



STUDENT/PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

SHAPING LIVES... INSPIRING SUCCESS



GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS
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Mission Statement

SouthTech Academy's core mission is to graduate students prepared for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome everyone to another exciting year at SouthTech Academy. Here at STA, we aim to make all Bulldogs feel like a part of the SouthTech Family. We strive to bring out the best in our students while guiding them into becoming career and college ready.

To prevent discipline issues and to maximize instructional time, it is imperative that both students and parents read this handbook in its entirety. Students, take ownership of your future and take advantage of the amazing resources SouthTech Academy has to offer you. Families, I invite you to be active in our school as a volunteer, as a board member, or by serving on one of our many committees that make our school great.

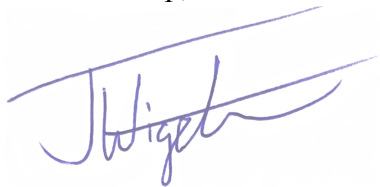
At SouthTech Academy, we have outstanding instructors who are committed to their craft and students. It is through this commitment that we can set measurable goals for improvement and growth with our students. It is our belief that all students should graduate high school prepared for work, higher education, and productive citizenship.

The expectation is for all SouthTech students to embrace and adhere to The Bulldog Way: Be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn---beginning with prompt arrival at school each and every day. Above all, as you commence your learning journey, it is essential to put forth your best efforts----working cohesively with peers, taking pride in your school, and using technology with integrity.

SouthTech Academy is a special place filled with teachers and students who care for each other and constantly strive to build positive relationships. It is through these positive relationships that we support our students academically, socially, and through career-related growth. Your child's educational experience is our priority! I'm truly honored to serve as Principal of SouthTech Academy. I take great pride in this opportunity and can't wait to see what successes the future holds. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 561-369-7040 or at joshua.wigelsworth@pbcharterschools.org.

I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you and your families during this highly anticipated school year and moving forward.

In Partnership,



Joshua K. Wigelsworth
Principal

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Bell Schedule

A/B Schedule ~ Grades 9-12

Lunch A		Lunch B	
Breakfast	6:00 - 6:55	Breakfast	6:30 - 6:55
1st Period	7:00 - 8:27	1st Period	7:00 - 8:27
2nd Period	8:32 - 10:11	2nd Period	8:32 - 10:11
A LUNCH	10:11- 10:41	3rd Period	10:16 - 11:43
3rd Period	10:46 - 12:13	B LUNCH	11:43 – 12:13
4th Period	12:18- 1:45	4th Period	12:18 - 1:45

Printed student schedules will designate Lunch A or Lunch B.

The Bulldog Way



Respectful

Responsible

Ready to Learn

**School Colors:
Red, White & Blue**

Contact Information

Main Office: (561) 369-7001

Career Academies: (561) 369-7052

Clinic: (561) 364-7919

Exceptional Student Education Office: (561) 369-7009

Food Service: (561) 369-7074

Student Services: (561) 369-7007

Career Academies

Auto Collision & Repair

Agricultural Technology

Ed Morse Automotive Technology

Cosmetology

Culinary Arts

Business Management Academy

Commercial Arts Academy

Artificial Intelligence & Cyber Defense Academy

Medical Sciences

DigiFilm

Veterinary Assisting

Upholding academic integrity is a core value at SouthTech.

- Maintaining a **passing grade** in your academy is **essential** for remaining in **good standing** at SouthTech.
- Students are allowed to make one academy change during their academic career at SouthTech Academy. Career Academy changes must be approved by **Administration**.
- **Individual career academies may have specific guidelines and expectations.**
- ***Instances of **academic dishonesty**, particularly regarding **state certification exams**, may impact your continued **enrollment** at SouthTech.***

Dates to Remember

Teacher Work Days No School for Students	
October 12, 2026	
November 3, 2026	
January 4, 2027	
February 24, 2027	
March 29, 2027	
School Holidays	
Labor Day	September 7, 2026
Fall Holiday	September 21, 2026
Fall Holiday	November 11, 2026
Thanksgiving Week	November 23-27, 2026
Winter Break	December 21, 2026—January 1, 2027
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18, 2027
Spring Holiday	March 10, 2027
Spring Break	March 22-26, 2027
Memorial Day	May 31, 2027
Early Release Days	
SouthTech Staff Development	Decemeber 11, 2026
Final Exams—Periods 1 & 2	December 16, 2026
Final Exams—Periods 3 & 4	December 17, 2026
Final Exams - Make-up Day	December 18, 2026
Midterms—Periods 1 & 2	March 17, 2027
Midterms—Periods 3 & 4	March 18, 2027
Midterms—Make-up Day	March 19, 2027
Final Exams—Periods 1 & 2	May 25, 2027
Final Exams—Periods 3 & 4	May 26, 2027
Final Exams—Make-up Day	May 27, 2027
Last Day of School	
May 27, 2027	

Parent Involvement

Parents are strongly encouraged to play an active role in students' education while at SouthTech Academy. For information on parent involvement opportunities, contact Administration at (561) 369-7935.

Emergency School Closing Procedures

The Executive Director of SouthTech Academy will close school due to dangerous weather conditions or emergencies. In case of school closure, school will operate under the Instructional Continuity Plan. School closings will be announced on local news outlets and at southtechschools.org when possible and will coincide with the Palm Beach County School District.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement

SouthTech Schools, a state-approved LEA, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), marital status, health status, genetic information, or political or religious beliefs, or any other characteristic prohibited by law in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to: HR Manager, 6161 W. Woolbright Rd., Boynton Beach, Florida 33437; (561) 369-7042.

