

Middle School Handbook

Houston Academy

2019-2020



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

Welcome to the 2019 – 2020 School Year

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

The Houston Academy Middle School Team is looking forward to another great, partnering with you to grow and develop. It is my hope that we will all adopt a growth mindset and attempt to improve our habits of mind, body, and spirit on a daily basis. Any day that we do not get better at something ... whether it be a better student, a better parent, a better listener, a better problem-solver, a kinder person, a better athlete, whatever ... is a wasted day. Let's be sure not to waste a single day.

The Middle School theme for the 2019 – 2020 school year is: Houston Academy Middle School: Where Values Matter. Our focus for the year will be on helping students develop a moral compass that will guide them wherever they go as they grow. Values will be the centerpiece of the character education aspects of the Middle School Advisory Program; they will be emphasized, when appropriate and logical, in classes.

It is my contention that if we dream it, we can build it. So, let's dream big! Let's take the Houston Academy from 'great' to 'greater' by better meeting the needs of the early adolescent student. These students deserve educational experiences that are designed specifically for them, and that is exactly what we will be doing!

This handbook is designed to serve as a helpful resource for navigating the school year. It provides a wealth of information about school policies, practices, and services available to support and enrich learning.

Family involvement is a leading factor in academic success, and we value your collaboration in support of your child's learning. Your participation, feedback, and suggestions are always welcome.

I am looking forward to a wonderful, exciting, and growth-producing year!

Dr. Vincent M. Janney, Head of Middle School

MISSION STATEMENT

Houston Academy is an independent college preparatory institution. Our mission is to prepare all our students for the responsible participation in a global society by providing an excellent learning environment and opportunities to achieve their highest academic, social and creative potential.

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. The 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, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, or physical handicap.

Middle School Faculty/Staff List
2019 – 2020

Name	Position	Contact (email)	Room #
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Cromer, Natalie	History/Grade 6 and 8	cromern@houstonacademy.com	DH 213
Edge, Marc	Athletic Director	edgem@houstonacademy.com	Gym
Egan, Sandra	Math and Science/ Grade 6 /Science Grade 8	egans@houstonacademy.com	DH 215
Fleming, Kelley	Learning Specialist	flemingk@houstonacademy.com	FH 303 A
Gray, Alana	English/ Grade 7 and 8	graya@houstonacademy.com	DC 524
Flowers, Patti	Learning Specialist	flowersp@houstonacademy.com	103
Griffin, Amy	Chorus and Drama	griffina@houstonacademy.com	DC 502
Griffin, Leigh	Physical Education	griffinl@houstonacademy.com	Gym
Hart, Brian	Dean of Students	hartb@houstonacademy.com	Library
Hart, Karrie	Geography/Print Design	hartk@houstonacademy.com	DC 526
Holmes, James	Band	holmesj@houstonacademy.com	HH 415
Howard, A. J.	Physical Education	howarda@houstonacademy.com	Gym
Howell, Vanessa	Spanish	howellv@houstonacademy.com	PS
Jackson, Brian	Digital Media	jacksonb@houstonacademy.com	Library
Janney, Vincent	Head of Middle School	janneyv@houstonacademy.com	Main Office
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Ryan, Jody	Physical Education	ryanj@houstonacademy.com	Gym
Savoy, Ashleigh	Grade 5 Homeroom	savoaya@houstonacademy.com	DH 211
Sewell, Pamela	Math/Science	sewellp@houstonacademy.com	DH 216
Speed, Judy	Administrative Assistant	speedj@houstonacademy.com	Counseling Center
Walker, Cheryl	MS Counselor	walkerc@houstonacademy.com	Library
Whigham, Jack	Mathematics	whighamj@houstonacademy.com	Villa 1
Wilder, Ginger	French/Spanish	wilderg@houstonacademy.com	FH 307
Woodson, Lucia	Spanish	woodsonl@houstonacademy.com	FH 305
Ziglar, Kathy	Mathematics	ziglark@houstonacademy.com	HH 407

2019 -2020 YEARLY SCHOOL CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

Faculty/Staff Professional Development Days (no school for students)	August 5 & 6
Teacher Work Day (no school for students)	August 7
First Day of School (full day)	August 8
Labor Day (no school)	September 2
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00, Grades 1-12	September 18
Fall Break	October 11 – 14
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @12:00, Grades 1-12	October 30
Veteran’s Day (no school)	November 11
Thanksgiving Holidays	November 25 – 29
Winter Holiday Break	December 18 - January 3
School Resumes	January 6
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)	January 20
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00; Grades 1-12	January 29
Faculty/Staff Professional Development Day (no school for students)	February 13
Winter Break	February 14 – 17
Spring Break	March 23 – 27
Good Friday (no school)	April 10
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00, Grades 1-12	April 29
US Graduation	May 22
Last Day	May 22

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Houston Academy Middle School

Vision

Houston Academy's Middle School is a nurturing community that helps young learners develop the necessary skills needed to reach their highest potential and achieve academic and personal success.

Core Values and Beliefs

- We believe a **rigorous academic experience** is of high priority and helps students acquire skills needed to overcome adversity and thrive as they prepare for the demands of high school and beyond.
- We believe a **self-aware student** relentlessly strives to build skills in listening, organization, comprehension, and use of technology.
- We believe tasks requiring **creativity, innovation, and collaboration** are valuable and relevant.
- We believe the ability to **communicate clearly** both in written and verbal format is fundamental and worthy of attention across the curriculum.
- We believe it is the **responsibility of all adults within the community to work together to consistently nurture values** such as honor, diligence, and respect.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Grading System

In grades 5 -8, students receive grades in all academic areas. The students receive letter grades based upon a numerical percentage utilizing the following scale:

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

Students in middle school begin to hone the skills to take comprehensive exams. In 5th grade, students will take 1 exam each semester, one in December and one in May. In 6th grade, students will take 2 exams each semester. The grades for these exams will count in a minimal way for the term in which they are taken.

In grades 7 and 8, students begin to take comprehensive semester examinations in each core class. Semester grades are determined based upon the two previous quarters and the semester examination. The semester examination counts as 14.3% (or 1/7th) of the semester average.

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. Generally, 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 semester, students will be allowed to attend summer school *held at Houston Academy* in order to potentially return to the school. If student performance during summer school is sufficient, the student may be reenrolled for the upcoming school year. The Head of Middle School must approve any summer school work for credit. Summer school attendance is allowed only one time. The Head of Middle School must approve any deviations from these guidelines. Any student who fails two or more subjects for the year is subject to potential release from HA.

