



**Elementary  
Family Handbook  
24-25**

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# The Mission of Our Schools

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Brillante Public Charter Schools, PK-8 schools in the classical tradition, help students to grow intellectually, socially and physically into young men and women of good character and spirit, and to be prepared for excellence in high school, college and beyond.

Through the application of proven strategies and strategic partnerships, Brillante Public Charter Schools provide a well-rounded liberal arts education. Brillante believes that graduation from college is an important foundation for a successful life. By developing students' reflective and critical thinking skills, and positive character traits, Brillante equips each student with the fundamental tools to construct a better future for themselves and for the world around them. Brillante students gain confidence in their knowledge and are able to ask meaningful questions and engage in purposeful discourse. Their ability to reason and solve problems extends beyond school walls and carries them through life.

## Attendance - General

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Attendance at school is the most basic requirement for learning. In order for students to reach their personal best, they must be on time and present and make their strongest effort at school each and every day. **At Brillante, consistent and timely attendance is required, and poor attendance will not be tolerated. Additionally, Texas state law mandates attendance for students of a certain age.**

**Brillante's curriculum is rigorous and ambitious. As such, every day is essential for students to keep pace. Parents/guardians are expected to ensure their child is in school. Scholars are expected to be at school every single day. Excessive unexcused absences are considered a violation of the Commitment to Excellence that each family signs during their Home Visit meetings.**

- Brillante holds firmly to the belief that missing school results in missed learning, and thus encourages families to schedule appointments during already scheduled time off for students. Brillante releases its school calendar prior to each school year so families can plan accordingly. If students have ten or more days of absences for the year, it may affect their ability to be promoted to the next grade.

- **Medical Appointments** – Parents/guardians are encouraged to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours. Preferable appointment times are Friday afternoons (after 1:00 P.M.) or during school closures. In the rare case that a student has a medical appointment at a time when school is in session, he or she should not be absent for the entire school day, but rather attend school before and/or after the appointment. Please make sure to bring in the doctor's excuse upon return to school.

- **Suspensions are considered absences** – If a student is absent from school due to suspension, each day of suspension is treated the same as an absence.

- **Early dismissal** – – Students are expected to stay in school until the very end of the day (3:45 P.M. Monday - Friday). The learning environment is disrupted when students are picked up early. As such, Brillante will not release students prior to the end of the school day without an excused reason..

## Excused Absences

Brillante Public Charter School shall excuse a student from attending school for:

(1)the following purposes, including travel for those purposes:

(A)observing religious holy days;

(B)attending a required court appearance;

(C)appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student’s application for United States citizenship;

(D)taking part in a United States naturalization oath ceremony;

(E)serving as an election clerk; or

(F)if the student is in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services, participating, as determined and documented by the department, in an activity:

(i)ordered by a court, provided that it is not practicable to schedule the participation outside of school hours; or

(ii)required under a court-ordered service plan.

(2)a temporary absence resulting from an appointment with health care professionals for the student or the student’s child if the student commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment; or

(3)an absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student’s attendance infeasible, if the student or the student’s parent or guardian provides a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in this state specifying the student’s illness and the anticipated period of the student’s absence relating to the illness or related treatment.

## Attendance – Consequences for Absences and Tardies

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- **No absences in a reporting period:** Students and parents/guardians are congratulated and recognized for exceptional attendance and commitment to their

- education during the semester.
- **Five absences in a reporting period:** If a student is absent five times in a reporting period, it is considered a serious problem, and a violation of the Commitment to Excellence. **At this point, the teacher or Principal will contact the parent/guardian.**
  - **Four tardies in a reporting period will result in an absence being recorded in the student file.**
  - **Three absences in a four-week period:** Brillante Public Charter Schools shall notify a student's parent/ guardian if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent/ guardian that it is the parent/ guardian's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent/ guardian is needed to discuss the absences.
  - **Ten absences in a six-month period:** Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year, the student's parent/ guardian is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093 and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a).
  - **Ten absences in a school year:** If a student is absent ten times in a school year, the student is considered unprepared and is **at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. A member of the administration will contact the parent/guardian.** The Principal reserves the right to retain any student who misses more than ten days in a school year.

