

Lower School Handbook

Houston Academy

2024-2025



Houston Academy
901 Buena Vista Drive · Dothan, AL 36303 · (334) 794-4106

Welcome to Houston Academy's Lower School!

We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year as teachers, students, parents, and administrators work together to take advantage of all that is offered in the Lower School at Houston Academy.

This Handbook has been developed to enhance communication among all members of the school community and is intended as a guide to help students and their families come to know Houston Academy's programs and opportunities as well as to set forth basic expectations and agreements. Parental awareness and support of these policies and procedures is essential to the academic, social, and emotional growth of our students, and we value your collaboration in support of your child's learning. We are happy to be working with you.

Julie Kinney

Head of Lower School

MISSION STATEMENT

To seek. To find. To share.

We seek to do our best. We find our greatest potential. We share what we have discovered.

VALUES

Houston Academy inspires students to learn, grow and lead by focusing on our core values.

Excellence

We always give and expect our best effort—in school, in athletics, in activities, and in life.

Honor

We do the right thing, even when it's hard.

Respect

We value everyone.

Responsibility

We are accountable for our words and our actions.

Leadership

We learn to lead through authentic opportunities that focus on serving others.

Community

We are a vibrant, close-knit learning community that values knowledge, hard work and good character.

PHILOSOPHY

Houston Academy is a college preparatory school. As such, the curriculum aims quite properly toward fine scholarship. The teachers who implement the course of study maintain high academic standards to insure the development of skills and the mastery of ideas requisite for matriculation at higher levels of learning. Driven by the ideals of the mission statement, Houston Academy seeks to prepare its students not merely to endure the world about them, but to thrive in it. We endeavor to develop students who enjoy thinking, analyzing, and expressing. We intend for them to make a significant difference in their community. Houston Academy strives to help individual students to develop their personal, intellectual, physical, artistic, and social selves to their utmost capability.

Admission to Houston Academy is without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, gender, handicap, or disability. Houston Academy does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, creed, color, religion, alienage or national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, disability or handicap, sex, marital status, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws. Houston Academy prohibits any such discrimination against students, faculty and all other employees. With respect to the School's facilities, the School's athletic teams, and the education of the School's students, Houston Academy will identify each student based on the student's sex designated on the student's Birth Certificate. Houston Academy respects and honors the civil and privacy rights of all students, faculty and other personnel. Any person at Houston Academy who believes he/she has been discriminated against must report such discrimination to the Head of School and or their immediate supervisor.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Houston Academy establishes and communicates policies and procedures to ensure the effective administration of the school. Community members are required to use the established communication channels and to follow the chain of command. Should a community member get dissatisfied with Houston Academy in any way, that individual should strive to resolve the matter with the person(s) involved as privately and compassionately as possible, rather than spreading criticism and negativity verbally or through social media. Issues will be resolved as privately as possible and with the best interest of the student(s) at heart. Parents are encouraged to speak directly to the appropriate teacher(s) when there is an academic or behavior/discipline issue in a specific class. Lower School students and parents are encouraged to speak to the Lower School Counselor if there is a general academic or behavior/discipline matter that requires attention. If the student and parents are not satisfied with the attempted resolution of the matter, the Head of Lower School should be contacted and a meeting arranged that will include all relevant parties. If the student and parents remain unsatisfied with the outcome, a joint meeting between the **Head of School** and the involved parties will be scheduled. Neither the Head of Lower School nor the **Head of School** will discuss a specific issue, matter, or incident with a parent if that parent has

not followed the chain of command described above.

The Board of Trustees exists to create plans, to set policies, and to make decisions that will ensure the viability of the school's mission for future generations. The Board is not involved with the day-to-day operations of the school as its authority exists only when a board meeting is in session and a quorum is present. It lives in the future, concerning itself with those issues that impact the future viability of the school. The Head of School is the sole employee of the Board and is responsible for running the school and making operational decisions on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, issues or conflicts involving students and Houston Academy should NOT be addressed to the Board of Trustees but should, instead, be addressed to the appropriate teacher or counselor (as described in the paragraphs above depending upon the nature of the issue).