Credit toward high school graduation is given to every 8th grade student who successfully completes Algebra I. For this reason, the semester examination in this course will count as 20% (or 1/5th) of the semester grade. You may refer to the Upper School Handbook for the Grade Point Average associated with each letter grade.

Report Cards

Students receive report cards four times per year. Report cards are sent via email following the end of each grading period. These grading periods are posted on the Tandem calendar. A printed copy of the final report card of the school year will be mailed home over the summer. Parents may check grades at any time on PowerSchool, Houston Academy's online grade book program.

Parent Conferences – Grade 5 (optional)

Parent/teacher conferences for grade 5 are held at the end of the 1st 9 weeks grading period. These conferences are optional, and may be requested by either the teacher or the parent/guardian. The dates and times of these conferences will be communicated during the first term. 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 or by calling the main office. 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 also requests that parents do not call teachers at home. The contact information for teachers and administration are provided in the front of this book and the school website.

Counselor Conferences

Counselors are available to meet with any students who have social or academic questions or concerns. Counseling conferences may also be scheduled *for* students throughout the year. Attendance at these conferences is required unless the student has a school conflict. In case of a conflict, the student is expected to see the counselor before the appointed time to reschedule the appointment.

After the quarter report cards are received, counselors will meet any students who are having academic difficulty. Plans for improving study habits will be discussed, and parents will be notified if tutoring is deemed necessary.

Honor Rolls

At the end of each semester, an Honor Roll will be announced and published for grades 5 through 8. To be eligible for the Headmaster's List, a student must have a 4.0, grade point average for the previous semester. For the Principal's List, a student must have between a 3.75 and 4.0. For Raider Honor Roll, a student must have a 3.52 grade point average for the previous semester. Please note that PE, chorus, journalism, band, driver education, drama, study hall, and technology courses do not count in the cumulative grade point average.

Testing Policy

Middle School students will have no more than two *major* tests/assessments 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.

Examinations

Taking lengthier, comprehensive examinations is a skill that will be required of all Houston Academy students in high school and in college. Therefore, students will learn the habits of mind, body, and spirit to be successful in such undertakings by being exposed to opportunities during the middle school program.

In grades 5 and 6, students will be exposed to the concept of semester exams by learning the organizational and preparation skills for and taking one or two exams. The exams will not be weighted separately, but will rather stand as a normal test grade for the quarter in which it is taken.

In grades 7 and 8, students must take semester examinations in each academic subject. Two hours are scheduled for each exam and students will be expected to take only two exams per day. Examinations count as 1/7th of the semester grade. For 8th graders taking

Algebra I CP or Honors, because of the graduation credit given for these classes, the examination counts as 1/5th of the semester grade.

No tests will be scheduled the two days prior to exams to allow students the opportunity to focus on and prepare for the exams.

Exam Exemptions

Students in grades 7 and 8, who may take as many as 5 exams, will be allowed to exempt one final exam in the each semester with the following stipulations:

1. Academics: A student must have a 90 or above average at the end of each nine-week term to exempt an exam.
2. Discipline: No exemptions will be allowed for any student with a major discipline referral (Discipline or Honor Code Violation; including the accumulation of Minor Infractions).
3. Students will not be allowed to exempt the same class both semesters.
4. No exemptions will be allowed in a semester class.
5. A student that exceeds the number of acceptable absences will not be allowed to exempt any exam.

Achievement Tests

Achievement tests can help a student understand academic strengths and weaknesses while also helping a school understand the relative efficacy of its program. There is also a benefit in students having multiple opportunities to sit through standardized testing experiences so that they are comfortable and relaxed when they take standardized tests (such as the PSAT, SAT and/or ACT) in high school that will comprise an aspect of their academic resume for college acceptance. Thus, each year, students in grades 3 – 10 will take the ACT Aspire. The ACT Aspire is an assessment that measures academic achievement in the areas of English, reading, mathematics, science and writing. It is aligned to the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards.

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.

Each day's homework assignments will average a total 45 - 90 minutes in 5th and 6th grades and 60 – 120 minutes in grades 7 and 8. Because these times are averages, they may vary, depending on the assignment and the rate at which a student works. If a student is taking an agonizingly long time to complete homework on a regular basis, it is suggested that a parent chart the amount of time spent and share that information with the teacher(s) and Head of Middle School. This data is very important for teachers as they attempt to understand the relative mastery of the content and skill being covered while also considering the amount of homework given at a specific grade level. It is essential that students assume the responsibility of completing all homework.

Make Up Work

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.

Work missed due to an absence, including school connected activities, may be made up at school upon the student’s return. It is, however, the student’s responsibility to contact the teachers about make up work. **Completion of work missed due to illness should take approximately the same time as the time missed from class (i.e. one day missed, one day to make up work).** If work is missed for a school related event or sports function is not completed before the absence or event, grades may be affected.

Drop and Add

The counselor, course teacher, and, finally, the Head of Middle School must approve any changes in a student schedule. Students may be moved down to an on-grade level class due to excessive absences, grades, or other reasons deemed appropriate by the counselor, teacher, and/or Head of Middle School.

Schedule

To help middle school students make a smooth transition to the Upper School, grades 6, 7, and 8 function on a six-day rotating cycle of seven periods, the same schedule used grades 9 through 12. The first six classes meet in a different time slot each day. The seventh period does not rotate. This rotating schedule is consistent with brain research that suggests students will benefit from having different classes meet at different times of the day.

Grade 6, 7, and 8 Daily Schedule

Period	Time	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1 st	8:00-8:50	A	B	C	D	E	F
2 nd	8:54-9:44	B	C	D	E	F	A
Break	9:44-9:59						
3 rd	10:03-10:53	C	D	E	F	A	B
4 th	10:57-11:47	D	E	F	A	B	C
1 st Lunch	11:47-12:15						
5 th	12:19-1:09	E	F	A	B	C	D
6 th	1:13-2:03	F	A	B	C	D	E
7 th	2:06-2:51	G	G	G	G	G	G
Advisory (M-F)	2:54 – 3:15	Advisory	Advisory	Clubs	Advisory	Advisory	
Tutorial	3:15-3:45						

Tutorials

Middle school teachers are available for tutorial before and after school daily. **It is the responsibility of the student to make an appointment for tutorial.** Teachers also may require students attend tutorial.

In addition, students earning a 75% or below in any class are **required** to attend tutorials at least one day per week. **Required tutorial takes precedence over any/all extracurricular activities. Failure to meet this obligation will result in disciplinary action.** Tardiness or absence from tutorial shall be treated as tardiness or absence from a class, which may result in disciplinary action (including, possibly, detention).