## **Attendance – Arrival/Dismissal**

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Timeliness is essential to each child's success – at school and in life. At Brillante, core instruction and learning begins from the moment students walk in the door until the moment they leave.

When students arrive late, they miss valuable learning time and tardiness, in general, is a bad habit. One of the most common reasons that people lose their job is persistent tardiness. As such, reinforcing timeliness from a young age is critical.

**Arrival:** Students must be dropped off at school between 7:15 A.M. and 8:00 A.M.

- Students arriving after 8:00 AM are considered late and tardiness is recorded on these students' files. The main gate will be closed at 7:55 AM am.
- Since it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to transport the child to school, any family whose tardiness becomes a pattern and begins to significantly interfere with instruction is required to have a formal meeting

**Dismissal:** Dismissal is at 3:45 P.M. Monday- Friday.

- All students not attending an after school program must be picked up within a

15-minute window. The doors close promptly at 4:15 P.M. Monday-Friday. **Late pick-ups are recorded on students' files and parents will be charged \$10 every ten minutes that the parent is late for pick-up. Any minute after 4:20 pm is considered a tardy minute. Payment will be collected at the end of the month by debit or credit card. The first two times will be recorded as a warning. Fees will begin after the student has been picked up late more than two times.**

- In the case of an emergency, parents/guardians that need to pick up their child early may notify the office and teacher in advance, and must retrieve their child prior to 2:30 P.M. **Parents/guardians may not be able to pick up their child between 2:30 PM and 3:45 PM so as to maintain safety while students are transitioning from their classrooms to dismissal.**
- If late pick-ups become a pattern and/or a family accrues more than five late pick-ups in a reporting period, the parent/guardian will be required to have a formal meeting with the administration, and the incident will be recorded in the student's file. Additionally, the school may need to take action accordingly, filing a written complaint with a relevant court or child services agency.

## Homework

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Homework is an essential part of the educational program: it is designed to reinforce skills taught in the classroom, to help students develop a deeper understanding of concepts, and to promote good study habits. Homework is assigned every night across all grades. Homework includes at least 20-30 minutes of required reading nightly (including most weekends and holidays), for which a parent/guardian signature is required on the reading log. Homework must be completed in full and in accordance with Brillante's high standards for hard work, attention to detail and precision, and overall professional presentation.

All students are provided with Homework Folders that include a nightly Reading Log. Homework Folders are designed to teach students essential organizational skills. **Reading Logs must be filled out properly with a parent/guardian signature, and all assigned homework must be completed and in the folder.** There are high standards for homework since homework is a key ingredient to scholars' success.

### Homework Procedures:

- Scholars will be provided with homework packets each week
- Scholars are required to complete their homework daily and read for 20 minutes each night (evidenced by a family member's signature on the Reading Log)
- Scholars submit their complete Homework folder Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday
- Homework folders are returned prior to dismissal each day
- Homework packets are collected for final scoring on Friday mornings
- Teachers score each Homework packet according to the following scale:
  - ✓ Good work!
  - ✗ Some work completed (incomplete/incorrect); the student should re-do the

assignment(s) and submit by the end of the week

**O (Circle)** Did not attempt/no effort; student should re-do the assignment(s) and submit by the end of the week

- Scholars receive separate Family Challenge work for the weekends, due Monday morning

More extensive homework packets are assigned for extended breaks. These homework packets are distributed on the day leading up to extended breaks, and also posted under the Parent Resources page on [brillanteacademy.org](http://brillanteacademy.org).

## Independent Reading

Research shows that the number one way to improve a student's reading skills is to have them read as often as possible. There is a high correlation between students who read regularly outside of school, and those who score highest on reading exams. **The more students read, the more likely they are to succeed in school and in life. Supporting students' independent reading at home is the most important way to help them improve their speed, accuracy, vocabulary, comprehension, and overall reading ability.** Although Brillante students have high-quality reading time during the school day, they must read at home every night for at least 20 minutes, every weekend, and during any vacation from school to ensure they are building their stamina and reading skills at the same rate as their peers. Families can support students' reading by asking them to read aloud, by stopping them occasionally and asking questions about what they are reading. This dialogue around reading encourages and enhances students' comprehension and love of reading.