IMPORTANT DATES 2024-2025

First Day of School	August 8
Labor Day*	September 2
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal	September 18
Grandparents Day	September 20
Fall Break*	October 11-14
Grades 1-4 Conference Days/Early Dismissal	October 23 & 24
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal	October 31
Preschool Conference Days/No School 3P-5K	November 6 & 7
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Holidays*	November 25-29
Christmas Holidays*	December 19-January 3
Staff Development Day*	January 6
School Resumes	January 7
Martin Luther King Day*	January 20
Faculty/Staff Professional Development Day*	February 13
Winter Break*	February 14-17
Preschool Conference Days/No School 3P-5K*	February 26 & 27
Spring Break*	March 24-28
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal	April 8
Good Friday*	April 18
Student Recognition Day/Last Day/Early Dismissal	May 22

***No School for Students**

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PRESCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum

Each young child is unique in personality and pattern of growth and development. The Preschool curriculum responds to these individual needs by providing appropriate experiences to stimulate physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Classroom environments encourage active exploration and interaction with adults, children, and materials. Learning to become a responsible group member is an important area of growth in preschool. All components of the preschool curriculum encourage the development of a child's self-esteem and positive feelings toward learning.

In our half-day Preschool program, math, reading, science, language arts, social studies, music, and art objectives are integrated through meaningful activities. Enrichment classes in art, music, PE (5K only), STEAM (5K only), and library enhance the program and are on a 6-day rotating schedule.

Students in 3P, 4P, and 5K will take an end-of-year assessment to evaluate their level of performance in order to advance to the next grade level. The automatic re-enrollment process at Houston Academy should not be seen to imply an automatic promotion to the next grade level. Those students who do not pass the assessment will be evaluated by the Houston Academy Academic Team to determine the best recommendation for each individual student. The recommendations may include retention, mandatory summer tutoring, or withdrawal from Houston Academy.

Parent Conferences

Individual parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and second trimester, and parents will be notified of the exact appointment time. However, parents are encouraged to schedule teacher conferences whenever they have questions or concerns about their child's progress. Appointments may be arranged by sending a note or email to the classroom teacher. The School requests that parents respect faculty members' personal time and avoid contacting teachers outside of regular school hours or on their cell phones.

Progress Reports

Students receive progress reports three times a year. These reports are issued at the scheduled parent/teacher conferences.

GRADES 1-4 ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum

The School affords a challenging academic program to students in grades 1st-4th. Reading, math, language, history, science, and spelling comprise the core curriculum. Ability grouping in the area of math (Grades 2-4) provides the opportunity to develop intellectual capacities of each student to the utmost. The curriculum also offers art, music, computer, library, STEAM, guidance, and physical education to all students, and these enrichment classes are scheduled on a 6-day rotating schedule.

Technology

Students in Lower School access educational resources via the wireless network on school provided iPads for each student in kindergarten - 4th grade. Teachers, the Head of Lower School, and the Technology Director collaborate to identify and make accessible the appropriate applications, websites, and online resources to support and enhance the curriculum at every grade level. Misuse of technology or accessing inappropriate online content at school by students is strictly prohibited.

Textbooks and Supplies

The cost for textbooks and workbooks is not included in tuition. Parents are assessed a fee in October for the cost of consumable materials and the use of school owned textbooks. Workbooks are charged on an individual basis.

Homework

Homework is a significant and meaningful part of the curriculum at Houston Academy. It serves to instill in students the formation and development of good study habits and to reinforce the learned skills and concepts in all subject areas. In addition to preparing students for the next day's class, homework helps students develop independent study habits and work skills necessary for Middle School and Upper School.

Each day's homework assignments will average 20 minutes in 1st grade; 30-45 minutes in 2nd grade; 30-60 minutes in 3rd grade; and 45-60 minutes in 4th grade. Because these times are averages, they may vary, depending on the assignment and the rate at which a student works. It is essential that students assume the responsibility of completing all homework.

Make Up Work

Work missed due to an illness may be made up at school upon the student's return. Requests for missed assignments may be made by calling the school office or emailing the teacher by 10:00 a.m. on the day the assignments will be picked up. Teachers have limited time during the school day to compile work to be sent home, so homework assignments will not be ready to be picked up until 3:00 p.m. The student will be responsible for completing and turning in any work missed due to an absence. All makeup work should be completed and returned to the teacher in a reasonable amount of time.

Parent Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held at the end of the 1st 9 weeks grading period for grades 1-4. Parents are notified of their scheduled appointment time. The School encourages parents to schedule teacher conferences whenever they have questions about their child's progress. Appointments may be arranged by sending a note or email to the classroom teacher. Please do not make unannounced visits to teachers before the start of the school day or during the school day. At these times faculty are assembling materials for the day's activities and/or assisting with carpool traffic/duty. The School requests that parents respect faculty members' personal time and avoid contacting teachers outside of regular school hours or on their cell phones.