Advisory Program

According to the Association for Middle Level Education (formerly the National Middle School Association), one of the pivotal characteristics of an effective middle school program is the presence of an adult advocate to guide the personal and academic growth of each student. In other words, one of the fundamental needs of a middle school student as he or she navigates the challenges and changes that characterize the middle school years is to know and trust *at least* one adult while also being know and trusted by that adult. Since it is known that academic success and personal growth increase markedly when the affective needs of young adolescents are met, adults in a developmentally responsive middle school serve as advocates and mentors for the students.

At Houston Academy Middle School, students are assigned an advisor each year. Normally, the advisor is a teacher at the Middle School level and serves as the contact person for that student. Advisory provides the opportunity for teachers and students to build the relationships that make students comfortable in turning to their advisor with a problem, question, or just a need to talk. This Middle School Advisory Program is important as advocates help students transition from the type of support found in Lower School to the more independent learning environment of Upper School.

Due to the daily schedule and the fact that the 5th grade homeroom teachers have the time and opportunity to get to *really* know the students in their care, these teachers will serve as the advisors for the children in their homerooms. The advocates for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students will be drawn from individuals who have regular contact with the students at these grade levels.

Among the purposes of the advisory program are to:

- ensure that each student is known well at school by at least one adult who is that youngster's advocate;
- provide a venue in which every student can find ways of being successful within the academic and social options the school provides;
- arrange for the student to meet with the Middle School Counselor to discuss an issue if warranted;
- accompany the student in the proceedings resulting from any discipline or honor code infractions, serving as a source of support and guidance; and
- promote communication and coordination between home and school.

Short Term

At the end of the third grading period, students in grades 7 and 8 participate in Short Term. During this time, all normal activities cease. Students will participate in various activities provided by the faculty and members of the community. Additionally, students may opt to go on teacher sponsored educational trips.

Student Clubs and Activities

Houston Academy sponsors a variety of clubs and activities. Students are encouraged to participate in school activities as an important aspect of a well-rounded education. Some clubs may have dues. All clubs are asked to do a project for the school and for the community. Middle School clubs will meet one day per week during the Advisory period.

Some clubs and activities that have occurred in the past include spelling bees, Big Brother/Big Sister, field trips, Television Production Team, Student Government Association, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Computer Club, Art Club, Junior Scholars' Bowl, archery, robotics, and world languages clubs. Due to such factors as student interest and sponsorship availability, certain clubs may not be offered any given year.

In addition, if there is an interest on behalf of a group of students to organize a club or activity at Houston Academy, those students should attempt to locate a sponsor and, with the sponsor, arrange a meeting with the Head of Middle School to discuss the possibility of offering it.

Dances

School-sponsored dances may occur throughout the year and may be attended by students in grades 7 and 8. There is a '**no date**' policy in order to remove the pressure of dating at this young age. Each student is encouraged to attend the dances and to feel comfortable, or several students may wish to attend in a group. Students from other schools are not permitted at these dances. Girls should wear nice pants or a dress (NO cocktail dresses; appropriate length; NO strapless dresses). Boys should wear long pants and a collared shirt.

Intramurals and Athletics

Students in middle school may participate in the intramural program that occurs regularly after school during the year. These intramural gatherings may contain any combination of skill-based instruction, rules and regulations discussion, and physical competition. Any student is welcome to attend any intramural session.

Students in grades 7 and 8 are eligible to participate in Athletics. Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) requires students to have the following on file before they may start practice. All forms and paperwork should be turned into the head coach or Athletic Director. Any questions regarding HA Athletics or AHSAA transfer and eligibility rules please e-mail Athletic Director Marc Edge at edgem@houstonacademy.com.

- Physical Form
- Concussion Consent Form
- Participation Consent Form
- Copy of Birth Certificate

- Sportsmanship

The Physical Form, Concussion and Participation forms may be found on Houston Academy's website and also the AHSAA web site. The parent or legal guardian and student must sign the Physical Form, Concussion form and Participation form. If you are a new student you will be required to take the Sportsmanship course through the NFHS Learn Program. You will just need to take this course one time for your middle and high school eligibility.

Directions for Sportsmanship Requirement • Go to www.nfhslearn.com And register as a student. You will take the sportsmanship elective course for students. The course is free. Make sure you print the completion certificate at the end and give a copy to your coach or Athletic Director.

Academic Rule: Students entering 7th grade for the first time are eligible for participation in athletics. Students entering 8th grade must have passed at least five new subjects with a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in those subjects during the previous two semesters and summer school, if applicable.

Transfer Rule: Students transferring to HA and entering 7th grade for the first time are eligible. This is regardless of where they transfer from and where they live. Receiving financial aid from the school would be the only factor that could render them ineligible. Students transferring to HA and entering 8th grade will be ineligible for athletics for one calendar year unless they have made a bona fide move to within the Dothan City limits. If a student athlete has made a bona fide move to within the Dothan City limits, the student athlete must meet the following criteria to be eligible for participation in athletics:

1. Student must meet the course and grade requirements of the AHSAA; and
2. Student must not be receiving financial aid from Houston Academy.

A student transferring from a non-member school will be eligible at any grade level by proving they live within the Dothan City limits and meet the criteria listed above. All transfer students and bona fide moves must be pre-approved through the AHSAA.

Tryouts: Students are encouraged to contact coaches or the Athletic Director for tryout information. And dates for tryouts. Once tryout dates are established, they will be posted on the Tandem Calendar.

School Attendance on Game Day and Practice Day: Student athletes must be in school for a full day to be able to participate in any athletic game or match. The Athletic Director or Head of Middle School may grant permission on medical decisions that might determine if a student athlete may play or not play in a match that day. Student athletes must be in school for at least four class periods to be able to practice after school. Any student that is sent home during the day because of illness or as discipline may not return to school to practice or play in a game or match.

Tutorials: All student athletes must have an opportunity to attend a tutorial either before or after school without consequences from the coach. Coaches should communicate with the teacher and parents so that there are no conflicts of interest. The coach should, at all times, encourage the student athlete to attend the tutorial.

Summer Workouts: All student athletes at Houston Academy must be pre-enrolled before they may start any summer workouts. Transfer students must be officially withdrawn from their previous school and be officially enrolled at Houston Academy. Transfers must meet all of the AHSAA eligibility criteria before they may participate in any summer team competition.