**Please do not sign your child's independent reading log if you have not actually seen him or her read.** Students may be tempted to cut corners; however, skipping this important reading requirement only hurts students' achievement in the long run.

## Make-Up Work

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After returning from an absence, students are expected to complete any missed assignments. The parent/guardian must help the student check missed assignments, and ensure all missed work is completed.

In the rare event of a planned absence (one that is known in advance), parents/guardians are required to notify teachers and the school administration at least two weeks prior to allow time for work packets and anticipated missed work to be compiled. From there, students are expected to complete the work during their absence, and the parent/guardian is ultimately responsible for ensuring quality, completion, and effectiveness of the student's work product. Again, absences from school have a direct, negative impact on a child's academic progress, and should be avoided at all costs. A student should only be absent in the case of serious illness or a family emergency.

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## Student Technology Policy

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**\*\* This policy applies to all electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, personal laptop computers, etc.) \*\***

The Brillante student technology policy allows the *possession* of telecommunications devices by students on campus during the regular school day, but not the use of such devices. The policy also states that telecommunication devices may not be kept on the student's person. This means that the device must be kept in a bookbag, and remain in the off position for the duration of the school day.

During the school day (defined as being from the time a student arrives on campus each morning until school is dismissed for the day with an authorized adult), these devices must be turned off and may not be used by students. These devices enable potential distraction to students and the overall learning environment and can compromise the integrity of students' learning and peer to peer interactions. The possession of cell phones by students on campus also poses a risk with regard to bullying behaviors.

There is no reason that a student should need to use a cell phone during the regular school day. In any instance requiring emergency communication with a student or with a parent/guardian, the school will immediately assist the student, parent/guardian, or other authorized adult with the necessary communication via a school telephone.

If a student is found to be in violation of the Student Technology Policy, school personnel will confiscate the device. Refusal by a student to surrender the device is not an option. Devices confiscated may be picked up by the parent/guardian from the teacher or staff member who confiscated the device. If a part-time employee (i.e. related service providers – paraprofessional, speech therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, etc.) confiscates a device, it may be picked up from the student's homeroom teacher or from the main office. Brillante reserves the right to search the contents of any devices that have been confiscated. Finally, should any device be lost, stolen, or damaged at school, Brillante is not responsible, and will not assume responsibility for damages, repairs, or replacements.

## **Communication**

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Brillante requires parents/guardians to be partners in the education of their children. The important task of educating a child and ensuring each child's success in school and in life calls for the school, the student, and the parents/guardians to work together in partnership. ***See the Brillante Commitment to Excellence (attached as Appendix).***

In order to be effective partners, all stakeholders must communicate respectfully and productively. There are several ways that Brillante communicates with families throughout the year:

- **Communication Flyers:** Monthly, each family receives a Brillante Newsletter, Monthly Event Calendar, Grade-Specific Newsletters, and School Foods Calendar
  - There may be other flyers sent home periodically as we utilize the platform ClassDojo to frequently communicate home. ClassDojo is designed to keep parents informed and facilitate participation at school. It is a mass communication tool that can send emails, text messages, and phone calls to



district parents and staff.