Report Cards

Students in grades 1-4 receive report cards four times a year. The report card for the first grading period will be issued at the scheduled parent/teacher conference. Thereafter, report cards are sent home on Thursday following the end of each grading period. These grading periods are posted on the Tandem calendar. Parents may check grades at any time on PowerSchool, Houston Academy's online grade book program.

Grading System

In grade 4 all academic areas receive letter grades:

A+:	100-98	B+:	89-87	C+:	79-77	D:	69-65
A:	97-93	B:	86-83	C:	76-73	F:	Below 65
A-:	92-90	B:	82-80	C-:	72-70		

These letter grades are also used in grades 1-3 for math, spelling, language, and reading. All other curriculum areas in grades 1-3 receive the following letter designations:

E:	Excellent
N:	Needs to improve
S:	Satisfactory
U:	Unsatisfactory

All enrichment areas in grades 1-4 receive the letter designations of E, S, N, and U. All grades are derived from the required course of study. Students are encouraged to do their best academically and are supported in their efforts to achieve. Teachers will not allow students to retake a test, nor will they give extra credit assignments to enhance a grade. In the event of a course failure for the year, students could be allowed to attend summer school in order to return to Houston Academy. The Head of Lower School must approve any summer school work for credit. Any deviations from these guidelines must be approved by the Head of Lower School. Any student who fails two or more subjects for the year is subject to retention or release from Houston Academy. A student may only be retained one time.

Testing Policy

Students will have no more than two major tests on a single day. Students who are absent on a test day should be prepared to take the missed test immediately upon return to school unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher during the student's absence. Each year, Lower School students will take 3 diagnostic assessments during the school year that measure ability and achievement. Fees associated with these assessments will be charged to parents.

Learning Services

The Learning Specialists in the Learning Services Department provide individual and small group instruction to Lower School students who have identified academic weaknesses. Individualized instruction in reading and math using the Orton-Gillingham method is among the services offered. Sessions are scheduled in cooperation with the student's classroom teacher. Students may be referred for Learning Services by their classroom teacher, guidance counselor, Head of Lower School, or parents. Tuition does not include the cost of Learning Services.

Guidance and Counseling

The goal of the Lower School guidance and counseling program is to provide students with the support and encouragement needed to help them grow and thrive in all areas. The counselor works closely with administration, teachers, students, and their families to offer support for academic, social, emotional, and behavioral concerns. The counselor provides individual and group counseling as needed for students and parents.

Houston Academy's Lower School counseling program provides weekly guidance classes for 1st-4th grade students. These guidance classes provide students with an opportunity to discuss a variety of topics while sharing and learning from each other. Weekly guidance classes also involve activities that include partner and group activities, team building activities, interactive lessons, role-play, and games. The goal of these guidance classes is to educate and encourage students to make decisions that help them thrive academically, emotionally, and socially as they develop.

Activities

Activities are designed to broaden student interests and to help develop academic subjects as well as in interest in other areas:

Spelling Bees – The School sponsors this educational learning activity to improve spelling and increase vocabulary for students in grades 1-4. Winners from each class will compete in a school-wide bee.

Field Trips – All classes in the Lower School participate in various field trips each year. These trips include WonderWorks, 1st grade; Montgomery Zoo, 2nd grade; Alabama State Capitol, 3rd grade; Challenger Learning Center of Tallahassee, 4th grade.

House Games - Students participate in a field day in the early spring. Teams compete in conjunction with the House System.

Musical Productions - Musical programs are presented at Christmas and Grandparents Day and feature all Lower School students in grades 3P-4th grade.

Preschool Walkers - Fourth grade students have the opportunity to develop leadership skills by volunteering to help walk the Preschool students to their classrooms each morning.

House System - All students, Grades 1-12, participate in the House System (composed of 6 teams) to build school spirit and to promote unity and interaction between students in all divisions. Activities and events will consist of whole-school, divisions, and grade level, and will include team building games, competitions, community service projects, etc.

Sporting Events - All Houston Academy students may attend all home regular season athletic events at no charge.

Awards

In an effort to promote extracurricular involvement and academic excellence for students in grades 1-4, a Student Recognition Day is held the last day of each school year:

Art Awards are presented to students whose artwork is chosen for display in the Wiregrass Museum of Art's Young Artists Exhibits and AISA region/ state competition.

Math Awards are presented to students in 4th grade who are the top scorers on the Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi Math League contest.

Participation Certificates are presented for participation in the school spelling bee.

Achievement Certificates are given to students in grades 1-4 to recognize consistent effort and successful completion of studies during the academic year.

