notified in writing. For TEFA-funded students, dismissal and any resulting return of funds are handled in coordination with the State of Texas TEFA program.

Health, Safety & Compliance

Immunization Policy (Texas)

Excel High School Texas is committed to supporting student health and complying with Texas immunization requirements. Families enrolling non-adult students who are legal residents of Texas must provide immunization records or approved exemption documentation as part of the enrollment process. In Texas, this requirement applies specifically to students entering 7th grade. Students who do not submit the required documentation may experience delays in enrollment. Families are asked to provide a copy of the student's immunization record, or an exemption form as permitted by Texas law, prior to the start of the program. Exemptions may apply for medical reasons, or for reasons of conscience including religious belief, with appropriate documentation submitted in compliance with Texas law.

For detailed Texas exemption information, families may refer to the Texas Department of State Health Services school immunization exemption resources at dshs.texas.gov. Records or exemption forms can be uploaded through the student's Learn Stage portal or submitted to the Student Records Office at records@excelhighschool.com.

Harassment, Bullying, and Discrimination Policy

I. Purpose

Excel High School Texas is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, free from harassment, bullying, intimidation, and violence. This policy prohibits all forms of harassment, including but not limited to harassment based on

race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or veteran status.

II. General Policy Statement

It is the policy of Excel High School Texas to promote a virtual academic environment free from harassment and violence. Harassment in any form — especially that which is based on race, religion, sex, or gender identity, or that creates chronic disruption — will not be tolerated.

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, and faculty
- School advisory board members, agents, contractors, and volunteers
- All school-affiliated communication and learning platforms, including Learn Stage, messages, discussion forums, and coaching calls

It is a violation of this policy for any student or staff member to:

- Engage in conduct or communication that constitutes harassment or bullying
- Threaten, attempt, or commit violence or intimidation against another student or staff member
- Create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive educational environment

Excel will investigate all reported incidents and take appropriate disciplinary action when violations occur.

III. Definitions

A. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a condition of educational access or advancement
- The conduct is used to influence academic decisions
- The behavior creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Examples include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or pressure
- Sexual jokes, gestures, messages, or images
- Comments or actions based on gender, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual orientation
- Demands for sexual favors, with implied threats or promises

This also includes discrimination or harassment on the basis of sex, including pregnancy or related conditions.

B. Racial Harassment

Racial harassment consists of verbal, written, or graphic conduct based on race, ethnicity, or national origin that:

- Creates a hostile or offensive academic environment
- Unreasonably interferes with a student's academic performance
- Diminishes a student's educational opportunities

C. Religious Harassment

Religious harassment includes verbal or written conduct based on a person's religious beliefs or practices that:

- Creates an intimidating or offensive academic environment
- Interferes with participation or performance in school activities
- Targets a student or staff member for ridicule or exclusion

D. Chronic or Continual Harassment

This refers to repetitive behavior — verbal, written, or digital — that causes sustained emotional distress, intimidation, or interruption to the learning environment. Examples may include:

- Cyberbullying
- Persistent unwanted contact or messaging
- Targeted exclusion or rumor-spreading
- Hostile or demeaning language

IV. Reporting Procedures

Any student, staff member, parent, or community member who believes that harassment, bullying, or discrimination has occurred should report the incident immediately to:

- A Success Coach or Academic Coach
- Student Services at 800-620-3844 or info@excelhighschooltexas.com
- The Learn Stage Help Desk

Both written and oral reports are accepted, and formal reporting forms are encouraged but not required. Excel will make every effort to respect the privacy of all parties involved while complying with its investigative obligations.

V. Investigation

School leadership, or a designee, will initiate a prompt, thorough, and confidential investigation. Investigations may include:

- Interviews with the complainant, alleged offender(s), and witnesses
- Review of messages, emails, discussion boards, or digital logs

- Analysis of contextual and behavioral patterns

Excel may implement interim measures during the investigation to ensure student safety and minimize disruption.