- **Report Card Conferences:** Report card nights are sessions that parents/guardians are required to attend to meet with their child's teachers. At each conference parents/guardians receive a written report card that includes qualitative and quantitative data measures of their child's present level of performance in academic achievement and social-emotional growth. These conferences are critical opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about their child's progress and needs.
- **Behavior Alert / Academic Alert:** If a child is experiencing behavioral or academic challenges, the school may send home a written notice, or communicate challenges through an in-person meeting. Parents/guardians must make sure to review the concerns outlined in the letter with the child and to contact the school if there are any questions, or if any follow up is required.
- **Phone Calls:** Throughout the year, the school will also communicate via phone calls or written notes from a teacher, school administrator, or operations personnel. If the message requires a response, families are required to respond either by phone or in writing within 24 hours.
- **Meetings:** If the school requests a meeting with a parent/guardian, there is likely an urgent and important matter at hand. As such, timely scheduling is required. Should a family wish to schedule a meeting with a teacher or administrator, they are advised to contact that staff member directly and schedule the meeting at a mutually desirable time.
- **Visits:** To arrange a visit to the school, please see the section on *School Visitor Policy*.
- **Parent/Guardian Concerns:** If families have a concern about a school policy, academic grade, discipline decision, or anything else, Brillante suggests first taking some time to reflect on the matter before addressing the issue. If the parent/guardian is still concerned after a day or two has passed, and the issue has not been resolved, the school should be contacted in a respectful, calm, and solution-oriented manner. Brillante welcomes conversations that adhere to these norms and is always open to working in partnership toward mutually beneficial solutions and overall betterment for the students and the school community at large. Brillante understands and accepts that challenges can spark strong feelings on the part of all stakeholders. Still, the school is a place of business and respectful partnership and must be treated as such. Any issues must be handled professionally and respectfully, and with appropriate concern for all parties involved.

Brillante requires families' support. Families enroll in Brillante because it is a demanding, rigorous school, with high expectations for academics and behavior. All stakeholders – parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators – play a critical role in students' success and work together to ensure all children gain the knowledge they need to be successful in their present life, through high school, college, and beyond. Core to Brillante's mission is the belief that school and home are each a part of the same team: working together as partners ensures each child will succeed.

## Promotion to the Next Grade

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In order to be promoted to the next grade level, students must meet the minimum grade level promotional standards for their current grade level. Any students that have not met the minimum, end-of-year standards have their academic records reviewed by school administrators. If a student is being considered for grade-level retention, his/her homeroom teacher must assist in the creation of an individualized plan that specifies the necessary changes to ensure the student will benefit from repeating the grade level. Ensuring each student's setting from one year to the next is appropriate given their specific learning needs is essential. There are instances in which a child that is below grade level may be promoted. For example, a child may be promoted if significant growth has been made from the previous year, or if administrators do not feel that retention is in the best interest of the child. The school administration reserves the right to mandate academic summer school as a necessary intervention for a student. The school's administration meets with families to discuss the promotion decisions and communicate any additional strategies for supporting the child at home.

### Criteria for Promotion:

- **Perform at or above grade level** in reading, math, writing, science, and social studies.
- **Attendance:** Any student that is absent more than 10 times is at risk of being retained.
- **Grade level social and emotional competence** is another factor that is considered in determining promotional readiness.
- **Homework completion and weekly test scores** show scholars' achievement level and corresponding readiness to move on to more challenging content in the next grade level.

## Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

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The Student Services Manager reviews all student IEPs and helps develop the metrics that are used to determine if students are reaching the goals written in their IEPs. Brillante is dedicated to ensuring students receiving Special Education services are making an appropriate rate of progress. Brillante staff work with parents/guardians to make sure that all parties are fully aware of students' goals and their IEP specific requirements.

Students receiving Special Education Services are held to the same standards for grade-level promotion as their general education peers according to their IEP. Usually, students will be promoted to the next grade based on successful completion of the goals of the IEP; however, other circumstances are always considered. For example, if a program change is pending, meaning the student's setting would look different the following school year with adjusted supports, or a student has significant attendance or behavioral challenges unrelated to their IEP, the student may or may not qualify for retention, independent of their Special Education designation.

## Discipline

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## **“Love and Logic” Discipline Philosophy and Approach**

Brillante does not believe in a systems approach to discipline. Brillante believes there are logical consequences for actions and that, before an action happens, there should not be consequences already in place. Brillante’s system is principle-based on the theory that students can learn to solve their own problems and that each student is unique in how he/she responds to consequences. Love and Logic rewards pro-social choices in a non-prescriptive manner. In other words, rewards and consequences are logical and student-specific. This structure is intended to put the thinking on students, to make them owners of their learning and choices, to ensure students are intrinsically motivated, and to bring about lasting change in student behavior and reflection.