Academic Excellence Awards are presented to all students with a yearly average of *A* or *S* in each academic subject.

Presidential Awards for Educational Excellence are presented to 4th grade students who maintain a 90 average during the Fall of their fourth grade year and scored at or above the 85th percentile on a standardized achievement test.

Participation Certificates are presented to students who were elected as SGA officers.

RAIDER KID Awards are presented to students chosen each quarter who exemplified the following characteristics: *Raider Spirit, Always Kind, Includes Everyone, Does Their Best, Example to Others, Reliable Helper and Friend.*

Outstanding Character Awards are presented to one boy and one girl from each class in grades 1st-4th who best exemplify the character traits emphasized during guidance classes.

Grandparents/Grandfriends Day

Each year Lower School celebrates Grandparents and Grandfriends with a special day of entertainment and classroom visitation. Please check the school Tandem calendar for the date. Specific information about the program will be provided once the details have been finalized.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 3P-4th Grade

School Hours

3P-5K: 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1-4: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Students are encouraged to be in the classroom by 7:55 a.m. to unpack and get organized for the school day. The school day officially begins at 8:00. Teachers are in their classrooms at 7:40. Students who arrive before that time must go to the Lower School breezeway. For the safety of your children, please do not drop students off before 7:30 a.m. Students should not be in the Lower School breezeway before this time. Students will not be dismissed on a regular basis from school earlier than 3:00 p.m. for any non-school related activities.

Attendance

Daily attendance and punctuality are essential to academic achievement. When students are not in class they miss valuable instructional time, daily work, test preparation, quizzes, and tests. Eighteen days absent per year is considered excessive and could result in failure. Occasionally a student may be absent due to illness, death in the family, or religious holiday. Absences of this nature are understandable, and every effort is made by the School to assist the student with makeup work. A student returning to school following an absence must bring a note or send an email from his parent stating the reason for the absence. When possible the School should be notified in advance of an absence.

Attendance in Preschool is figured on the following schedule:

Present 4 hours:	Present all day
Absent 1-2 hours:	Absent half day

Absent more than 2 hours: Absent all day

Attendance in grades 1-4 is figured on the following schedule:

Present 7 hours: Present all day

Absent 1-3 hours: Absent half day

Absent more than 3 hours: Absent all day

Parents are encouraged to coordinate family vacations with the school calendar. If a student must be absent for travel, permission must be granted prior to the trip by the classroom teacher and the Head of the Lower School. Students who miss class while traveling are required to meet the same standards as those who remain in class. Also note that while some homework may be assigned prior to departure, a great deal of discussion, explanation and oral classwork cannot be duplicated. Parents are responsible for assisting the child with work missed during this absence. Most of the assignments will be made up when the student returns to school.

Late Arrivals

Students who arrive between 8:00 and 8:07 are considered tardy. If a student arrives after 8:07, the parent should sign the student in at the main office. A school employee will walk the student to the classroom. Persistent tardiness causes students to miss important announcements and class work. Their late entrance into the classroom causes a disruption to the learning environment of the entire class. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to have their child at school by 8:00. Habitual late arrival at school is unacceptable, and disciplinary actions may be imposed for excessive tardies.

Early Departure

If a student must check out prior to the conclusion of the normal academic day, a note or email should be sent to the classroom teacher indicating the time the student will leave. The parent must sign the student out in the main office. The receptionist will then call the student to the office. At no time will students be sent to the office to wait to be picked up.

Extended Day

The HA Extended Day Program is operated for the convenience of working parents of Houston Academy students. The extended day program for 3P-5K students is 12:00-5:30, and extended day for students in grades 1-4 is 3:00 to 5:30. Students in grades 1-4 will have an opportunity to get started on their homework at Extended Day. Drop-ins or part-time students are not accepted. Extended Day follows the same calendar as Houston Academy. Tuition does not include the cost of Extended Day. Houston Academy Extended Day is licensed by the State Department of Human Resources and must follow their policies.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Carpool in the morning and afternoon is a very important time. The safety of the children is our first priority. Because of this primary concern, we ask everyone to follow these guidelines:

- Please make sure that your children have their supplies ready and seat belts unbuckled when you stop to let them out in the morning. Try to give out kisses and goodbyes before you arrive at the departure point.
- Teach your children to handle car doors on their own; parents should not have to leave their car to open the door for their child. Teachers are outside to assist the children when necessary.
- Students are to unload from the right side of the vehicle.
- When loading or unloading during carpool, please pull your vehicle up as far as possible so others may load and unload at the same time. Do not pass other cars in the line.
- Everyone must go through the carpool line. Do not park in the parking lot.
- Do not leave your car unattended.
- As you arrive or if you arrive early, please keep your children inside the vehicle, including windows and sunroofs.
- Please do not use cell phones once the carpool line begins to move. For the safety of students, your full attention is needed in the bumper-to-bumper traffic of carpool.
- Please turn off your car while waiting to pick up your children to reduce pollution from idling cars. This pollution negatively affects a child's healthy lung growth and development and also damages our environment.
- Use the arrival/departure location for the youngest Lower School member of your carpool. Please do not go to multiple areas.
- For every child's protection, the school requires a written note from a parent if a child is to leave with anyone other than a designated driver.
- Due to congested traffic, Extended Day students should not be picked up between 2:45-3:30.

Preschool Arrival (back driveway): Use the back driveway (Entrance B) which enters off Whatley Drive from the direction of Westgate Parkway only, not from the direction of Flowers Hospital. Don't make a left turn into the back driveway. Cars should pull together as closely as possible, and students in 5K may unload at any point along the covered walkway. 3P and 4P students must unload at #1 or #2 positions only. Due to state regulations, 3P and 4P students cannot be dropped off at another location. PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:40.

Preschool Departure: Enter the parking lot from Buena Vista Drive (Entrance D) and form the carpool line through the parking lot. Parents should not wait in the hallway for students to be dismissed. All students will meet their rides at the designated area by the circular drive.

Grades 1-3 Arrival: Enter Buena Vista from Burbank Drive. Upon entering the front drive (Entrance D), cars should then pull together as closely as possible, in the right lane. Cars should stay in one lane (no passing) and must stop in front of Downs Hall for students to unload. Parking in front of Downs Hall is not allowed. Please use the front driveway exit. PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:40.

Grade 4 Arrival: Use the back driveway (Entrance B) which enters off Whatley Drive from the direction of Westgate Parkway only, not from the direction of Flowers Hospital. Don't make a left turn into the back driveway. Cars should pull together as closely as possible, and students in grades may unload at any point along the covered walkway. PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 7:40.

Grades 1-4 Departure: Cars should enter Buena Vista from Burbank Drive (Entrance D) forming one line in the front parking lot around to the back loop, where the first car will pull up to #1 loading spot. All cars will enter and remain in the right, inside lane (Lane 1). Students will all load at loading spots 1-6 and all cars will exit right on to Whatley Drive. **Lower School Students with Middle School or Upper School siblings will remain in place to be picked up in the Middle School (Family) Line.**

For every child's protection, the names of all adults authorized to pick up a student should be noted in Powerschool. Parents must notify the school if someone other than the regularly designated person picks up their child.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents, should sign in at the main office, leave a driver's license, and receive a visitor's badge. Upon return of the visitor's pass in the office, the visitor may then receive the driver's license back. No one is allowed to go directly to a classroom or any other area on campus without first signing in at the office and getting approval.

Illness

While regular attendance is important, it is even more important that students who are ill or recovering from an illness remain at home. Students should not come to school with a fever or symptoms of a contagious disease. If your child contracts head lice, they must be treated and completely nit-free before returning to school.

Parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately if they become ill during the school day. Students who develop a fever (100.4 degrees or higher) during the school day will not be allowed to return the next day. **A student should be free of fever and any symptoms of a virus (including vomiting and diarrhea) for a full 24-hour period before returning to school following an illness.**

Potty Training

Children enrolled in 3P and beyond must be **fully** potty trained before attending school. The State Department of Human Resources requires Preschoolers to be potty-trained because we do not diaper or have changing stations. All Preschoolers must do the following:

- No longer wear diapers or disposable underwear including training pants and pull-ups.
- Can tell the teacher when they need to use the restroom
- Able to independently pull their pants up and down
- Can attend to their own hygiene (wipes on his/her own)

If your child is not completely potty-trained as described above when school begins and has more than occasional accidents (two in 5 school days), your child must remain at home until the potty training is complete. Accidents requiring assistance will result in a phone call to parents for assistance.

Medication

At no time should a student have any medication, prescription or over the counter, in his possession. Parents may administer medication to their child during the school day in the school office. If your child needs medication administered by school personnel, please follow these procedures:

- Complete a *Medication Authorization Form* which is available in the school/guidance office.
- Prescription medication must have a Physician's signature on the form.
- Parent or guardian should give the medication and completed form to the office personnel.
- All medication must be in the original container or a labeled pharmacy bottle.