Anticipated Athletic Teams for the 2018-2019 School Year

Houston Academy recognizes and promotes the importance of interscholastic activities. As a member of the Alabama High School Athletic Association the school offers a broad spectrum of organized programs in the following sports:

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cheerleading (V, JV)	Archery (club)	Baseball (V, JV, MS)
Boys Cross Country (V, JV, MS)	Boys Bowling (V)	Boys Golf (V)
Girls Cross Country (V, JV, MS)	Girls Bowling (V)	Girls Golf (V)
Football (V, JV)	Cheerleading (V, JV)	Boys Tennis (JV, V)
Volleyball (V, JV, JH)	Boys Basketball (V, JV, MS)	Girls Tennis (JV, V)
Boys Swimming (V)	Girls Basketball (V, JV, MS)	Boys Soccer (V, JV, MS)
Girls Swimming (V)		Girls Soccer (V, JV)
		Softball (JV, V)
		Boys Track & Field (V)
		Girls Track & Field (V)

Physical Education

PE is an integral part of the instructional program at Houston Academy. If your child cannot participate on a particular day, please send a note to your child’s teacher. Students are required to wear tennis shoes for physical education classes.

Students are required to wear an approved HA PE Uniform that is comprised of an HA athletic shirt and short (which must be an appropriate length). The uniform clothing is available via Raider Retail. As is the case with female skirts, there must be a significant separation between the shirt line and the bottom of the short. Students that do not dress in the appropriate PE uniform will not be permitted to participate in PE class and will therefore lose significant participation points. PE uniform violations will reported as regular uniform violations (minor infractions) and an accumulation of infractions will result in a contract and potential school suspension.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A missed school day is a missed opportunity to learn. Research shows a strong link between school attendance and academic achievement. Each day a student is absent or late, it deprives the opportunity for students to interact with both teachers and fellow students. In particular, the rigorous nature of Houston Academy's college preparatory curriculum demands punctual, regular attendance. Additionally, regular attendance is a skill necessary for success in college and in life. Finally, Alabama state law requires regular school attendance and requires all independent and private schools to vigorously enforce compulsory school attendance laws.

Absences and tardies from class due to school-related activities (such as field trips, athletic events, or disciplinary action) will not be counted as absences as long as the student attends the class/event.

If a student misses more than one class during the day, they are not permitted to participate in any after school activity of any type unless prior arrangements are made with the Middle School Head. For this reason, whenever possible, trips and dental or medical appointments should be scheduled so that students do not miss class.

All students returning to school following an absence, regardless of the reason, must report to the office with a note signed by a parent/guardian (not electronic) stating the reason for the absence.

All questions regarding attendance requirements should be directed to the Head of Middle School.

Appointments:

Students arriving after 8:00 AM must sign in at the office upon their arrival at school, where they will receive a pass to enter class.

Students who must depart campus before 3:15 p.m. for an appointment must present a note from a parent or guardian confirming the appointment prior to 7:55 a.m. The student will be given a pass in order to be dismissed from class at the appropriate time. No middle school student may leave campus during the day without signing out in the office.

Parents are **strongly** encouraged to schedule appointments after school or during periods when Houston Academy is not in session. *Please remember that students that miss more than 9 classes in any given class in a semester or 18 for the year may not be awarded credit regardless of the reason for the absence.*

Tardiness:

Students will be on time for all classes, meetings, and assemblies and are strictly prohibited from skipping such activities. For attendance purposes, if a student is more than 10 minutes late for a class without just cause and written explanation, he or she is considered absent from that class and if on campus, is considered "skipping school" (Major Infraction).

Students in grade 5 who arrive after 8:00 are considered tardy. If a student arrives after 8:00, the parent should sign the student in at the main office. The student will then walk him/herself to class. 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.

Students in grades 6 through 8 who are unable to be in their assigned location by 8:00 AM must sign in at the office and obtain a pass in order to be admitted to class. Students arriving after 8:00 AM will be counted absent; therefore, they must report to the office to sign in with an excuse.

The classroom teacher will record tardies to classes from A to G periods within PowerTeacher. All such tardies will be counted as unexcused unless the student has a note from a teacher or an administrator. Students who are tardy to class will be required to make up any missed work that is graded before leaving school that day.

Students who accumulate 3 tardies in a single class or 5 total tardies in a Semester will be assigned a Minor Infraction, serve detention and sign an Attendance Contract. Failure to comply with the Attendance Contract will result in further disciplinary action and the assignment of a Major Infraction, which may include Saturday School, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion, and the exam exemption privilege will be revoked.

Absences:

HA community members understand that excessive absences undermine the educational experience of a child and have a negative effect on academic performance. *Absences are no longer labeled as excused or unexcused; rather, the student is simply present or absent.*

In order for a student to receive credit for a course at Houston Academy and the right to exempt exams, the student must NOT be absent from the class for more than nine (9) classes during a semester. If a student meets/surpasses these limits, they will be assigned a Major Infraction and will go before the Middle School Discipline Committee.

The MS Discipline Council will review the absence justifications provided by the parents at the time of the absence and make a recommendation to the Head of School as to whether or not a student will receive credit for a class in which he or she has exceeded the allowable number of absences and any other disciplinary consequences to be assigned in accordance with the rules and regulations established within the Student Code of Conduct.

Valid reasons for missing class include:

- personal illness;
- court appearances;
- family illness, medical emergency, or death in the family;
- scheduled healthcare appointments for which the Middle School office was previously notified;
- or other absences previously approved by the Head of Middle School.

If a family trip must be scheduled during school days, the student will be given the opportunity to make up essential assignments provided prior arrangements have been made through the Head of Middle School. Except in cases of emergency, such arrangements should be made *at least* one week before the expected absence.

Athletes, cheerleaders, and Raiderettes must attend school all day on game day to be eligible to participate.

Written warnings will be sent to the student and his/her parent as absences accrue during a semester of study. The first warning letter will be sent after a student has accumulated five (5) absences in a semester.

Pre-arranged Absences:

The school's vacations are generous in both number and length; therefore, Houston Academy expects parents and students to observe the dates specified on the school calendar. Exceptions, which are requested in advance, may be considered. Only absences for which a Pre-Arranged Absence Form has been completed will be considered.

The Pre-Arranged Absence Form may be obtained from the office. The form must be approved by all of the student's teachers and submitted to the Head of Middle School no less than one week (5 school days) prior to the absence. The student should request all assignments from the teachers and make arrangements to make up, or take prior, any missed tests or quizzes. If a student's academic standing is in jeopardy, a pre-arranged absence will not be granted.

Drop off and Pick Up

Students in grades 5 and 6 can be dropped off and picked up from the Lower School horseshoe. Students in grades 7 and 8 can be dropped off and picked up from the Upper School parking lot. If a parent has a child in more than one grade, the students should be dropped off and picked up at the location reserved for the **older child**.