Those core beliefs of Love and Logic include:

- Maintaining dignity for the adult and child
- Whenever possible, sharing the control
- Whenever possible, sharing the thinking -- get the child to do more
- If consequences are necessary, using the empathy-with-consequences approach

At each Parent University, families have the opportunity to learn more about the Love and Logic approach and practice different techniques. A more detailed policy can be requested in the main office.

In the case of severe behavioral issues, an incident report will be created for the student and added to their file. A parent may collect a copy of the incident report from the administration office. The point of contact for incident reports: **Mariza Cantu**, PEIMS Manager.

## **Hours of Operation**

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Brillante Academy schools operate from 7:15 A.M. until 3:45 P.M., Monday through Friday. Students are required to arrive at school on time (by 7:45 A.M. at the latest) and to remain in school until dismissal at 3:45 P.M. (unless there is early release). Prioritizing attendance and timeliness sends a message to children that school is extremely important.

## **Lost and Found**

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The school will keep a small lost and found box in a designated location. Parents/guardians may come in any day between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. to search the Lost and Found. At the end of each reporting period, items left in the box may be donated to a local charity.

## **Messages/Voicemail**

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It would take an incredible amount of staffing and resources to provide message services, **and we cannot guarantee that messages will actually reach students or teachers**

**during the day.** Students and teachers may not receive incoming phone calls or messages unless it is an emergency that requires immediate attention. As such, messages for staff during school hours should be kept to a minimum.

To get a message to a child's teacher, please call the front office to leave a message with the front reception area or attempt to reach the teacher via ClassDojo. Brillante staff check messages and voicemails frequently and are committed to returning calls within one business day.

## **Nursing Services and Medication**

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Nursing services are provided by the campus nurse and/or a fellow campus representative that has been trained in the administration of basic health provided services. It is recommended that parents/guardians have a doctor or health center look into any recurring health problem a child is having.

The nurse is responsible for checking all health records to be certain that each student is properly immunized. The School is required by law to have a completed health form on file for every student within 14 days of a child attending our school. The health form documents the vaccinations that a child has received to date.

If a child requires medication during school hours, the school's nurse can provide a Medical Administration Form (or MAF). Completed MAFs enable the building nurse to store and administer medication. However, medication cannot be administered to children until the child's physician has completed the form. This is a requirement of the Health Department and pertains to all medicine, including Aspirin, Tylenol, and other over-the-counter medications. The building nurse will keep a detailed log of all medications that are administered.

## **Transportation**

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Brillante Schools are accessible by a school transportation system. In the case that transportation is not available due to maintenance, for example, parents will be notified as soon as the decision to not run a bus is made.

Brillante recognizes that charter schools are considered non-public schools for the purpose of receiving transportation services under Education Law §2853(4)(b). The TX DOE is responsible for providing the same transportation services as other Texas public school students. Special education students can receive transportation as mandated in their IEPs. The school works closely with the special education providers to ensure appropriate transportation is provided. Families of students who do not qualify for bus services, are responsible for arranging their child's transportation to and from school.

## **School Calendar and Closings**

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Please see the Brillante Public Charter Schools calendar (included as an *Appendix* in this Handbook) for the scheduled school days for each school year.

**For weather-related closures, Brillante Schools only close in case of inclement weather conditions.** Please find our updates class dojo and social media.

## **School Lunch Program**

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Both breakfast and lunch are available at Brillante. As part of its participation in the School Nutrition Program (a federal program that subsidizes student meals), the school must collect completed lunch application forms for all students. The lunch application form is used to determine the level of assistance that a child receives.

Parents/guardians may send lunch to school. If lunch is sent to school with a child, Brillante requires nutritious foods only. Unhealthy drinks (e.g., sodas or juices) or unhealthy snacks (snacks high in fat, calories, or sugar, such as fried chips, cookies, etc.) are not permitted at school. Foods that are high in sugar content cause students to become hyper and then to lose energy and feel sluggish. This influence of high-sugar foods has a negative impact on learning. As such, Brillante will only allow healthy food and beverage options (such as fruit and water) instead of candy or soda. The school reserves the right to confiscate and discard any unhealthy food and drinks that are brought to school. However, parents will be notified.