VI. Disciplinary Action

If a violation is confirmed, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, which may include:

- Written warnings
- Suspension or removal from specific courses or platforms
- Dismissal from Excel High School Texas

The outcome will be communicated in writing, consistent with applicable privacy laws and the progressive-discipline framework.

VII. Retaliation Prohibited

Excel High School Texas strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports harassment, cooperates in an investigation, or participates in any proceeding related to this policy.

VIII. Alternative Legal Avenues

Nothing in this policy limits any rights a person may have under applicable law.

IX. Communication and Review of Policy

This policy is included in the Student Handbook and published on the Excel High School Texas website. Students and families are informed of this policy at enrollment. Excel reviews and updates this policy annually to remain consistent with applicable law and best practice.

Acceptable Use Policy

Excel provides access to the Learn Stage platform, BRYTE, and related digital tools for a limited educational purpose: to support enrolled coursework and learning. Use of Excel systems is a privilege, not a right, and continued access depends on responsible, appropriate use.

Unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to:

- Sharing login credentials or accessing another person's account.
- Attempting to circumvent platform security, filtering, or monitoring.
- Using Excel systems for unlawful activity, harassment, or to access or distribute

harmful, obscene, or threatening material.

- Using AI tools, including BRYTE, to complete assignments dishonestly (see Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, & Policies).
- Damaging, disrupting, or attempting to gain unauthorized access to Excel systems or data.

Privacy and monitoring. Students should have no expectation of privacy in their use of Excel systems. Excel may monitor platform activity to maintain security, ensure appropriate use, support academic integrity, and comply with law. By enrolling and using Excel systems, students and parents/guardians acknowledge and agree to this Acceptable Use Policy; Excel is not liable for misuse of its systems by students or third parties.

Internet Safety Policy (CIPA Compliance)

Excel is committed to student safety online. Consistent with the principles of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Excel takes reasonable measures to protect students within its own digital environment, including content controls within the Learn Stage platform, monitoring of platform activity for safety and appropriate use, and staff supervision of student interactions.

Within Excel's environment, students are protected from access to materials that are obscene, harmful to minors, or otherwise inappropriate, and from unsafe communication features. Because online learning happens in the home, families are also responsible for general internet safety on home networks and personal devices. Excel offers an Internet Safety & Study Skills course for middle school students covering safe online behavior, evaluating credible sources, and managing screen time. Safety concerns identified through coursework, messages, or coaching are handled in accordance with Excel's safety-response protocols and mandatory-reporting duties under Texas law.

Dual Enrollment & Transfer

Dual Enrollment Program

Excel partners with select colleges and universities, including agreements with several Texas institutions, to let students take real college courses online while still enrolled in high school. Dual-enrollment students earn both high school credit toward their Excel diploma and college credit at the partner institution.

Eligibility. Dual enrollment is generally available to students in good academic standing who have demonstrated readiness for college-level work; specific prerequisites are set by the partner institution. A Success Coach helps families confirm eligibility and select courses.

Course approval and credit transfer. Students should obtain approval before enrolling in a dual-enrollment course to ensure it applies toward Excel graduation requirements. Excel records dual-enrollment credit on the Excel transcript upon receipt of an official college transcript; the awarding of college credit is governed by the partner institution.

Academic performance. Dual-enrollment courses are college courses and are graded by the partner institution. Grades may affect both the high school and the college record. Students are responsible for understanding how a dual-enrollment grade is reflected on the Excel transcript and GPA. Notification and transcript submission. To receive Excel credit, students must notify Excel of dual-enrollment coursework and arrange for an official college transcript to be sent to the Registrar. Course availability and partner institutions may change year to year; contact a Texas advisor for the current list.

Dual Enrollment Agreement

Before beginning dual-enrollment coursework, students and their parent/guardian acknowledge their understanding of how credit is earned and transferred, that the partner institution sets its own grading and policies, that tuition or fees may apply at the partner institution, and that the student is responsible for arranging official transcript delivery to Excel. A Texas advisor reviews this agreement with the family at the time of dual-enrollment registration.