Parents picking up their 5th and 6th grade students can do so from the LS horseshoe but they **may not line up prior to 3:14 so as not to block up the horseshoe and disrupt the end of Lower School dismissal**. If a parent arrives early and is blocking access to a portion of the LS horseshoe, the parent will be asked to move.

5th and 6th grade students with siblings or carpool partners in grades 7 through 12 must be picked up from the Upper School parking lot. People coming to pick up 7th and 8th grade students should enter the US parking lot off of Buena Vista Drive from the direction of Burbank Street (**and NOT from Whatley Drive**).

Checking In/Out

Students may not leave campus for any reason during school hours without parental permission. Students arriving late or leaving early must have parent's permission and must sign in/out in the office. All spaces on the sign in/out sheet must be completed and someone in the office must initial the sheet.

Inclement Weather

In situations of early morning inclement weather, the school will notify the radio station WOOF at 99.7 and WTVY TV regarding plans for the day. Please tune into one of these stations for instructions. The AlertNow Notification Service will also be implemented.

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 by arranging this with the classroom teacher (grade 5) and the Counselor (grades 6, 7, and 8). 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 or online. Prescription medication must have a Physician's signature on the form.
- Parent or guardian should give the medication and completed form to the teacher, counselor, or office personnel.
- All medication must be in the original container or a labeled pharmacy bottle.

No medication will be administered to a student without a parent's written permission.

Lockers

Students in grades 7 and 8 must rent lockers at the beginning of the school year from the Student Council. Lockers should be locked during the day and after school. The school will not be responsible for items taken from unlocked lockers. Students will need to return their lock and locker in good order at the end of the year. Failure to do so will result in a \$10.00 fine.

The locker area will be locked between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. This will foster student responsibility and reduce vandalism. Students may not call school personnel to come to the school to open the locker area after school hours. No exceptions will be made. The school reserves the right at any time to search lockers on the school premises.

The lockers for students in grade 6 are located in the 6th grade classrooms and do not require a lock.

Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will be permitted to carry their backpacks between classes. In an attempt to foster organization and responsibility (while also limiting the weight of a backpack that a student must carry), students should only carry books for two classes at a time and their MacBook in its case.

Textbooks

Tuition does not include the cost of textbooks and workbooks. Students may purchase their books from any Internet service that offers textbooks or from another student. The school supplies list and a list of textbooks required for each course offered are available on the website at www.houstonacademy.com.

Lunch

Students in grades 5 - 8 may not leave campus for lunch unless they are in the company of their parent. The parent must sign the student out in the office. Telephone permission is not acceptable. The students must sign in upon returning to campus.

Students may bring lunch from home or use the catering service provided by the school. Grades 5 through 8 will eat lunch together in Dunning Hall. Each grade will sit in an assigned area in Dunning Hall, with 8th graders having the ability to sit at the picnic tables outside. Any student who wishes to leave the lunch area for any reason must get permission from one of the three teachers on duty in Dunning Hall each day. All students must be back in DH in time to hear the daily announcements.

All trash should be put in the containers provided. Trash is not to be left on the tables, floor, or around the picnic area. No open food or drink is permitted in classrooms, hallways, the library, locker room(s), the main office, or the gymnasiums. In the interest of student safety, fast food delivery will not be allowed. Approved water bottles are the only exception. If you are a parent and delivering lunch, you must come through the office and receive a Visitor's Pass.

Our school lunch service, managed and catered by Subs and More, provides an easy and nutritious lunch for students. Food from a variety of local restaurants can be ordered online and the choices change regularly. We encourage parents to take advantage of this wonderful service (orders can be placed from your phone or computer; information is available under the 'Parents' tab on the HA website) or to allow their student to pack a lunch. This is an important step toward responsibility and helps the student maintain a sense of independence that is lost when parents bring lunch daily.

Tammi Holman 7/21/2016 1:29 PM

Comment [1]: I love this!

Water Bottles

Proper hydration is essential to efficient brain function and effective learning; therefore, students are strongly encouraged to drink water during the school day. Students may carry non-breakable, translucent (they can be colored but must be see-through) water bottles. In order to be environmentally responsible, students are asked to use refillable bottles that can be refilled at water filling stations throughout the school. Refillable "Camelback" bottles are available for purchase at Raider Retail. No glass water bottles or soft-sided water bottles will be allowed in classrooms.

Raider Retail

Raider Retail (RR) is located in Dunning Hall and is staffed by HA PTO volunteers. It is open Monday through Friday 9:30-12:30. Houston Academy merchandise such as tee shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, hats, etc. can be purchased at Raider Retail. HA tee shirts can be worn with jeans on spirit days in place of uniforms. HA T-shirts and shorts are a requirement for Upper School PE.

In addition to spirit wear merchandise, snacks and drinks are sold during upper school break and during all lunches. There are healthy options available such as yogurt, cheese, fruit, and water in addition to routine snacks. For convenience, parents may open accounts for the students, but cash is accepted as well. Checks should be made out to HA PTO, and the responsible parent's name and cell phone number should be provided. A record is kept of what is bought and can be reviewed if desired. Since time is very limited during break and lunch, the student's name and items purchased are written down,

and after peak periods, it is deducted from the account card. For this reason, it is impossible for volunteers to follow any special instructions or know if a student reaches a negative balance. A volunteer will contact you by text when your child's balance is depleted.

All proceeds from spirit wear and snack sales are donated back to school in various ways. RR is a great volunteer opportunity and a good way to meet fellow parents as well as become familiar with the students.

UNIFORM POLICY

Lands End is the official uniform provider for Houston Academy. Some uniform pieces may also be purchased at Sandra Jean Uniforms in Dothan. All shirts, bottoms, and outerwear must have the HA logo and must be purchased from either Sandra Jean or from Lands' End.

Violations of the uniform policy will result in a Minor Infraction. If a student receives three uniform violations during a semester, they will be sent to the Discipline Committee and assigned a Major Infraction. The consequence for Major Infraction for violation of the Uniform Policy is that the student will be required to serve detention and subsequently sign a Uniform Contract that sets a higher standard in the future, ie. Saturday Detention for a 4th violation, Internal Suspension for the 5th violation, External Suspension for a 6th Violation, etc. HA faculty may confiscate any items that are worn that are not part of the approved Uniform Policy and will return those items at the end of the academic day.

OUTERWEAR

The following items are considered part of the Uniform Policy and are available through Lands End or Sandra Jean:

- HA Squall Parka or Lined Rain Jacket (navy or royal blue)
- HA Puffer Jacket from Sandra Jean (royal blue)
- HA Fleece Jacket or Vest (navy or royal blue)
- HA Cardigan (girls)

HA apparel that does not meet the outerwear criteria above (blankets, sweatshirts, hoodies, warmups, etc.) that are sold by Raider Retail or obtained through an HA team, club, or organization may **ONLY** be worn on Raider Days (Fridays).