## **School Visitor Policy**

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Visitors, especially parents/guardians, are a vital part of the Brillante community. Families are welcomed as volunteers, observers, and partners in the education of students.

**Parents/guardians who would like to visit should contact classroom teachers to make arrangements. These arrangements will be shared with Administration for approval. In the case that the date for observations is not available due to campus testing or other previously scheduled events, a new date will be provided to the parent for their mutual agreement.**

***Each observation is limited to 30 minutes with an administrator present. In order to maintain student safety at all times, all parental observations and visits must be calendared beforehand. Limitations to observations will apply.***

**Upon arriving, all visitors must sign in with the Main Office to receive a visitor's pass.**

Upon entering the building, Brillante's security guard will request visitors' names and corresponding identification, and keep a record of all visits.

If a visitor is coming to school to drop something off for a student or to leave a message, visitors are still required to come first to the Main Office. To ensure student and staff safety, unannounced visitors cannot be in the building without explicit permission and a visitor's pass. The school administration reserves the right to ask any visitor to leave the building at any time.

## **Student Records**

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The school administration is responsible for all student records. The school will discuss,

explain, and/or make available any records on file to an eligible student (18 years old or greater) or parents/guardians. If a parent/guardian would like to examine a child's record, the parent/guardian should submit a request in writing to the Principal. The requesting party can request a copy of some or all of the information contained on the student's file. Once requested, records are sent within 10 days to the eligible student or parent/guardian.

**Please see Appendix for more information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).**

## **Student Support Services**

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### **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

#### Special Education Referrals:

***If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services*** to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, ***the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request.*** At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

***Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education.***

**However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.**

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must *complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student.* However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.*

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person: **Jacqueline Elizondo**

Phone Number: (956) 474-3242

Section 504 Referrals

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: **Jacqueline Elizondo**

Phone Number: (956) 474-3242

### Additional Information:

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The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

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- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
  - [Partners Resource Network](#)
  - [Special Education Information Center](#)
  - [Texas Project First](#)
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## **School Uniforms**

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All students must come to school in uniform every day. If a student arrives at school out of uniform, parents/guardians are notified immediately and asked to bring in a uniform before the student is sent to class. If the school has extra uniforms on hand, staff may have the child change himself/herself into the borrowed clothing. In the event that Brillante lends clothing, families are responsible for washing and returning the items within three business days. Brillante adheres to a strict uniform policy for several reasons:

- 1) Uniforms unite students as a community.** The consistent Brillante polo serves as a powerful visual statement of community. When students are dressed in their uniforms, they are making a commitment to live up to the school's values.
- 2) Uniforms reduce distractions and clothing competition.** Often students spend more time discussing and evaluating what others are wearing or not wearing than they spend focusing on learning. Wearing uniforms eliminates this distraction.
- 3) Uniforms promote equality.** Whether families have a high income or low income, the students come to school looking the same way. By wearing a uniform, no one is diminished for what he/she wears, and students are not able to compare what they do or do not have.
- 4) Uniforms look professional.** Students look neat when they arrive at school with shirts tucked into their pants. Professional attire reinforces the idea that students come to school "dressed for work" and prepared to focus and learn. Studies have shown that professional, neat attire and high achievement are correlated.

**Students may not change out of the Brillante uniform at any point during the school day (with the exception of performances).**

## **General Uniform Requirements**

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- Uniform checks occur during Scholar Arrival, Morning Routines (teachers record infractions), and before transitions



- **Boys:** rubber-soled, ALL-BLACK shoes, black socks, navy blue pants, red uniform shirt, black belts (for non-elastic pants)
- Brillante sweaters
- **Girls:** rubber-soled, ALL-BLACK shoes, black socks or tights/leggings, navy blue pants, shorts, or skort. Brillante plaid jumpers, or skirts/skorts, red uniform shirt
  - Uniform shirts must always be tucked in; white undershirts may be worn underneath the uniform shirt
  - Brillante sweaters
  - Students may wear a spirit shirt and jeans on Fridays
- Teachers mark uniform infractions on the homework cover pages of scholars not in compliance with school dress code
- If uniform non-compliance becomes a pattern or chronic problem, the family will be called in for a formal meeting, and the incident will be recorded on the scholar's file
- Families are contacted immediately for egregious infractions and the family is required to bring a change of clothes to adjust the uniform as soon as possible
- **Exceptions:**
  - On Fridays, scholars may wear Brillante t-shirts or college t-shirts (tucked-in) in place of their polos
  - Outdoor trips have slightly modified guidelines, always indicated on the Field Trip Permission Form