Message to Parents/Guardians and Students

The office will deliver messages to students on an emergency basis only. Transportation and other non-emergency situations should be handled prior to or after school. In the event of an emergency, please call (561) 369-7001.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation routes are posted inside each classroom. The signal to evacuate will be either a horn alarm or an announcement over the P.A. system. Students are to evacuate quickly to their designated areas, remain calm and follow directions as they are given. Teachers will check rolls at their assigned areas. Students and teachers are to return to their classroom after the all-clear signal is given.

Setting off, damaging, defacing, or in any way disturbing fire alarms or fire-fighting equipment will result in a mandatory ten (10) day out of school suspension and possibly legal action.

Lost or Stolen Items

The school cannot assume responsibility for lost or stolen articles. Students are urged not to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. Personal items or books found will be located in the student services or main office areas. School police or student services personnel will not disrupt classroom instruction to search for personal or unauthorized items which include cell phones, tablets, earbuds/headphones, or other electronic devices.

Closed Campus Policy

- Students are not permitted to leave campus without permission from administration. Violation will result in recorded absences from class or classes and additional disciplinary action.
- All **classroom areas** are off limits to students during his/her lunch period.
- Students are not permitted in the parking lot during the school day without **administrative** permission.
- If a student's vehicle is to be utilized for demonstration or practical application in the automotive labs, only the owner/student driver, with a proper hall pass will be permitted to transfer the vehicle from the student parking lot to the automotive lab where it must remain until the end of the school day and after the buses have departed.
- Any type of personal deliveries from off campus will not be permitted without prior administrative approval.
- Students must have a written hall pass to be out of class for any reason. Only one student will be released per hall pass.
- All visitors must show a valid state-issued ID, sign in, and be cleared by the main office.

Financial Responsibilities

Students may view their financial obligations in SIS. Students are responsible for meeting financial obligations in a timely manner. Seniors with unpaid fees will not be permitted to participate in activities until their financial obligations are met. The diploma of any senior who has outstanding financial obligations at the time of senior checkout will be withheld until the debt is satisfied. Meeting financial obligations is a prerequisite for walking at graduation.

News Coverage of School Activities

At various times during the course of the school year, several activities require the use of the student's photograph, video image, art work, writing, annual yearbooks, graduation programs, websites and approved news gatherings, etc. Please note the language found within the annual Student Registration Form:

Parental Consent for Release of Student Photograph and Information

I hereby give permission for the school or District to use my child's photograph, video image, writing, voice recording, name, grade level, school name, participation in officially recognized activities and sport, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, diplomas and awards received, date and place of birth, and most recent previous school attended, in annual yearbooks, graduation programs, playbills, school productions, web sites, etc. and/or similar school or District sponsored publications or in school or District approved news media interviews, releases, articles, and photographs. I also provide permission for the release by the school or District to the media and governmental entities of my child's name, grade, school name and honors my child has received for public announcement of recognition of my student's accomplishments. I understand that without checking the permission box my child's name and photograph cannot and will not be included in any publications or presentation, including a school yearbook.

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged and invited to confer with teachers, counselors or administration any time during the school year. It is advisable to make an appointment to do so. This can be done by calling 561.369.7001 and select your school counselor.

Governing Board

The SouthTech Academy Governing Board establishes policies and governing operations of SouthTech Academy. The Governing Board provides opportunities for all involved to have input into SouthTech Academy's success. It also promotes and increases teamwork between school, students and parents. Please call 364-7929 for more information.

Textbooks

If your classroom teacher issues textbooks, the student is responsible for those books until they are returned. On the outside cover of each book, there is a barcode, which is specifically assigned to each student so that the book can be returned in the event it is lost. Each book is given a rating according to the condition it is in when assigned to the student. If the book is returned damaged in any way, the student will pay a fine. At the time of issuance, please report any existing damage to the teacher's attention. Questions regarding textbooks should be directed to the teacher.

Visitors and Student Pick-up

Visitors who are not parents/guardians are not allowed to visit students during school hours unless it has been pre-approved by administration. No student will be released to any person not on the Student Demographic Information in SIS. Those persons authorized to pick up a student must show proper photo identification. Parents/guardians may alter the student contact/pick-up list through the SIS Parent Gateway. There will be no early release after 1:15pm.

Student Services

The Student Services department at SouthTech Academy will assist students and parents/guardians in understanding the expectations and guidelines in SouthTech Academy's conduct and behavior policies. The Student Services department will also implement and assign disciplinary consequences.

Student Code of Conduct

The educational process of SouthTech Academy is to provide a safe environment that fosters student behavior that is socially acceptable and conducive to the learning and teaching processes. It is the intent of this policy to align SouthTech Academy's Universal Guidelines, consequences, and support for students attending SouthTech Academy.

SouthTech Academy exercises these responsibilities and expectations:

- During the time a student is in route to and from school.
- During the time a student is attending school.
- During the time a student is physically on campus and the property - which is owned or operated under the jurisdiction of SouthTech Academy or the Palm Beach County School District.
- During the time a student is attending any function sponsored by SouthTech Academy or the Palm Beach County School District.
- While a student is using any and all forms of technology.

All students at SouthTech Academy are expected to reflect its high standards by conducting themselves in a manner that is conducive to the orderly operation of the school. Students should be in class on time and change from class to class in an orderly fashion. Students are expected to adhere to SouthTech Academy's Universal Guidelines, and refrain from any behavior that may cause a disruption. Students are expected to show respect and consideration for their peers and all members of the SouthTech Academy staff; including bus drivers and visitors to campus. Both on the school campus and off the school campus, students are expected to exhibit desirable behaviors and keep from manifesting behavior unbecoming of a SouthTech Academy community member.