Library Policy

The library is a resource center for the school instructional program, and the students are encouraged to use it. In order to ensure that students have equal access to the library facilities, guidelines must be followed.

- Responsible care of library materials is stressed to all students.
- Students may check out as many as 2 books for 2 weeks. This number may be increased for special assignments. At or before the end of the 2 weeks the books must be returned to the library or renewed for another 2 weeks.
- Students who have overdue books at the end of the year will not receive their report cards until the library obligation is cleared.
- The library does not charge fines for overdue books, but it will assess students for damaged or lost books and/or media materials.
- Books are checked out on an individual basis. The student who checks out a book is responsible for returning it to the library on time.

Conduct and Discipline

We are committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all our students. The administration and faculty of Houston Academy expect all students to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner. We tailor our expectations to fit the developmental levels of the children to minimize frustrations and inappropriate behavior. Students are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the school. Learning takes place in a disciplined environment, and each teacher is responsible for maintaining proper discipline and a classroom environment conducive to learning. Self-control, proper language, and respect for peers and adults is emphasized and expected. Houston Academy will not tolerate any behavior that is disruptive, destructive, or immoral. Chronic or exceptional disciplinary cases will be reported to the Head of the Lower School for appropriate action and may be reviewed by the Lower School Disciplinary Committee. If the teacher, counselor, or administrator feels that the child would benefit from additional services, they will notify the parents and make recommendations.

Harassment and Bullying

As a school community, we want to maintain an environment where all members may work, study, and enjoy freedom from harassment, discrimination, hazing, and bullying of any kind. Harassment, bullying and hazing are prohibited, and violations will be considered major infractions resulting in disciplinary action.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to abuse (oral or written); obscene or suggestive remarks; display of sexually explicit content or offensive materials; or comments which are demeaning with respect to race, religion, ethnic or national origin physical characteristics or abilities, age, marital status, veteran status, citizenship disability, appearance, family or parental situation, sex, sexual orientation, or gender.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior (threatening, intimidating, or demeaning) that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying may include any written, verbal, or implied communication (including communication on the internet, or social networking sites, via email, through text message, or on personal blogs), whether or not it originates on the Houston Academy campus.

Hazing is any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing often involves some sort of power difference between those in a group and those who want to join a group, or between senior and junior members of a group and is often justified in the name of "tradition." However, an act may be defined as hazing, whether or not the victim is new to the team or organization. Any and all acts of hazing will be treated as a major infraction, at a minimum. Furthermore, hazing may result in a student being separated from the school and is a violation of Alabama Law under Alabama Code Title 16, Education 16-1-23.

Uniforms/Dress Code

A student's dress and appearance should always be neat, clean, and reflective of the high standards of Houston Academy. Parents are responsible for supervising their child's dress.

Preschool: Uniforms for Preschool students are optional and available through Zoghby's and include the following items.

Boys 3P-5K

- White pique polo with HA logo
- Blue & white gingham lined all-elastic pants
- Blue & white lined all-elastic shorts

Girls 3P-5K

- Royal & white gingham dress with HA logo

Durable play clothes are required for all preschool children. Daily activities include coloring, cutting, gluing, painting, as well as inside and outside play. Students should be dressed appropriately to participate in these activities. Closed toe shoes with socks, preferably athletic shoes, appropriate for play are required. Children may not wear flip flops, sandals, or Crocs. On cold days children should be properly attired for playing outside. Please clearly mark all coats and sweaters with the child's name. An extra set of clothing must be kept at school for children in the 3P and 4P classes. No accessory or article of clothing worn at school at any time may advertise/promote/reflect drugs, alcohol, or contain any slogans, political messages, or words that may be deemed inappropriate, controversial, or offensive by the school administration or that may distract from the learning environment. All clothing must be gender appropriate. No mohawks or other distracting haircuts or hair colors are allowed. Extreme or distracting makeup, accessories, or jewelry are not permitted. The administration retains the right to determine if any article of clothing is inappropriate or distracting.

Students in grades 1-4 are expected to be dressed in the appropriate school uniform each day. **All uniforms must be official Houston Academy items purchased from Zoghby's Uniforms located in Dothan at 2493 Montgomery Highway or online.** The link to this site is located on the HA website. Items marked with an asterisk * may be purchased anywhere. If, in the opinion of the Head of the Lower School, a student's uniform is unacceptable, the student must call home for a change of clothing. Parents are responsible for arranging this change.