## Complaint Policy

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When misunderstandings or disputes arise in the school community, it is important that they are resolved before serious problems develop. Faculty, staff, and other members of the school community should always try to resolve their difficulties among themselves first. Informal consultation with the Principal or other school leaders is encouraged if efforts among parties involved are not fruitful. If these efforts are not sufficient to resolve an issue, Brillante's policy for informal and formal complaints may be followed. The complaint can be sent to [info@brillanteacademy.org](mailto:info@brillanteacademy.org).

## Human Services

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Below are several emergency telephone numbers that may be useful to parents/guardians and students:

### Key Phone Numbers

Child Abuse Care Line	1-800-872-2288
Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-621 HOPE
Drug Dependence Hotline	1-800-LIFENET
Mental Health Hotline	1-800-LIFENET
Police/Fire Emergency	911
Rape Crisis Hotline	1-800-621-HOPE
Runaway Hotline	1-888-83R-OOTS
Suicide Prevention	1-800-273-TALK



## Appendix:

### **FERPA Policies and Procedures**

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school's principal, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. The school will make copies available to parents and may charge a copying fee for each page requested to be copied, not to exceed \$.50.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or brillianteschools.org student serving on an official committee such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to

officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400  
Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-4605  
FERPA PARENT SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read the FERPA law that was issued to me by Brillante Public  
Charter Schools.

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Student Name

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Parent Signature

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Date

## **Commitment to Excellence**

### **School Staff's Commitment:**

Without taking shortcuts, or making excuses, we commit to Brillante Public Charter Schools in the following ways:

- **Timeliness:** We will arrive at school each day by 7:25 a.m. but if scheduled for duty you must arrive at 7:15 a.m. and remain until we have fulfilled the responsibilities that are critical to reaching our mission. At minimum, the hours are generally Monday-Friday 7:25 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
- **High Quality Education:** We commit to providing a high-quality education and to going the extra mile for our students. We will work longer school hours, and always offer our students the best that we have.
- **Support and Respect:** We will appreciate, support, and respect every student.
- **Communication:** We will communicate regularly with parents about their child's progress and make ourselves available in person and by phone to parents and students. We will assume each person's best intentions and will avoid jumping to conclusions. We will return phone calls within one business day.
- **Homework:** We will assign relevant, meaningful homework Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to reinforce the skills and concepts learned in class. We will ensure that students go home each week with books to read.
- **Fairness:** We will enforce Brillante's values consistently and fairly. When students are disciplined or when students deserve recognition for their accomplishments, we will promptly inform parents.
- **Safety:** We will protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals. Our students are our primary responsibility and their safety is our utmost priority.
- **Values:** We will live by, model, and teach the values of Courage, Justice, Wisdom, Love and Self-control each and every day.

We understand these guidelines and commit to upholding them to the best of our abilities, in the best interest of Brillante scholars and the school community as a whole.

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Staff Signature

### **Scholar's Commitment:**

Without taking shortcuts, or making excuses, I commit to Brillante Public Charter Schools in the following ways:

- I understand that my education is important. I will always work, think, and behave in the best way that I know how and do whatever it takes for my fellow students and me to learn.
- I will set goals for myself and strive to reach these goals.
- I will show courage by taking on challenges.
- I will show justice by being mindful of others.
- I will show wisdom by being thoughtful in my words and actions.
- I will show self-control by actively monitoring my voice and my body.
- If I make a mistake, I will tell the truth and accept responsibility for my actions.
- I will come to school every day by 7:25 a.m. and stay at Brillante until 3:45 p.m.
- I will wear the Brillante uniform properly every day and follow the school dress code.
- I will always finish my homework every night, and if I am confused, I will ask for help.