Transferring from Excel High School to Another Institution

Because Excel is regionally accredited (Cognia and MSA-CESS) and TEPSAC-accredited, credits and diplomas earned at Excel transfer to and from Texas public and private schools and are recognized by colleges, universities, the military, and employers. Students transferring to another school should request an official transcript through the Registrar and confirm acceptance directly with the receiving institution, as each school applies its own transfer rules. Excel will work with a receiving institution to support credit acceptance where needed.

Enrichment, Distinctions & Student Life

Academic Distinctions

Excel recognizes academic achievement through honor-roll distinctions calculated on a student's cumulative performance:

"Alpha" Honor Roll

Unweighted 4.0 Scale: Term GPA: 3.667 and above This indicates a strong performance across standard coursework. Weighted 4.5 Scale: Approximate Term GPA: 4.125 and

above Reflects additional recognition for engaging in higher-level courses such as Honors.

Weighted 5.0 Scale: Approximate Term GPA: 4.584 and above Acknowledges excellence in advanced coursework, celebrating achievement in AP classes.

"Beta" Honor Roll

Unweighted 4.0 Scale: Term GPA: 3.000 to 3.666 Marks a commendable level of achievement in standard courses.

Weighted 4.5 Scale: Approximate Term GPA: 3.750 to 4.124 Reflects additional recognition for engaging in higher-level courses such as Honors.

Weighted 5.0 Scale: Approximate Term GPA: 3.750 to 4.583 Acknowledges excellence in advanced coursework, celebrating achievement in AP classes.

Latin Honors (Laude Recognition)

At EHS we honor outstanding academic achievement by adopting the Laude Latin Model, a refined approach that goes beyond traditional class rankings. This model reflects our commitment to recognizing each student's unique academic journey and their exceptional dedication to learning.

Your final cumulative grade point average (GPA) will determine the academic honor that is noted on your high school transcript, diploma, and celebrated at commencement. The three distinguished levels of academic honors are as follows:

Summa Cum Laude (With Highest Distinction):

Unweighted GPA (4.0 Scale): 4.000 and above

Weighted Equivalent (4.5 Scale): Typically, a weighted GPA of 4.500 and above. This reflects the extra rigor and challenge of advanced courses.

Weighted Equivalent (5.0 Scale): Typically, a weighted GPA of 5.000 and above. This reflects the highest academic achievement, incorporating the difficulty of advanced courses.

Magna Cum Laude (With Great Distinction):

Unweighted GPA (4.0 Scale): 3.850 to 3.999

Weighted Equivalent (4.5 Scale): Approximately 4.337 to 4.499. Taking more challenging courses could enhance a GPA within this range.

Weighted Equivalent (5.0 Scale): Approximately 4.812 to 4.999. This range acknowledges significant achievement, considering the extra rigor of Honors, AP, or IB classes.

Cum Laude (With Distinction):

Unweighted GPA (4.0 Scale): 3.667 to 3.849

Weighted Equivalent (4.5 Scale): Roughly 4.150 to 4.336. The added weight reflects any advanced coursework, maintaining a high standard of achievement.

Weighted Equivalent (5.0 Scale): Roughly 4.584 to 4.811. This reflects substantial academic dedication and success in more challenging coursework.

Important Note: In instances where miscalculations are identified, adjustments will be made to award honors retrospectively. Honors that were mistakenly awarded will not be rescinded, ensuring fair and just recognition of your achievements.

Class Rank Position Statement

Because Excel is a self-paced school serving students on widely varying schedules and pathways, Excel generally does not compute a traditional class rank. Excel reports GPA and academic distinctions instead, and will provide a rank or a non-ranking statement on official request when required by a college, scholarship, or program. Families needing class-rank information for an application should contact the Registrar.

Student Community Achievement Hub

The Student Community Achievement Hub is Excel's space for recognizing student accomplishments and connecting learners across the Excel community. It highlights honor-roll recognition, program milestones, enrichment participation, and student achievements, helping online students feel part of a wider community beyond their individual coursework.