Discipline Plan

In addition to supporting student by providing related interventions, failure to comply with the **SouthTech Academy Student Code of Conduct** will result in consequences that may include a combination of the following which are not sequential steps:

- **Conference with student:** Discuss behavior interventions and/or solutions with students. This can include direct instruction in expected or desirable behaviors.
- **Parent/guardian contact:** Teachers and/or administrators will contact parents/guardians with concerns and solutions to a student's conduct and behavior.
- **Request for parent/guardian conference:** Teachers/administration or parents/guardians may request a conference to discuss student's conduct and/or behavior. In some cases, as determined by administration, a student may not be able to return to that class until a conference has taken place. That student will be sent to ISS (in school suspension) until such time that a conference is held.
- **Parent/guardian intervention:** As a result of the severity of an infraction, an administrative request may be made to the parent/guardian that a student should not return to school without the parent/guardian accompanying him/her for an administrative conference. It is important that the parent/guardian make the conference as soon as possible. The days that a student is out shall not exceed ten days and will be considered unexcused absences.
- **In School Suspension (ISS):** ISS is the temporary removal of a student from regular classes for a determined number of class period/periods or day/days in which the student will be held in one classroom for the assigned time. In this classroom, students will sign in and turn in their mobile electronic devices. There will be total silence while in ISS. Students will be given opportunities for students to complete reflection activities and academic assignments that must be completed before the student will be released from ISS. Failure to complete an assignment or the disruption of ISS, will result in additional time added to ISS or out of school suspension (OSS).

- **Lunch Detention:** Disciplinary consequence in which an entire lunch period a student is assigned to the ISS room where they will silently eat lunch. Failure to report to Lunch detention will result in further disciplinary action.
- **Out of School Suspension (OSS):** Extreme disciplinary consequences may require the temporary removal of a student from SouthTech Academy. This removal is not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days per incident. All out of school suspensions will be coded appropriately in SIS. The administrative designee shall include any analysis of suspension in the report of school progress.
- **Probationary Contract:** A student may be placed on a probationary contract after repeated minor level offenses or any major level offenses. A student will also be placed on a probationary contract for missing 10 days of school.
- **Withdrawal from SouthTech Academy:** Cumulative failure to adhere to SouthTech Academy policies may result in the student's withdrawal.
- **Expulsion:** As a result of an infraction that severely violates SouthTech Academy and the Palm Beach County School District policies, a recommendation may be made to the SouthTech Academy Board, who then may recommend to the Palm Beach County School Board not to allow a student to attend any public school in Palm Beach County.
- Rules and regulations will apply to all school related activities on or off campus, including school transportation. A good faith effort shall be made by instructors and/or administrators to employ parental involvement whenever necessary to assist in a student's negative behaviors or academic performances.

Discipline Matrix of the Palm Beach County School District

According to SouthTech Academy's Student Code of Conduct Policy, SouthTech Academy will use and follow the codes set forth in the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix to determine reasons and consequences for discipline infractions. In addition, SouthTech Academy has developed a matrix for school-wide behavior expectations. Which will also be considered when deciding discipline and may override the Palm Beach County Code of Conduct Policy, if it is deemed necessary for the continued safety of students and staff.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Students will be held financially accountable for damage to Chromebooks or any other SouthTech Academy property.

There will be no unauthorized use of **any electronic devices** during instructional time. If the electronic device becomes **visible** or **disruptive**, it will be confiscated. The school shall not be held liable for any personal devices on campus.

Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher for an educational purpose. Additionally, the use of TikTok, and any successor platforms, is prohibited on school grounds. Any unauthorized or inappropriate use of an electronic device will result in confiscation.

Failure to comply with the *Technology Acceptable Use Policy* will result in the following action:

1st Offense – Items will be confiscated and the student may retrieve the item at the end of the day.

2nd Offense –Return of the confiscated item will require the parent/guardian to come to the Student Services Department and pick up the item.

3rd Offense - Confiscated items will not be given back to the student or parents until the end of the semester as defined by the Palm Beach County School District Matrix.

Refusal to turn over a device to a SouthTech Academy faculty or staff member when requested will result in a referral for insubordination.

School technology systems will include measures to prevent hacking or unauthorized access by students to data or information that they should not have access to, and to prohibit other unlawful online activities by students.

Continuous Offenses: Items will be confiscated and the student will receive a referral for insubordination. Disciplinary action will be taken as outlined in the Palm Beach County School District discipline matrix.

Drug, Alcohol, or Tobacco/E-Cigarette Violation

1st Offense – Dependant upon individual circumstances, students will complete up to 10 days out-of-school suspension and may be withdrawn. Prior to returning to school, students will be placed on a probationary contract, and required to complete an online drug, alcohol and tobacco course.

Repeated Offenses – Students will be withdrawn from SouthTech Academy.

Dress Code

SouthTech Academy will adhere to the following dress code policies—enforcing the following dress code policies as we prepare our students for future success.

• When on campus, students will wear the appropriate SouthTech Academy uniform. This uniform must be properly worn and visible at all times during the school day.