GIRLS' 5-8

The following items are a part of Houston Academy's Uniform Dress Code for girls:

- White, royal blue, or light blue HA polo shirt (long or short sleeve) *athletic or knit material.
- HA button-down white shirt.
- HA khaki short or pant of athletic or knit material.
- HA khaki or plaid skirt/skort *must meet the length requirement (skirt = there should be a minimum separation of five inches between the skirt hem and the shirttail)

GIRLS' GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Uniforms must be neat and clean. Clothing with stains, holes, tears, fraying cannot be worn at school.
- No article of clothing worn at school at any time may advertise/promote/reflect drugs, alcohol, or contain any slogans or words that may be deemed inappropriate or offensive by the school administration.
- **No athletic/club jackets, sweatshirts, etc. may be worn except on Raider Day.**
- Belts (solid brown/black) must be worn at all times if belt loops are on the uniform.
- Socks of solid color (white, blue, grey, black) are required. If the brand is visible, it must be a single logo and may not include stripes, bands, etc.
- Athletic (tennis) shoes which are predominately white, black, grey, or blue OR dark (brown or black) closed shoe (wallabee, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) are acceptable. No open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, boots*, heels of any kind, etc. are allowed. **Boots are not allowed, not even on Raider Days.**
- Tights and leggings (seamless without visible brand names) that reach the ankle, and knee socks must be **solid** in color (blue, grey, black or white).
- Skorts, skirts, and shorts may not be short or revealing. Skirts should reflect modesty.
- Any visible items worn under collared uniform must be solid white, grey, or royal blue and may not contain any visible logos.
- Hats, caps, sunglasses, or other headgear are not permitted on campus at any time from arrival until dismissal.
- Females may wear headbands that are solid white, grey, black, or royal blue. These head bands may not have extraneous decoration (i.e. cat ears).
- Clothing should fit well, be modestly cut, and should not be too tight or too baggy.
- No cleavage should show, and the midsection must be fully covered, even when the arms are raised.
- Distracting make-up, hair, or jewelry is not allowed. Hair must be a natural color.
- Visible tattoos are not allowed.
- Piercings must be confined to the ear and not be distracting.

The administration retains the right to determine if any article of clothing is inappropriate.

BOYS' GRADES 5-8

The following items are a part of Houston Academy's Uniform Dress Code for boys and are available through Lands End:

- White, royal blue or light blue HA polo shirt (long or short sleeve)* of athletic or knit material.
- HA button-down white shirt.
- HA short or pant of athletic or knit material.

BOYS' GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Uniforms must be neat and clean. Clothing with stains, holes, tears, fraying should not be worn at school.
- Clothing should fit well, not too tight or too baggy.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- Belts (solid brown/black) must be worn at all times if belt loops are on the uniform.
- Socks of solid color (white, blue, grey, black) are required. If the brand is visible, it must be a single logo and may not include stripes, bands, etc.
- Athletic (tennis) shoes which are predominately white, black, grey, or blue OR dark (brown or black) closed shoe (wallabee, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) are acceptable. No open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, boots*, heels of any kind, etc. are allowed. **Boots are not allowed, not even on Raider Days.**
- No article of clothing worn at school at any time may advertise/promote/reflect drugs, alcohol, or contain any slogans or words that may be deemed inappropriate or offensive by the school administration.
- **No athletic/club jackets, sweatshirts, etc. may be worn except on Raider Days.**
- Any visible items worn under collared uniform must be solid white, grey, or royal blue and may not contain any visible logos.
- Hair may be no longer than the top of the collar. No “mohawks” or other distracting haircuts or hair colors are allowed. Hair may not cover the face or eyes at any time.
- Hats, caps, sunglasses, or other headgear are not permitted on campus at any time from arrival until dismissal.
- No visible body piercing or tattoos are allowed.
- Male students cannot remove their shirts on campus at any time.

The administration retains the right to determine if any article of clothing is inappropriate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students are required to wear an approved HA PE t-shirt and athletic short (which must be an appropriate length). Students that do not dress in the appropriate PE uniform will not be permitted to participate in PE class and will therefore lose significant participation points. If students are training for specific sports during a PE period, they may request permission to wear an approved alternative HA PE uniform.

RAIDER DAYS

Fridays are designated as “Raider Days”. On Raider Days, the dress code is relaxed; however, students are still held to high standards and a defined set of rules and regulations. On these days, students may wear any approved HA T-shirt, sweatshirt, or athletic jersey/jacket issued through clubs, teams, or PTO/Raider Retail sales. Students may wear blue jeans (long) with no holes or fraying; otherwise, they must wear regular uniform bottoms. Athletic shoes continue to be the recommended shoe, especially if the student is enrolled in PE or Athletics and Fitness. Students must wear regular school uniforms if they elect not to participate in Raider Day.

SPIRIT DAYS

Students are encouraged to participate in Spirit Days by dressing out of uniform according to the designated theme that is approved by the Upper School Head. Although uniforms are not required these days, student attire must still be appropriate and considered to be in “good taste”. No short shorts/skirts, tank tops, headwear, face paint, or other distracting objects are permitted unless specifically specified by the administrative team. In all cases, it is recommended that students seek clarification of the specific rules for theme days vs. interpreting the rules and regulations incorrectly.

Library Policy

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

1. Responsible care of library materials is stressed to all students.
2. 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.
3. Students who have overdue books at the end of the year will not receive their report cards until the library obligation is cleared.
4. The library does not charge fines for overdue books, but it will assess students for damaged or lost books and/or media materials.
5. Books are checked out on an individual basis. The student who checks out a book is responsible for returning it to the library.
6. The computers in the library fall under the same guidelines as all other school computers.

Copy Machines

Students may not use the school’s copy machines. The librarian has a copy machine that students may use at a cost of \$.25 per sheet.

Chewing Gum

Middle School students are not allowed to chew gum on campus.

Visitors

Parents, guests, and visitors must check in at the main office and receive a name badge to be on campus. This badge should be worn for the duration of the visit. Unauthorized visitors are not allowed on the campus. No fast-food delivery will be allowed. For the safety of our students, any parent delivering lunch to their child **MUST** check in through the front office.

Telephones

Students may use the phone provided for them in the office for brief communication and emergency calls.

