



Houston Academy

2024-25 LOWER SCHOOL PROFILE

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LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School offers a program for three year old preschool through grade 4. All faculty members have Bachelors or Masters Degrees, and preschool classes have full-time teacher assistants. Talented, dedicated, and experienced teachers in a positive and nurturing environment guide Lower School students in developing confidence, self-discipline, academic achievement, and responsibility. Our rigorous curriculum develops mastery of fundamental skills, enhanced critical thinking, and stimulates creativity for our students.

TECHNOLOGY

Houston Academy is committed to providing the best technology resources and solutions in support of the school's mission and the Strategic Plan. Houston Academy was the first school in the area to provide students K-4 with 1:1 access to iPads. Faculty utilize Interactive Promethean panels, Smart boards, document cameras, curriculum based software, and subscription-based educational programs to enhance students' knowledge. School-wide wireless network covers the campus, providing network and internet access to all classrooms and learning areas. State-of-the-art technology tools integrated into the curriculum offer Houston Academy students a comprehensive 21st century education.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Houston Academy enrolls qualified students without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, or physical handicap. The school encourages prospective parents to schedule a campus tour with the Director of Admissions before initiating the application process.

Please see the age requirements below for 3P, 4P and 5K:

Grade	Age Requirement
3P	Must be 3 years old by August 1st of the enrolling year.
4P	Must be 4 years old by August 1st of the enrolling year.
5K	Must be 5 years old by August 1st of the enrolling year.
	All preschool and 5K students must be fully potty trained before the first day of school.

For first grade, a student must have successfully completed a kindergarten program and meet our standards of admission. If a student does not meet our first grade admissions standards, Houston Academy will recommend that the applicant completes our kindergarten program in order to be fully prepared for first grade.

Students seeking admission must submit a completed application form along with the \$100 non-refundable application fee. Applicants should submit the Academic Reference Form, provided in the Houston Academy packet or on the website, to their current classroom teacher for completion. This reference form should then be forwarded from the previous school to the Director of Admissions at Houston Academy.

New student testing to measure ability levels is required of all applicants for grades 5K-4. After the application is received, applicants will be notified as to the date and time for the testing. The Admissions Committee will review and evaluate the application materials and tests of all applicants. Those who meet the criteria for admission will be offered a contract provided openings are available. Priority will be given to qualified siblings and children of alumni. In situations where there are no openings, qualified applicants' names will be placed in a waiting pool to be considered for the next opening. Admission will be offered to applicants in the waiting pool as openings become available.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Lower School Counselor

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Houston Academy

An Independent College Preparatory Institution

DAILY SCHEDULE

The 3P, 4P and 5K classes meet each day from 8:00-12:00. Students in grades 1-4 meet daily from 8:00-3:00.

Extended day care is available for a limited number of Houston Academy preschool students from 12:00-5:30, Monday-Friday. After school care is available for students in grades 1-4 from 3:00-5:30. Tuition does not cover the cost of extended day care. To enquire about this service, contact the Head of Lower School.

PROGRAM PROFILES

3P The program provides an easy transition from home to school. Center time and units of study are used to integrate all the curriculum areas. The children also participate in art, library, and music. In an atmosphere that promotes a sense of caring, emphasis is placed on interacting socially, developing independence and a positive self-image, accepting responsibility, and learning to listen and follow directions. This is a year for introduction to basic readiness skills: social, language, perceptual, and fine and gross motor. Hands-on, concrete activities and experiences encourage the learning process. Readiness handwriting skills are presented through the *Handwriting Without Tears* program. Resource guests, field trips, and parental involvement extend the learning experiences.

4P The *Benchmark Ready to Advance* program is used to incorporate language development, literacy, mathematics, science and social studies skills. Other materials and experiences from unit studies are used to support the curriculum. The *Handwriting Without Tears* program reinforces handwriting skills and offers a variety of manipulatives for the students to understand the introduction to the correct formation of each letter. The children also attend classes in art, library, and music. Imaginative play and centers provide an opportunity for children to interact with other children and the environment. Major emphasis is placed on learning to accept responsibility, to listen and follow directions, and to work independently and in groups. The classroom atmosphere promotes the development of a positive self-concept. Field trips and special guests enhance the overall program. Each child is evaluated in the spring to determine readiness for the kindergarten program.

5K The kindergarten curriculum offers an integrated approach to language with emphasis on phonetic instruction and the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. *Benchmark Workshop* is used in developing reading and language arts skills. Daily journal writing incorporates writing and spelling. Use of the *Handwriting Without Tears* program continues the development of handwriting skills. The *Math in Focus* series is used with problem solving at the center of the math learning. Students take weekly enrichment classes in art, library, music, physical education, and STEAM. Music reading skills are introduced in the weekly music classes. Students have 1:1 access to iPads in the classroom. The program encourages parental involvement in field trips and special activities.

Our mission...

To Seek. To Find. To Share.

1st Students remain in self-contained classrooms for the study of academic subjects. Students use *Math in Focus* for math and *Benchmark Workshop* for developing reading and language skills. Accelerated Reader, a computerized reading program, begins at this level and continues through the fourth grade. Daily journal writing incorporates writing and spelling activities. The *Handwriting Without Tears* program provides developmentally appropriate handwriting practice through fourth grade. Students report to enrichment teachers for classes in art, library, music, physical education, STEAM, and character education. Students have 1:1 access to iPads in the classroom. Students explore percussion elements, including African drums, in music class. Field trips and special activities extend the learning experience, including a visit to Wonder Works in Panama City, FL.

3rd Developing good study and work habits are stressed. Students use the *Math in Focus* math series and *Benchmark Workshop*. Grouping in math places students on or above grade level. To enhance writing skills, writing is incorporated into all subject areas, and cursive writing instruction begins in 3rd grade. Enrichment classes include art, music, library, STEAM, physical education, and character education. Students experience their second year of recorders in their music classes, and they continue keyboarding. Students have 1:1 access to iPads in the classroom. Students also visit Montgomery and the Capitol as part of the Alabama History class. Guest speakers in the areas of science and social studies expand the student's learning opportunities.

2nd Unit activities correlate learning across the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on developing responsibility and good study habits. Students use the *Math in Focus* math series, *Benchmark Workshop*, and *Handwriting Without Tears*. Grouping in math places students on or above grade level. Enrichment teachers of art, library, music, physical education, STEAM, and character education correlate activities with the classroom teachers' plan of study. Recorders are introduced as part of the weekly music classes. Students have 1:1 access to iPads in the classroom. Students continue their use of technology to enhance their math, reading, and writing skills. Keyboard skills are introduced in 2nd grade. Field trips, guest speakers, and special activities enhance the learning process, including a visit to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, FL.

4th Students use the *Math in Focus* math series and *Benchmark Workshop*. Grouping in math places students on or above grade level. To enhance writing skills, writing is incorporated into all subject areas. Novel studies are used to enhance the reading curriculum. Enrichment classes include art, music, STEAM, physical education, and character education. Students have 1:1 access to iPads in the classroom. Students learn to play the ukelele in music class. Students are further exposed to the arts through ballet and other fine arts performances. Field trips and guest speakers extend the classroom learning activities. Students take a field trip to the Challenger Learning Center in Tallahassee in conjunction with their study of space in their science and social studies units.

ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIPS

The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Independent Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; the school holds memberships in the National Association of Independent Schools, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Southern Association of Independent Schools, College Board, National Honor Society, National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Southern Association of College Admissions Professionals, Alabama Association of Independent Schools, and the Alabama High School Athletic Association.