Dress Code: Boys Grades 1-4

- All shirts will have the block HA logo: white, royal blue, or columbia short sleeve polo shirt;
- Shorts and pants will be khaki twill or performance with the block HA logo. All items with belt loops require a solid or braided brown or black belt*.
- Athletic shoes* must be predominantly white, black, blue, or gray with any solid color trim. Shoes with writing or words, designs, sequins, etc. are not allowed. Light-ups, roller shoes, or any other unusual styles are not allowed.

- Socks* must be solid (no logo) white, blue, gray, or black.
- Outerwear will have the HA logo: gray pullover sweater, gray crew-neck cardigan, ash gray sweatshirt, heather gray ½ zip pullover, charcoal soft-shell jacket.
- Short sleeve, solid white undershirts* may be worn under uniform shirts.

Dress Code: Girls Grades 1-4

- All shirts will have the block HA logo: white, royal blue, or columbia short sleeve polo shirt; white Peter Pan polo shirt.
- Solid khaki shorts and pants will have the block HA logo. Items also include plaid skort, plaid box pleat skirt, and plaid tunic jumper.
- Shorts or bloomers must be worn under skirts and jumpers.
- Belts* should be solid or braided, brown or black
- Athletic shoes* must be predominantly white, black, blue, or gray with any solid color trim. Shoes with writing or words, designs, sequins, etc. are not allowed. Light-ups, roller shoes, or any other unusual styles are not allowed.
- Socks* must be solid (no logo) white, blue, gray, or black. Knee-style socks may be white. Solid white or navy tights are also acceptable. Solid white, black, or navy leggings are allowed as long as they reach the ankle. Lace, ruffles, or other embellishments are not allowed on leggings. No denim, athletic or yoga style leggings are allowed. Leggings can only be worn with skorts, skirts, and jumpers.
- Outerwear will have the HA logo: gray pullover sweater, gray crew-neck cardigan, ash gray sweatshirt, heather gray ½ zip pullover, and charcoal soft-shell jacket
- Skorts, shorts and jumpers should be a modest length. Uniform bottoms should be clearly visible from under the uniform tops.
- Solid white, royal blue, columbia blue or blue hair bows/ribbons are acceptable.
- Solid white, royal blue, columbia blue, or uniform plaid headbands are acceptable.

Dress Code: General Guidelines

- Uniforms must be kept neat and clean without holes, rips, or patches.
- No t-shirts may be worn except on Raider Day.
- Shirrtails are to be tucked in at all times.
- All clothing should be gender appropriate.
- Hats, caps, or other headgear are not permitted on campus at any time from arrival until dismissal.
- No mohawks or other distracting haircuts or unnatural hair colors are allowed.
- Extreme or distracting makeup, accessories, or jewelry are not permitted.
- Hair should be no longer than the bottom of the collar for boys and must fall no lower than the top of the eyebrow. Hair may not cover the face or eyes at any time.
- No personal monogramming is allowed on uniform items.
- **All student clothing should be labeled.**

Raider Day

Every Friday during the school year is designated as a "Raider Day." On Raider Days students may dress out of uniform and wear an HA T-shirt or sweatshirt purchased through the school, HA football jersey or cheerleader uniform, blue jean shorts (no shorter than 3 inches above the knee), capris, or pants with no holes or fraying. Shoes and outerwear must be regulation dress code. Students who elect not to participate in Raider Day will be expected to follow the uniform code of dress. During the football Homecoming week, students may dress out of uniform each day according to the designated theme. Student attire should be appropriate and in good taste.

Field Trip T-Shirt

All students (3P-4th) are required to purchase a field trip t-shirt that will be required on special days. This shirt may be purchased at www.haraiderwear.com.

Raider Retail

Raider Retail is located in the EDC Commons and is staffed by HA PTO volunteers. It is open Monday-Friday, 9:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Any deviation from this schedule will be posted on HA PTO Facebook page. Snacks and drinks are sold during Upper School break, Middle School break, and all the lunches. There are healthy options available such as yogurt, cheese, fruit, and water in addition to routine snacks and lunch items. For convenience, parents may open accounts for students, cash is also accepted, or you may use the Venmo app. The Raider Retail Venmo name is @Raider~Retail. Checks should be made out to HA PTO, and the responsible parent's name and cell phone number should be provided. Accounts need to be opened by a parent. The responsible parent should provide Raider Retail with a current cell phone number. RR volunteers will text a parent when a balance is running low or negative. A record is kept of what is purchased and can be reviewed. It is difficult for volunteers to follow any special instructions or know if a student has a negative balance; therefore, a volunteer will contact you by text when your child's balance is depleted. All proceeds from the Raider Retail sales are donated to the school for a variety of needs. Working in Raider Retail is a great volunteer opportunity to meet fellow parents as well as become familiar with the students. For more information about Raider Retail, contact Annette Jenne at awjenne@gmail.com.