- Students are expected to wear only STA outerwear. No other hoodies, jackets, blankets or sweaters may be worn over uniforms. At all times, hoods should always be worn off the head. Academy shirts should be visible.
- **Academies have veto power on outer garment attire and accessories.**
- Depending on a student's academy, students should wear their academy scrub bottoms, jeans, cargo pants, or slacks/khakis only.
- Students are expected to wear their pants at their natural waistline.
- Pants should be full length.
- Sweatpants, athleticwear, leisurewear, and leggings are not permitted.
- All clothing must be free of rips, holes, or unfinished edges.
- Skirts must reach at least two inches above the knees.
- Shirts are expected to cover midriffs.
- Uniforms should be worn in their original state, and may not be worn tied up, rolled up, or altered.
- Shorts may be worn along with approved Physical Education Department shirts only while participating in Physical Education classes.
- Heads must be free of head coverings.
- Uniform shoes must be close-toed and cover the entire heel.
- No Crocs, slides, slippers or bedroom-type footwear.
- With pre-approved administrative permission, students participating in boundary school sports activities or on campus competitive clubs may wear a Game Day Jersey on Game Day **only**.
- Students will wear their IDs.
- IDs must be **visible** for STA staff members to see at all times.

- **Students may not walk around with or wear blankets.**
- No clothing should promote activities illegal for students nor should it display vulgar or inappropriate language or images.
- Decisions regarding adherence to the dress code policy are at the sole discretion of Administrators and Academy instructors.

Students are expected to arrive and depart STA already dressed for success. Failure to comply with these dress code policies will result in one of the following consequences:

- Purchase a new uniform.
- Borrow a specific loaner if available.
- Wait in ISS until a uniform is provided from home.
- Spend the day in ISS
- Repeated violations will result in further disciplinary actions.

False Fire Alarm

Any student who pulls the fire alarm without legitimate cause will be subject to immediate disciplinary and legal action.

Student ID Badges

Student ID badges must be visible for STA staff members to see at all times. Failure to wear the required student ID badge could result in disciplinary action.

Search and Seizure

Any school administrator or authorized officer may conduct a search of a student on the school premises if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student possesses an item of contraband. Any school administrator or authorized employee may conduct a search of students' lockers and backpacks. Any confiscated property belonging to a student will be returned to the student or his/her parents by the end of the school year, except as required by law or by consideration of safety for students and staff. Students/parents are to arrange for pick-up of the items at the designated time.

Fighting

SouthTech Academy has a zero tolerance policy for fighting. Any student that engages in fighting or a physical altercation, will have the incident documented and the student will be administratively withdrawn from SouthTech Academy. SouthTech Academy promotes effective forms of communication that result in positive outcomes.

Assault and Battery

Whenever any student, parent, or other person commits an assault or battery upon any elected official or employee of a school district, and the elected official or employee is on school property or is away from school property on official business, any offense will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And will be included in the zero tolerance fighting policy.

Sexual Harassment Policy

SouthTech Academy and the School District of Palm Beach County, prohibits sexual harassment activity by any student. This policy shall apply to all official activities of the school and the district. It is recognized that discrimination or harassment complaints by students may arise from actual or perceived situations and circumstances. Students are obligated to carefully examine this policy prior to filing a sexual harassment complaint. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred will be investigated.

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment shall be defined as unwanted sexual advances and other inappropriate oral, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature that when conducted substantially interferes with a student's academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Any unwanted sexually oriented physical act or advance. This includes inappropriately grabbing or touching, bumping or rubbing against someone, kissing, holding, fondling or any similar contact.
- Verbal harassment or abuse. This includes comments regarding one's gender, body or appearance, making sexual jokes, innuendoes or stories.
- Unwelcome demands or requests for sexual activities.
- Creating a school environment that is intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive because of engaging in sexually oriented nonverbal conduct. This includes making obscene gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects,

posters or other material. Written sexual remarks, suggestions and drawings are also included.

Any student who violates this policy will be disciplined according to the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix.

Bullying and Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the organization that all of its students, employees, and volunteers learn and work in an environment that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The organization will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any type. In compliance with the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for all Students Acts, Section 1006.147, and Florida Statutes, conduct that constitutes bullying and harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

For the purpose of this policy bullying and harassment will be defined as intentionally and repetitively inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees and may involve but is not limited to: Teasing, social exclusion, threat, intimidation, stalking (including cyberstalking), physical violence, theft, sexual, religious or racial/ethnic harassment, public humiliation, or destruction of property. Cyberbullying means bullying through the use or distribution of technology or any electronic communication.

In compliance with the Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for all Students Act, SouthTech Academy has read and reviewed anti-bullying initiatives with all staff, put posters in appropriate areas throughout the school, established a designee to review, maintain and monitor any bullying/harassment incident reports and the bullying/harassment anonymous drop box.

Any student who violates this policy will be disciplined according to the Palm Beach County School District's discipline matrix.

Parent/Student Grievance Procedure

SouthTech Academy prides itself on the quality of the teaching and care provided to its students. All members of the STA community should contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment. Staff, student, or parent/guardians can raise concerns about any issues that affect a student's well-being and/or academic performance and work together to resolve them. The Board advises that the

proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline, or learning materials is as follows:

1. Teachers
2. Assistant Principal and/or Principal
3. Executive Director
4. Parent Liaison
5. Governing Board

Any complaint about school personnel will be investigated, and may require action by the Board of Directors.

All concerns and complaints raised will be treated seriously, and confidentiality will be established and maintained wherever possible in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

Transportation Policy

Riding the bus is a privilege. A student may be suspended from riding the bus if his/her conduct presents a safety concern. SouthTech Academy may suspend any student from riding the bus for a period not to exceed 10 (ten) days. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of such a decision within 24 hours of said suspension. Repeat offenders may be subject to expulsion.