I understand these guidelines and commit to upholding them to the best of my abilities, in the best interest of Brillante scholars and the school community as a whole.

## Parent's/Guardian's Commitment:

**Arrival (7:25 am):** Students must be dropped off at school between 7:15 am and 8:00am.

- Students arriving at or **after 8:00 am are considered late** and tardiness will be recorded.
- Since it is the parents' responsibility to transport the child to school, any student whose tardiness begins to significantly interfere with instruction will be required to have a formal meeting with the Administration, and the incident will be recorded in the student's file.

**Dismissal (M-F 3:45pm):**

- All students not attending an after school program must be picked up within a 15 minute window. Families arriving after this time will have a late pick-up recorded.
- Parents that need to pick up their child early, may do so prior to 2:30pm Monday – Friday. Any family who incurs more than 5 late pick ups in a trimester may be required to have a formal meeting with the Administration, and the incident will be recorded in the student's file.

**Attendance:** A day missed from school is marked as an absence.

- We understand that life happens (sickness, weddings, funerals, etc.), but we also hold firmly to the belief that missing school is a missed learning opportunity, and thus all absences will need to be presented with a viable excuse.
  - Please submit a Doctor's note when your child is out sick..
- Any student who is absent for 10 or more days of school during the school year, for any reason, will be considered "promotion in doubt" and may possibly be retained for the following school year.
- Any family that incurs an excessive number of absences will be required to have a formal meeting with the Administration. If a scholar has more than 20 absences, a report may be filed with child protective services.
- Students are expected to be at school each and every day. We DO NOT follow the Department of Education calendar, so please plan accordingly.

**Dress Code:** Students must be 100% compliant with the school dress code.

- *Boys Uniform:* rubber-soled, all black sneakers/shoes, black socks, uniform pants (black belt for non-elastic pants), Brillante polo (tucked in)..
- *Girls Uniform:* rubber-soled, all black sneakers/shoes, black socks or black stockings, uniform pants or jumper, Brillante polo (tucked in)..
- *Fridays:* Brillante Spirit shirt, t-shirts or college t-shirts (tucked in) in place of Brillante polos.
- Parents of students not in compliance with Brillante's dress code will be contacted immediately. Subsequent failure to meet dress code requirements will result in a meeting with the Administration and the incident may be recorded in the student's file.

**Meals:** Students may bring a lunch and/or breakfast from home, permitted that food items adhere to the following guidelines:

- No fried chips are allowed (baked chips, crackers, goldfish, etc. are permitted).
- No soda. (Only Milk, water and 100% juice are allowed).
- No candy or desserts are permitted.
- Brillante staff may confiscate any unacceptable foods that are brought to school.
- Birthday celebrations will be on Fridays from 2:50 pm-3:15 pm prior to dismissal, and should be coordinated directly with your scholar's teachers. Individually packaged cupcakes, brownies, cookies and/or other sweets are allowed (no pizzas, cakes, etc.) unless the principal approves in advance.
- Parents are responsible for communicating dietary restrictions and allergies to their scholar's teachers.

**Family Involvement:** Families are expected to maintain frequent communication with school personnel, to attend all mandatory meetings and events, and to respond to communication in a timely manner.

- Families will complete surveys within 24 hours.
- Families will communicate in a respectful manner, and will operate under the assumption that the school has their student and the school community's best interest in mind.
- Families are expected to attend 100% of Parent Teacher Conferences and Parent Workshops. If parents are unable to attend, they must send someone in their place.

- Families must check their student’s Homework Folder nightly for announcements and communication from the school.
- Families are encouraged to volunteer and/or participate in school events (e.g Field Trips)

**Homework:** Students must complete the assigned Homework AND read for at least 20 minutes every night.

**Code of Conduct:** Expectations for student behavior are outlined in the Brillante Schools Code of Conduct. Families are expected to partner with the school in ensuring students are meeting Brillante’s expectations and growing in their character every day.

We understand these guidelines and commit to upholding them to the best of our ability, in the best interest of our child and the school community as a whole.

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Family/Guardian Print

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Family/Guardian Signature