ElevatED Enrichment Program

Excel's ElevatED enrichment program extends learning beyond the core curriculum through honor societies and student clubs:

- National Honor Society (NHS). High school students who meet scholarship, leadership, service, and character criteria may be invited to join, recognizing well-rounded excellence.
- Virtual Clubs. Excel offers virtual clubs that let students explore interests, build community, and develop leadership in an online setting.

Participation details and eligibility are shared through the Learn Stage portal and a designated advisor.

Student & Family Engagement

Participants: The Student

Students are at the center of Excel's model and are responsible for their own learning. Key student responsibilities include logging in regularly and making consistent progress; completing assignments and assessments with academic integrity; communicating with coaches and responding to outreach; keeping login credentials secure; and using BRYTE and other tools to support — not replace — their own learning.

Participants: The Parent/Guardian

Parents and guardians are essential partners, particularly for younger students. Key responsibilities include creating a supportive study environment; monitoring progress through the parent portal; keeping contact information current and responding to school communications; supporting pacing and accountability; and notifying the school of circumstances that affect participation. For TEFA-funded students, families also complete required state documentation and cooperate with progress reporting.

The Crucial Role of Parental Involvement in Online Education

Research and Excel's own experience show that engaged families are the single strongest predictor of success in online learning. Families support student success when they:

- Create a structured environment — a consistent time and quiet space for schoolwork, with routines that protect focus.
- Monitor progress and stay informed — checking the parent portal, reviewing the gradebook, and staying in touch with coaches.
- Encourage engagement and accountability — helping the student set goals, meet pacing expectations, and follow through.
- Provide emotional support — encouraging persistence, celebrating milestones, and helping the student manage setbacks.
- Understand their role — recognizing that in an online school the family is an active partner in daily learning, not a passive observer.

Consistent parental involvement leads to stronger engagement, better pacing, and higher completion rates — and it helps students build the independence that college, career, and life require.

English Proficiency and Multilingual Learner Support

Excel's coursework, assessments, and communication are delivered in English, and students need sufficient English proficiency to engage with the curriculum. Excel supports multilingual learners through several built-in features and services, including text-to-speech and screen-reader compatibility, the BRYTE AI tutor's ability to explain concepts in clear, simple language, and Spanish-language enrollment and support available through the Español option at excelhighschooltexas.com. Families with questions about language support should contact a Texas advisor. Live support is available in Spanish. Course content may also be translated into additional languages using browser-based translation tools such as Google Translate; instruction, assessments, and official school communication are conducted in English.

Career and College Counseling

Excel's Success Coaches help students plan beyond graduation. Support includes selecting a Future Ready endorsement and career pathway, planning college-admission testing (PSAT/SAT/ACT) and AP exams using CEEB code 240707, understanding NCAA eligibility for student-athletes, preparing transcripts and applications, and mapping options across college, trade school, the military, and the workforce. Future Ready students receive dedicated, scheduled coaching throughout the year as part of the program.

Learning Support & Technical Requirements

Study Tips for Online Learning Success

Self-paced learning rewards good habits. Students do their best work when they:

- Read the grading rubric first so they understand exactly how each assignment is evaluated.
- Notice when an assignment expects a specific answer versus an open response, and answer accordingly.
- Prepare for assessments by reviewing lesson content and using BRYTE to practice and check understanding.
- Use BRYTE for on-demand support to explain concepts, walk through examples, and give feedback on drafts — not to complete work for them.
- Submit high-quality work by reviewing instructions, checking their writing, and

proofreading before submitting.

- Stay organized and consistent with a regular schedule and steady weekly progress rather than last-minute cramming.
- Be proactive — reaching out to a coach early when they are stuck rather than waiting until they fall behind.

Technology Skills, Hardware & Software Requirements

Students should be comfortable navigating a web browser, managing files, using email, and working within an online learning platform. Excel courses run on commonly available consumer devices; minimum requirements include a reliable broadband internet connection, a laptop, desktop, or tablet capable of running modern web applications, a current version of a modern browser (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari), audio output for video lessons, and a working email address for school communications. A laptop or desktop is recommended for writing-intensive and assessment work. Students should keep their browser and operating system updated and their Learn Stage credentials secure.