Cell Phones/Other Wireless Electronics

Students may not use cell phones or other wireless electronics except with permission. They must be turned off **and kept either in one’s locker or in one’s backpack/bookbag**

to eliminate student temptation to access and use it. Classrooms are NO CELL PHONE zones unless they are being used in instruction. Cell phones must be placed in holders in the classroom. Students in Middle School grades are not to be on their cell phones during break or lunch without permission from a supervising teacher. If a student needs to check a message or email during this time, they will be allowed with permission. The school is a place for academics; therefore, use of any of these items without special permission will result in the items being confiscated.

Technology

All technology falls under the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which is reviewed, read, and signed by each student and each parent at the beginning of the school year. The AUP establishes the standards and expectations for use of technology at Houston Academy.

DISCIPLINE

CONDUCT

The concept of respect is at the heart of Houston Academy's expectations concerning the behavior of its students. As a college preparatory institution, Houston Academy wishes to create an environment in which all students may learn and in which students and teachers, regardless of their differences, feel comfortable. In fact, at the core of our mission as an independent school that seeks to prepare our students for responsible participation in a global society, we are inclusive and welcoming of all people, regardless of religion, race, creed, national origin, or socio-economic status. At Houston Academy, we embrace the diversity of our community and attempt to learn from our differences and build on our students' and faculty's individual strengths. In short, respect for each other's rights and respect for our institution affirms the ethic central to our school's culture and ethos.

The discipline system is based on detentions, referrals, and recommendations from the Discipline Committee. The primary responsibility for classroom management lies with the teacher who may issue a detention for any violation of class guidelines. The issuing teacher will monitor the detention, and the Head of Middle School will be notified. Detentions will be served before school, during break, or after school. A student will have one day's notice so as to arrange transportation or to notify coaches.

For repeated behaviors or more serious rule violations, the Head of Middle School will meet with the student and all involved parties. The Head of Middle School will determine an appropriate response or decide to call a meeting of the Discipline Committee. Parents will be notified should the situation warrant more than a conversation between a student and the Head of Middle School. Should a meeting of the Discipline Committee be called, a recommendation of disciplinary action will be made to the Head of Middle School. The recommendation may include (in order of severity) detention, Saturday School, on-campus isolation (OCI), in-school suspension (ISS), off-campus suspension (OCS), or a student's separation from Houston Academy.

There are no academic punishments for disciplinary offenses at HA. That is, academic work missed during a disciplinary-related suspension may be made up for full credit. Honor offenses, which violate the integrity of an assignment/assessment, may result in a zero or reduced credit being assigned for that assignment/assessment.

A student with a serious disciplinary infraction or with repeated disciplinary infractions may be placed on probation for a specified period of time. Probation means that further violations of the rules and/or Houston Academy Honor Code will more than likely result in that student's separation from school. Separation from the School also may occur when a student's behavior is so flagrant and/or repetitive as to be intolerable in the opinion of the Head of Middle School and the Headmaster.

RESPECT/BULLYING

As a school community, we aspire to maintain an environment where all members may work, study, and enjoy freedom from harassment or bullying of any kind. Harassment may include, but is not limited to verbal abuse (oral or written); obscene or suggestive remarks; display of sexually explicit, demeaning, or offensive materials; or comments which are demeaning with respect to race, religion, ethnic origin, physical characteristics or abilities, appearance, sexual orientation, or gender. Actions considered to be bullying are any written, verbal, or implied communication that may be threatening, intimidating, or demeaning. This also includes bystanders. These actions are prohibited at all times and in all circumstances (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.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

It is important that schools develop a discipline hierarchy to help students, teachers, and parents identify, understand, and effectively handle the different levels of negative behaviors or offenses that commonly occur in a middle school setting. Educational researchers R. Marzano, J. Marzano, and D. Pickering (2005) have identified three levels of offenses:

Level 1 Offenses: Also known as "Minor Infractions," these are offenses that occur when students violate the rules and procedures that have been established by the school and individual classroom teachers.

The teacher has primary responsibility for the classroom environment and the coach has primary responsibility for the athletic environment. Therefore, teacher and coaches should handle disciplinary actions for minor infractions while students are under their supervision. Minor infractions may include being tardy to class or school, failing to return notices or tests sent to parents, disobeying general classroom rules regarding behavior, disrupting class, congregating in the parking lot, sitting in cars during the school day, dressing out of uniform, or using cell phones/wireless electronics in unauthorized circumstances. Minor offenses may become major after repeated occurrences. The teacher who is referring the student for a minor infraction will handle detention. School service is utilized as the primary form of detention. Saturday School will be assigned when additional consequences are necessary to help students comply with rules and policies. Saturday School hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on assigned dates. Discipline reports are sent to parents informing them of all infractions committed by their son/daughter.

LEVEL 1 OFFENSES:

1. Minor classroom misbehavior

2. Missing assigned detention
3. Inappropriate language
4. Misuse of technology
5. Driving violation
6. Dress code violation
7. Chewing gum
8. Food/drink in a non-designated area
9. Misuse of cell phone

Level 2 Offenses:

Also known as “Major Infractions,” these offenses are ‘serious misconduct’ offenses and may occur either outside of the classroom or inside the classroom. These offenses cause a major disruption in the classroom, undermine the sanctity of the learning community, and may be chronic and continuous. Such infractions may include harassment of any form, use of profane language, insubordination, theft, and vandalism.

For more severe cases of misconduct during school activities, field trips, or athletic events, students may receive detention or other disciplinary action as deemed appropriate. In Level 2 Offenses, individual teachers refer the individual(s) involved to the appropriate discipline committee (see description/ explanation of the process below). The committee may impose a variety of types of consequences including but not limited to: detention, conversation with parents, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Suspensions may be academic or nonacademic. Students who are on any kind of suspension will not be allowed to participate in school functions or athletic events on suspension days. Students must be aware that they are representatives of Houston Academy on or off campus and as such are answerable to the school. *The Discipline Committee will maintain a list of infractions and interventions for each student.*

LEVEL 2 OFFENSES:

1. Fighting
2. Willful destruction or vandalism of school, another student’s or school personnel’s property
3. Sexual harassment
4. Consistent minor infractions
5. Lack of respect for faculty, administration, or other students
6. Lying, forging, or stealing
7. Harassment/bullying of any kind
8. Leaving campus without permission
9. Skipping school or class
10. Any action deemed a Level 2 Offense by the Discipline Committee

Level 3 Offenses:

These offenses are “Major Infractions” that are of sufficient magnitude that suspension or expulsion is mandatory. Such infractions may include such things as threats, illegal substance possession/ distribution, and weapons violations.

Level 3 Offenses should be reported directly to the Head of Middle School, who will document the incident, and after a consultation the Middle School Counselor, the student's Advocate, and the Head of School, determine consequences and contact parents. *The Head of Middle School will maintain a list of infractions and interventions for each student.*

Level 3 Offenses:

1. Possession or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or tobacco products
2. Possession or consumption of illegal or harmful drugs
3. Possession of weapons (firearms, knives, fireworks, etc.)