BUS RULES

Occasionally, a bus is delayed in picking up students. Students should wait a reasonable time and then contact the school or our Transportation Coordinator to see if the bus is on route. Students are required to ride their assigned bus. The school bus driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers.

The driver is responsible for the safety of students and for their conduct on the bus. Riders are subject to the authority of the bus driver and may be suspended from riding the bus for violation of bus rules. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied if a pupil's behavior creates a problem on the school bus or at the bus stop. Safety is the number one consideration. In addition to the disciplinary rules stated in this handbook, the following rules must be observed:

- Students are expected to respect their neighbors and the property of their neighbors while waiting for the bus or while in route to or from the bus stop. Students are expected to behave in

a way that promotes safety and good manners. Students must stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus.

- Students preparing to board the bus should cross the roadway immediately in front of the bus, BUT NOT UNTIL THE BUS DRIVER HAS GIVEN THE SIGNAL TO CROSS AND IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.
- Students riding buses must arrive at the bus stop on time; the bus cannot wait for those who are tardy.
- Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
- All riders must keep their arms and heads inside the bus at all times. Nothing may be thrown from the bus.
- Riders should not engage in unnecessary conversation with the driver because this creates a dangerous situation. Students are to observe classroom conduct, except for ordinary conversation.
- Students must treat the bus property respectfully and carefully. Vandalism will not be tolerated.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or vaping on the bus is absolutely forbidden. Smoking or vaping and possession of tobacco products/e-cigarettes and vaping products is prohibited at the bus stop or while waiting for the bus.
- The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats if necessary in order to promote order and safety on the bus.
- Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned school bus stop. No one is entitled to ride any bus other than the one to which they are assigned.
- Parents/adults other than official personnel are not to board or approach the bus for any reason without prior approval from administration.

If a student's bus privileges are suspended, the student's parents are responsible to ensure that the student is attending school.

Parking and Driving on Campus

Parking on school property is a privilege that carries responsibilities.

- Students must produce a valid Florida's Operators Driver's License, the vehicle registration, proof of auto insurance, and a SouthTech Academy Parking Application, signed by the parent/guardian and student in order to apply for a parking tag.

- Upon approval, the parking tag will cost \$30.00. If a parking tag is lost or misplaced, the student may purchase a duplicate tag for \$5.00.
- Decals are to be suspended from the mirror and must be displayed at all times while the vehicle is on campus.
- Decals may not be transferred from person to person or vehicle to vehicle.
- Students must drive with care and obey all State of Florida traffic laws.
- Any instances of reckless driving on or off campus may result in suspension of parking privileges.
- The on-campus speed limit is 12 MPH and will be enforced.
- Students may not return to their car during school day (including lunch).
- No loitering is allowed in the parking lot before, during (including lunch), or after school. Students must depart the student parking lot immediately upon arriving or departing school.
- All students are to park in their assigned parking space unless notified by School Police or administration.
- Students that are habitually late may have their parking privileges suspended or revoked.
- Any student taking another student off campus without proper authorization will result in:
 - o **1st Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for no less than 10 days
 - o **2nd Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for no less than 30 days
 - o **3rd Offense** – Loss of parking privileges for remainder of school year
- No Student, once on the main campus, may return to the parking lot for ANY reason.

Attendance Policy

Pursuant to Florida statutes 1003.01 all students shall be required to attend school. Florida Statute 1003.24 states that it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardians(s) to insure their children attend school on a regular basis.

“Regular basis”, according to statute and policy means attending school every day including every period.

SouthTech Academy operates on a 4x4 block. Any student missing more than 10 days per full credit course, whether **excused or unexcused**, will put themselves in peril of not receiving full credit and may jeopardize their continued enrollment at SouthTech Academy.

Pursuant to Florida State Statute 1003.26 the Executive Director and Board of SouthTech Schools has the authority to take steps to bring **criminal prosecution** against the parent(s)/guardians(s) of a student that has violated the State of Florida Department of Education, Palm Beach County District School System and SouthTech Academy attendance policies which are the same.

To implement the provisions of state laws and rules requiring School Districts to verify the enrollment and attendance of students for the purpose of granting or denying driving privileges, the names of students who are in violation of the enrollment and attendance requirements for being licensed to drive in the State of Florida will be submitted by the principal or designee to the Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) with recommendations to suspend such student’s driving privileges.

Parents/guardians of students, who need to miss school due to religious holidays, should notify **Student Services** in writing prior to the date(s) requested for approval of the student to be excused from school on said day(s).

Students with prior approval via a (Temporary Learning Elsewhere) Field Trip Permission Form STCAI 1571 are allowed 2-1/2 days per year in grades 11 and 12 (for a total of 5 days) to visit colleges. Local colleges (Palm Beach State College, FAU, and Palm Beach Atlantic College) are not included. Proof of visitation must be returned to the **Student Services Department** for the missed days to be excused within 24 hours of the student’s return to school.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The parent(s)/guardians(s) and students understand that Florida State Law requires that all students attend school each day without exception unless there is a documented excuse for being absent.

After 5 days absent per semester, a warning will be issued. After 10 days absent, excused or unexcused, a student will be placed on a probationary contract and referred to the School Based Team.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to justify an absence within **24 hours** of the student's return to school. The justification will be evaluated based on the adopted School Board definition of "excused" absences which are:

1. Student illness
2. Medical appointment
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays or services recognized by all members of the faith
5. Subpoena by law enforcement agency or mandatory court appearance
6. Other individual student absences beyond the control of the parent or student, as determined and approved by the Principal or Principal's designee.

It is SouthTech Academy and The Palm Beach County School District's policy that the school responds in a timely manner to excused or unexcused absences. To this effect the Palm Beach County School District, through automatic dial, attempts to contact the parent/guardian within 24 hours of a student's absence.