NCAA Eligibility

Excel's core academic courses are approved by the NCAA Eligibility Center, so Texas student-athletes can establish and maintain eligibility for NCAA Division I and II athletics through Excel coursework. The NCAA requires a specified number of approved core courses in English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, and additional core areas, along with qualifying grades and test scores. Student-athletes should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center early, confirm which Excel courses appear on Excel's approved course list, and work with a Success Coach to align their course plan and testing timeline with NCAA requirements. Final determinations regarding NCAA eligibility, including the acceptance of coursework and satisfaction of all eligibility requirements, are made solely at the discretion of the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Enrollment Guarantee & FAQ

Credit Transfer Guarantee

Excel guarantees that credits earned through its regionally accredited programs meet recognized academic standards and are widely accepted by U.S. colleges and universities, community and junior colleges, and the military and most employers. If a post-secondary institution declines to accept Excel credits, Excel will work with the institution to facilitate acceptance; if the credits are ultimately denied, Excel will refund

tuition paid for the non-accepted credits. This guarantee does not apply to single/summer-school courses or part-time enrollments, and families are encouraged to verify transfer with their intended institution before enrolling in individual courses.

Proof of Enrollment (POE)

To be considered an active full-time student and qualify for a Proof of Enrollment (POE) letter, a student must be enrolled in a full-time diploma track program, be enrolled for a minimum of 10 consecutive days prior to the request, and demonstrate academic engagement through course activity and participation. In some cases a valid photo ID and a transcript from the previous school may be required on file before a POE is issued.

Submit POE requests through the Learn Stage Help Desk and allow up to 3 to 5 business days for processing, provided all requirements are met.

An exception to the 10-day requirement is made when documentation is required by a public school district or education authority to comply with state compulsory attendance laws. Families needing a POE urgently for a state-compliance, benefits, or TEFA deadline should contact Student Services and identify the deadline so the request can be expedited.

Frequently Asked Questions

What courses are available, and are they high quality? Excel offers accredited middle school, standard and Honors high school, AP, Future Ready, summer school, credit recovery, and dual enrollment, delivered through Learn Stage and backed by Cognia, TEPSAC, and MSA-CESS accreditation.

When can students start, and how do we enroll? Enrollment is open year-round; most students begin within 24 to 72 hours of completing the online enrollment form.

What support do students receive? Every student has access to academic and success coaches, the BRYTE AI tutor 24/7, a Help Desk, Student Services, and Spanish-language support; Future Ready students receive a dedicated Success Coach.

Is the online environment safe? Excel monitors its platform for safety and appropriate use, follows CIPA-aligned protections and FERPA/COPPA privacy practices, maintains SOC 2 compliance, and follows Texas mandatory-reporting duties.

How can I track my child's progress? Parents have dedicated portal access to the gradebook, progress, and coach communications inside Learn Stage.

Is there an attendance or face-to-face requirement? No. Excel is fully asynchronous; progress and engagement, not seat time, define participation, subject to any TEFA progress requirements.

How much does it cost? See the Tuition & Payment Plans chapter; eligible families may attend tuition-free through TEFA.

Will colleges accept Excel graduates? Yes. Excel's accredited diploma is recognized by Texas and national colleges and universities, the military under Tier 1 standards, and employers.

Directory & Key Contacts

The leadership and staff below operate across the Excel Education Systems family of schools and serve Excel High School Texas students and families.

Executive Leadership

Leadership Team

Rod Clarkson, M.B.A., Ed.S. — President & CEO

Mark Ulven, M.A., Ed.D. — Chief Expansion Officer

Nate Herrmann, B.S., M.B.A., SHRM-CP — Chief Operating Officer

Heather Farmakis, Ph.D. — Chief Strategy Officer / Superintendent of Schools

Kate Clarkson, B.S., M.B.A. — Director of Product Strategy

As a fully accredited private online school, Excel High School Texas is committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence, integrity, and student support. We appreciate the trust you have placed in us and remain dedicated to helping every student reach their full potential. Together, we will build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and future success. We wish you a successful and rewarding school year!