Party Invitations

Party invitations may be distributed at school if all children in the classroom receive one. It is also permissible to distribute invitations to all classmates of the same gender. If only a small percentage of a class is to be invited, please do not distribute the invitations at school or put them in the preschool bags.

Birthdays

Outside treats will not be allowed in the classroom for birthday celebrations. Birthdays for Preschool students will be acknowledged in the classroom by the teacher. Students in grades 1-4 will be recognized on the 2nd Wednesday of each month during the month of their birthday. Those who have birthdays in June will be recognized in May, and children who have July birthdays will be

recognized in August. Recognition will take place during lunch at which time each birthday student will receive a special treat provided by the school. **No deliveries of flowers, balloons, gifts, etc. will be allowed for birthdays or other occasions.**

Class Parties

Five class parties are planned during the school year: Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End-of-Year. In addition, different grades have their own special events. Parent volunteers coordinate these events with the classroom teacher. Parents who volunteer to host a party are responsible for the cost of that party. Money is not to be collected from the students. The parties should be held at school or someone's home. Class parties are special celebrations for students and their classmates only. The classrooms are not large enough to accommodate siblings and extra parents.

Forgotten Items

The faculty strives to instill the value of responsibility in the students. Placing the responsibility on the students for having the required work materials, books, homework, and lunches contributes to this endeavor. If a forgotten item must be delivered to a student during the school day, the parent should take the item to the main office, and someone from the office will deliver it at a time that will not be disruptive to the class.

Lost and Found

All items brought to school should be clearly labeled with the child's name (coats, sweaters, lunchboxes, books, book bags, notebooks, etc.). With identifying labels, found items can be returned to the child's classroom. All unlabeled items will be temporarily stored at school, and unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of the school year.

Immunization Record

State law requires that all children enrolled in a school have current immunization records on file at the school. Parents must furnish the school registrar with the child's Alabama Certificate of Immunization (Immprint) for his cumulative folder.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to expand the curriculum for our students. Notification of each field trip is sent home with the student prior to the trip. Parent/grandparent volunteers are usually needed to help with driving. Frequently, parents will be asked to help chaperone these trips. As an official school chaperone, parents are asked not to bring siblings, to remain with the group at all times, and to abide by the guidelines of the teacher and school.

Physical Education

PE is an integral part of the instructional program. If your child cannot participate on a particular day, please send a note to your child's teacher. Students in grades 5K -4th are required to wear athletic shoes for physical education classes.

Snacks and Lunch

Preschool

Children should bring a drink and snack from home for their daily snack time. Special days to purchase snacks are scheduled at the teacher's discretion.

Grades 1-4

Snacks for break should be brought from home.. There are three lunch options for Lower School students:

- Students can bring lunch from home. Microwaves are available in the EDC Grand Hall and the EDC Commons to heat food.
- Students can pre-order from the school catering service *We Lunch It*.
- Students can purchase food using cash or their school account through Raider Retail.

In the interest of student safety and limiting the foot traffic on campus, delivery of food will not be allowed to the school at any time. Delivery of food from a family member, friend, or any restaurant is strictly prohibited.

Students in Grades 1-4 eat lunch at 11:15-11:45 a.m.

The school lunch program is managed and catered by *We Lunch It*. A variety of local restaurants are rotated to cater throughout the year. This is an online system that allows orders to be placed from your phone, tablet or computer. More detailed information is found on the HA website under the "Parents" tab.

Inclement Weather

In situations of early morning inclement weather, the school will notify radio station WOOF at 99.7 and WTVY TV regarding plans for the day. Please tune in to one of these stations for instructions. The Alert Solutions Notification Service and Houston Academy social media platforms will also be implemented.

Mobile Technology Devices

These are allowed on campus, but they may not be used during school hours. They must be turned off at all times and kept out of sight in a backpack. Mobile Technology Devices include, but not limited to, Smartwatch, bluetooth headset, tablet. computer, cell phone, etc.

ALMA MATER

*We seek to find the truths in life; We seek reality
To share these things we all have found at Houston Academy.*

Oh, let us ever forward go;

Our thoughts will always be

Within the halls and memories here at Houston Academy.

Ever forward, leading onward, Ever forward let us be.

Oh, how we love her, let us serve her Oh, Houston Academy.