Tardies

General Expectations

- Students are expected to be on time for all of their classes.
- Students are tardy if they are not in classrooms when the tardy bell rings.
- Late-arriving students will be marked tardy in the SIS.
- Students who arrive late will report to the nearest tardy station for a pass.
- **The Student Services Team will conduct Tardy Sweeps every day for each period after the final bell.**
 - **Students found loitering in the hallways will be subject to disciplinary consequences.**
- Students who arrive later than 45 minutes will be marked as absent for that period.

Managed by Student Services

- Students who accumulate unexcused tardies will receive administrative consequences as follows:

- o Three (3) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) lunch detention and parent contact.
- o Six (6) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) period of In-School Suspension (ISS) from their Academy class.
- o Nine (9) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in one (1) full day of In-School Suspension (ISS).
- o Twelve (12) unexcused tardies, in one or more classes, will result in a probationary contract and a referral to the School-Based Team for specific, targeted interventions.

Multiple Documented Offenses

- Student Services will develop a formalized intervention plan, which includes a probationary contract, for all students who become truant.
- Students who violate the terms of their probationary contracts jeopardize their continued enrollment at SouthTech Academy.

Procedures for Leaving Campus

- Only parents/guardians/formal designees that are listed **in the SIS** may sign out and pick up a student.
- Early dismissal will not be permitted between 1:15 PM and 1:45PM.
- Parents/guardians/formal designees **must** provide some form of picture identification i.e., driver's license to main office personnel to sign out a student regardless of the student's age.
- Parents/guardians/formal designees **must** complete the sign out log located in the main office.
- The main office will process **all** releases of students.
- Students will only be released to authorized adults appearing in person, with the exception of a documented medical appointment that is confirmed by a school official with the parent or guardian.
- School Personnel will verify identity and custody issues before releasing a student to parents, guardians, or formal designees.

Wellness Promotion

SouthTech Academy follows the School District's wellness promotion policy 1.11 which is intended to fulfill the requirement under Public Law 108-265 state statute 204 (204) (42 U.S.C. statute 1751 Note) that promotes student health and reduction of childhood obesity, as well as to promote wellness for employees.

Student Activities – All SouthTech Policies Still Apply and DO extend to other campuses.

SouthTech Academy does not offer any interscholastic sports activities. SouthTech's charter agreement with Palm Beach County School District specifies that any SouthTech student in good standing may participate in interscholastic sports or other FHSAA activities at their boundary school. In addition, SouthTech Academy does offer after school intramural sports as well as various clubs and other activities in which students may participate.

To participate in any club, athletics or school-related activity a student must:

- Have a minimum of a 2.0 GPA
- Not be on a Probationary Contract
- Seniors must have met all graduation requirements—including community service and state assessments, along with having earned at least one Industry Certification. Any exceptions to the Industry Certification requirement must be approved by Administration.

Pledge of Allegiance

According to s.1003.44F.S., Patriotic Programs, upon written request by the parent/guardian, a student may be excused from reciting the pledge, including standing and placing the right hand over the heart. Students who have not been excused via written request by the parent/guardian are expected to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Posting of Advertisements, Signs or Messages

Administrative approval is required prior to any advertisements, signs or messages being posted at SouthTech Academy. To obtain administrative approval, follow these steps:

- Email the proposed sign, poster, or photo thereof to Administration.
- Await approval from a member of the Administrative Team.
- Once approval has been secured, proceed to post signage.

In the event that any signage is posted without approval from Administration, it will be removed.

Clinic

The clinic is located in the front office and is staffed by a trained professional. Once a student has been referred to the clinic, the clinic will administer first aid,

and families will be contacted as needed. Only parents/guardians/formal designees who are **pre-approved** and listed in the **SIS** may sign out and pick-up an ill student via the Main Office. If pre-approved designee is not reached, then the student will remain in the clinic or return to class.

Medication Needs

A student under the care of a physician and needing to take medication must clear its use by obtaining written permission from the parent and physician, or other authorized person on the emergency card. Students must secure the **Authorization of Medication** form from the school nurse and have it completed by the physician and parent. Completed forms must be returned to the school nurse. The medication itself should be presented to the nurse by the student's parent or guardian in the original container issued from the pharmacy. The school nurse or designee will monitor the administration of the medicine. Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must be received in the original, unopened container and labeled with the student's name and accompanied by an Authorization for Medication Administration. OTC medications do not require the signature of a healthcare provider. Parents must notify school administration if a student has a special medical condition or need. If a parent requests that prescription medication be given to their child, a doctor's written authorization and the original prescription containers should provide dosage and storage instructions. Prescriptions will be refilled as needed by the parent. Students may be given permission to carry the medication with them only if a completed Authorization to Carry and Self Administer form is submitted to the School with both the parent/guardian and physician signature.

Accidents and Injuries

As conditions warrant, students injured on school premises will be evaluated by the clinic staff. Depending on the severity of the injury they will be taken to the school clinic, or if needed (unless it is an emergency), with the permission of the parent/guardian, transported to an area hospital. In any and all cases, the parent/guardian will be notified. The supervising teacher or staff member will submit an accident report to the Office Manager within 24 hours.

Voluntary Student Accident Insurance

A voluntary student accident insurance program is available. Application forms regarding coverage and benefits can be obtained from the main office. Student insurance coverage is strongly recommended for all students. Health Science students must purchase specialized insurance.