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The Discipline Committee is the representative voice of the Middle School community on all disciplinary matters. When a violation of school rules has occurred, the Head of Middle School may refer the matter to the Discipline Committee. The Middle School Discipline Committee is comprised of three faculty members who teach in the middle school. Depending upon the incident, as many as two students may also be called to serve on the Middle School Discipline Committee. The committee members will interview individuals involved with and/or were witness to the incident in order to gather the data about the facts of the case, maintaining a written record of the proceedings. The committee should involve the student's advisor in the proceedings and may also communicate with the Middle School Counselor for input. Upon completion of the data gathering the committee will render a suggested, appropriate consequence(s) for the student and situation and communicate their opinion to the Head of Middle School. The Head of Middle School will then consider the opinion of the committee and communicate the final decision to the students and parents.

Computer Use Policies

Houston Academy seeks to place the latest technological advances into the hands of skilled, active learners. Providing Internet access to HA students promotes educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and research. Responsibilities come with the use of the Internet. It is, therefore, important that all parents are familiar with the school's policies regarding use of the computers, which also includes all policies and procedures listed, and sign by parents and students in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

1. School computers are for educational use only. Students may not play games using the computers at any time. Music or videos may be played only when part of a teacher's assignment (i.e. music added to PowerPoint presentation).
2. Students may not send messages of any kind using school computers. This includes the use of ICQ, AIM, Microsoft Messenger, all other chat software, and console messages.
3. Food and drink are not allowed in the lab.
4. Students may not install programs on a computer without specific permission from the Director of Technology or teacher. No games, utilities, or plug-ins should be downloaded without permission.
5. Students may not use school printers to print invitations, flyers, campaign information, game cheat sheets, or any other material deemed non-educational or inappropriate.

6. Students are not to open, read, or alter another student's work either on the computer or on the network. Any attempt to copy another student's work will be treated as cheating and/or plagiarism as addressed in the Student Handbook.
7. If a student causes damage to the software configuration or the hardware of a computer, he/she will be liable for the cost of repair and/or replacement of the equipment.
8. Students may not enter any area protected by a password unless authorized to do so.

Honor Code

An Honor Code, drafted by Houston Academy students and faculty and regulated by an Honor Council, was approved and implemented since the 1998 school year.

Honesty is a fundamental principle upon which our society is based. It is required to create the atmosphere in which friendship, scholarship, and trust can grow. In the strictest sense, honor is a uniquely personal matter. The Honor System cannot and will not force the student to become honorable. It does, however, aid the student in realizing the benefits of integrity to the individual and to the academic community.

The Honor System embodies the concept of personal honor in a framework of law and practice. The result is a system of conducting examinations, writing papers, and performing other academic endeavors with regard to individual honor and without faculty proctoring. The system promotes trust between students and their teachers and peers. The responsibility for maintaining the validity of academic work is placed on all students. It is upon these goals and principles that the Houston Academy Honor Code is based.

All Houston Academy Middle School students are expected to uphold specific standards of conduct:

1. Students will exhibit honesty in all endeavors.
2. Students will encourage active participation in the spirit and ethics of the Honor Code.
3. At the end of each assignment, students will sign the following statement:

“My signature affirms my honor.”

Any infraction of the code will be referred to the Honor Council, which will serve as the mediator for the Honor Code.

Types of Offenses

No document or set of procedures can cover every possible contingency, and not set of guidelines for conduct ensures that the standards of the school community will be upheld. In the final analysis, good will, compassion, and common sense should guide in dealings with all students. Any honor violation witnessed by a faculty member or student should be reported to the Head of Middle School, who will then decide next steps. In grades 5 and 6, the teacher(s) in question, the 5th and 6th Grade Discipline Committee, and/or the Head of Middle School will deal with the violations. In grades 7 and 8, the teacher(s) in question, the 7th and 8th Grade Discipline Committee, the Middle School Honor Council, and/or the Head of Middle School will deal with the violations. Violations of the Honor Code include the following:

1. Plagiarism
2. Cheating on Examinations
3. Lying
4. Stealing
5. Sabotage
6. Falsification

The Honor Council will not regard claims of ignorance, unintentional error, or academic or personal pressures as an adequate defense for violations of the Honor Code.

Organization of the Middle School Honor Council

The Middle School Honor Council will operate independently of all other student organizations and will consist of the following:

- The Dean of Students
- 2 Faculty Members

Preliminary Procedures

Prior to any hearing, a preliminary investigation of any violation will be held. After the investigation, the Head of Middle School will contact parents, and a trial date will be scheduled. The students, and faculty advisors will work closely with the Head of Middle School to ensure confidentiality and to protect the rights of the student(s).

Student Rights

All students have been given notice of this Honor Code by virtue of its publication. Regardless of whether a student has actually read the handout or handbook, a student is charged with the knowledge of it. Ignorance of rules is never a defense.

Students who appear before the Honor Council will be granted certain rights:

- They will be provided written statements describing the charges against them and their rights and responsibilities.
- They will not have the nature or disposition of Honor Council proceedings appear on their transcripts. If found guilty, the student will have the infraction placed in an Honor Council file.

Trial

If the accused is found guilty, the Council through a majority vote will determine the consequences. All consequences will be presented to the Head of Middle School and the Headmaster for final approval. If there is a tie, the Head of Middle School will vote to break the tie. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Detention: The Council will specify the number of days.
- Community service requirements: The Council will specify the type and number of hours.
- Alternatives: The Council may recommend another suitable consequence, e.g., an approved apology, revocation of senior privileges, or Saturday school.
- Academic consequences: could result in a zero for an assignment, test, etc.
- On-campus Isolation
- In-Campus Suspension
- Off-Campus Suspension
- Separation from the school

COURSES

5th Grade

- English
- Reading
- Mathematics
- History
- Science
- Art/Chorus/Band/Computer/Spanish/Physical Education/Guidance

6th Grade

- English
- Mathematics
- History
- Science
- Art/Chorus/Band/Computer/Latin/Spanish/Physical Education/Drama

7th Grade

- English
- Pre-Algebra CP or Honors
- Life Science
- Geography
- Spanish Ia, French Ia, Latin Ia
- Art/Physical Education/Chorus/Band/Drama

8th Grade

- English
- Pre-Algebra, Algebra I Honors or College Preparatory
- Physical Science
- World History I
- Spanish Ib, French Ib, Latin Ib
- Art/Physical Education/Chorus/Band/Drama/Print Design/Digital Design