Mental Health and Student Safety Evaluation

In case of emergency, SouthTech will provide onsite mental health evaluation and release to a law enforcement officer as necessary:

- SouthTech Academy will notify a student's parent or guardian if the student is in need of evaluation.
- Administration may delay notification by up to 24 hours if there is suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect and the delay has been deemed to be in the student's best interest.
 - Delay in notification may occur only after a report of suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect is submitted to the Department of Children and Families' central abuse hotline.

Guidelines and Procedures for Grading

Grading Period and Report Card Distribution

Report cards are generated every 4-1/2 weeks. The report card will reflect the academic status and attendance for each student. A student that is struggling academically may be referred to the School Based Team for academic interventions. Any student in jeopardy of failing may receive daily or weekly progress reports issued to the parents.

Student Information System

Parents will be able to view student grades through the Student Information System (SIS). Parents receive emailed instructions on accessing SIS upon their students' initial entry into a School District of Palm Beach County school. STA will send instructions to newly enrolled families in August. Questions can be directed to the main office or to the school counseling office.

General Rules for Grading

Grading shall be based on the progress and mastery of the standards. A student's attendance, daily preparation and promptness in completing assignments must be consistent and congruent with the grades given. Students are required to make-up

all work missed for all absences. A student must complete all work within one day for each day he/she is absent from class. Students who do not complete and submit make-up work will earn no credit for all missed work which may result in failure of the course and no credit earned for that course.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Any work submitted by a student must represent his/her own effort. In the case of material borrowed from another source, the work submitted must include clear and appropriate attribution. Any student who is caught cheating or deliberately plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action. Grade-related consequences will be determined by Classroom Instructors as stated in syllabi.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Acceptable Use Policy

- The purpose of this policy is to ensure that AI technologies are used safely, ethically, and responsibly to support teaching, learning, and student development.
- AI technologies may only be used for educational purposes and activities approved by teachers or school administrators.
- Students must adhere to all school rules and guidelines while using AI technologies, both on school premises and during school-sponsored events or activities.
- Students are expected to use AI technologies responsibly and respectfully, treating others with kindness and consideration at all times.
- Students must ensure that any content created or shared using AI technologies is appropriate for an educational setting and complies with school policies on acceptable content. Content must not be plagiarized and must follow copyright laws.
- Content that is offensive, inappropriate, or violates copyright laws is strictly prohibited.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation of others using AI technologies is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Students should report any instances of cyberbullying or harassment to a teacher or school administrator immediately.
- Teachers and school staff may monitor the use of AI technologies to ensure compliance with this policy and promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of access to AI

technologies, parental notification, and suspension or expulsion from school.

Credits

Florida Statutes mandate a minimum of 120 hours of attendance for one credit to be awarded. On the block schedule utilized by SouthTech Academy, perfect attendance provides 123.0 hours of instruction available to students. Three absences place the student below the required hours of attendance. An alternative to meeting hours-of-attendance requirements is to demonstrate mastery of the course content. Mastery is defined as: (1) passing at least one of the blocked quarters and, (2) passing the semester final examination or (3) passing both of the blocked quarters. Students may earn one credit per semester for each course successfully completed.

Senior Exemptions

For any non-EOC course, a graduating senior who has received A's and B's in BQ 3 & BQ 4 or BQ7 & BQ8 for that course may choose to be exempt from the final examination for that course. If exemption is chosen, the quarter grade for the non-EOC course will be determined by averaging the last two marking periods. If exemption is not chosen, the quarter grade for the course will be calculated using the normal grade calculation method for all high school credit courses. Seniors in an EOC course may not be exempted from the EOC assessment.

Grading Scale

- A = Outstanding progress (90%-100%)
- B = Above average progress (80%-89%)
- C = Average progress (70%-79%)
- D = Lowest acceptable progress (60%-69%)
- F = Failure (below 60%)
- W = Withdrawn
- I = Incomplete
- E = Senior exempt from final exam

Student Behavior Evaluation

- 4 = Student's behavior is very constructive to learning.
- 3 = Student's behavior is generally supportive of learning.
- 2 = Student's behavior is detrimental to his/her own learning.
- 1 = Student's behavior is detrimental to his/her own learning and to the learning of others.

Exceptional Student Education and 504 Plans

SouthTech Academy follows Federal and State regulations and timelines regarding students with disabilities. Contact the school's ESE Coordinator for further information.

School Counseling

The school counseling department provides academic, personal/social, and career focused counseling services. School counselors can also assist students and families with community resources, including referrals for mental health counseling.

Graduation Requirements

The typical student will successfully complete eight credits or units per year. A minimum of twenty-four credits earned in grades 9-12 are required for graduation. In order to graduate from SouthTech Academy with a regular diploma, the student must meet the following requirements:

- Pass the following statewide assessments
 - Grade 10 ELA or concordant scores
 - Algebra 1 EOC or comparative score
 - Students enrolled in Biology, US History, Algebra 1, and Geometry must take an EOC which will count as 30% of the final grade
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Complete 20 hours of community service.
 - Items excluded from community service are: donations, service to benefit for-profit businesses, and court mandated community service.
 - A student who does not have access to community service opportunities will be provided opportunities on campus.

Required Subjects for a Standard Diploma

- English/Language Arts – 4 credits
- Mathematics – 4 credits (Must include Algebra 1 and Geometry. One credit from middle school may be utilized)
- Science – 3 credits (Must include biology and physical science)
- Social Studies – 3 credits (World History, U.S. History, American Government and Economics with Financial Literacy)

- Physical Education - 1 credit (**must** include ½ credit of personal fitness and ½ credit of physical education activity elective.
- Fine and/or Performing Arts – 1 credit
- Electives – 8 credits (7.5 credits for students entering in 2023-2024 and thereafter)
- Beginning with students entering in 2023-2024 each student must earn .5 credit in personal financial literacy

Refer to the Student Progression Plan for additional graduation options.

Students are expected to complete a 4-year Career Academy Program at SouthTech Academy. If a student wishes to graduate early for any reason, students should meet with their school counselor as early as possible, but at the latest prior to December of their senior year.

Accelerated Options at SouthTech Academy

Dual Enrollment

Students may dual enroll at Palm Beach State College. Students must have a 3.0 unweighted GPA and college ready test scores in order to dual enroll. Freshmen must have a 3.5 unweighted GPA.

Advanced Placement

Students have the opportunity to take Advance Placement (AP) classes in several content areas. At the end of each AP course, students take an exam to attempt to earn college credit. All students enrolled in AP courses must sit for the exam.

CTE & Industry Certification

Every student at SouthTech is enrolled in a career academy, through which they will have the opportunity to take at least one industry certification exam.

FLVS

Students who are interested in taking Florida Virtual School (FLVS) classes should speak to their school counselor for more information.

Diplomas

Standard Diploma

- Awarded to students who meet all criteria established by SouthTech Academy, The Palm Beach County School District and The Florida State Department of Education.

Diploma Designations

In addition to meeting the 24-credit standard high school diploma requirements, a student may earn:

- *Scholar* Designation:
 - o Earn 1 credit in Algebra II
 - o Pass the Geometry EOC
 - o Earn 1 credit in statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course;
 - o Pass the Biology I EOC
 - o Earn 1 credit in chemistry or physics
 - o Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to chemistry or physics
 - o Pass the U.S. History EOC
 - o Earn 2 credits in the same world language
 - o Earn at least 1 credit in AP, IB, AICE or a dual enrollment course
- *Merit* Designation:
 - Meet the standard high school diploma requirements
 - Attain one or more industry certifications from the list established (per section 1003.492, Florida Statutes).

Scholarships

SouthTech Academy's School Counseling Department provides information regarding a variety of scholarship opportunities. It is in the student's best interest to look at this information early in his/her high school career so that plans can be made accordingly. To that end, a list of scholarship opportunities from local and national organizations is located in the School Counseling Google Classroom. We encourage students to utilize our resources to find ways of furthering their secondary educational pursuits, and to secure employment based on the skills learned at SouthTech Academy. See your School Counselor or Vocational Instructor for more information.

Class or Schedule Change

A student wishing to withdraw from a class or have a schedule change must request a schedule change by completing a form in the School Counseling Google Classroom. Students must continue to attend all classes until they are officially withdrawn or until their schedule has been officially changed. Schedule changes MUST be justified and will be approved on a limited basis. Unless special circumstances exist, schedule changes after the second week of a class will not be approved.

Withdrawals and Transfers from School

The following must be completed in order for a student to withdraw or transfer from SouthTech Academy:

- Parent/guardian must accompany the student to the School Counseling Office and authorize the student's withdrawal.
- Turn in all books and clear financial obligations.
- Complete the required exit interview/survey.
- Complete the withdrawal Form PBSO 0756 and obtain all the required signatures.
- Return the completed withdrawal form to the School Counseling Department.

Student Records

Parents and/or students eighteen years of age or older shall have the right to inspect, review and obtain copies of any and all official records, files and data directly related to the student. These records may be obtained through the data processor's office. Copies of education records shall be provided upon request according to Florida Statutes.

Transcripts

An official compilation of credits for release to other schools or organizations is called a transcript. Arrangements for transcripts can be made through the schools website at <https://www.southtechschools.org/transcript-request/>. Electronic transcripts are free of charge. Paper transcripts are \$3.00. See the website for more information.

Certificates

- **Vocational Certificate of Completion** – Awarded to students who complete a vocational job preparatory program as outlined in the Department of Adult, Vocational and Community Education guidelines.

SOUTHTECH ACADEMY
PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Student's Rules and Regulations.

Your signature means you have received this booklet and understand the rules, protocols and expectations of SouthTech Academy Students.

Students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, custodians, and office staff all have important roles to play at SouthTech Academy. With so many people working together, problems may occur from time to time. Rules have been made to address these problems and rules need to be followed with fidelity. The Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook lists the rules for students at SouthTech Academy. The rules apply to all activities occurring on school grounds, on other sites being used for school activities, and for any vehicle authorized for the transporting of students. Please read them.

Since parents/guardians can be held responsible for the actions of their children, it is important that they are aware of the rules and consequences if the rules are broken. Parents/guardians need to become actively involved in the education of their children and have the responsibility to provide the school with the current emergency contact person and/or telephone numbers. They also have the responsibility to notify the school of anything (such as medical information) that may affect their child's ability to learn, to attend school regularly, or to take part in school activities. Parents/guardians should take special notice of the student services section that includes the attendance, dress code, tardies, utilization of cell phones and other electronic devices and gang relationship policies.

SouthTech Academy must have proof that every student and every parent/guardian has received, read and understands the SouthTech Academy Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook. Student's and parents'/guardians' signatures indicate an understanding of an agreement to adhere to all SouthTech Academy policies and procedures while utilizing school provided transportation, attending all school learning activities or school sponsored extracurricular activities.

Your signature indicates that you have received this booklet and acknowledge the rules.

PRINT NAME	STUDENT SIGNATURE	DATE
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PRINT NAME	PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	DATE
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PARENT/GUARDIAN EMERGENCY NUMBER	STUDENT GRADE
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