

UPPER SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Houston Academy

2022-23



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2022-2023 YEARLY SCHOOL CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

New Student Technology Training	August ???
Freshmen and New US Student Orientation	August 15
First Day of School	August 16
Booster Night (5:30 PM)	August 18
Open House (6:00 PM)	August 23
Labor Day (no school)	September 5
NJHS Induction Ceremony	September 21
NHS Induction Ceremony	September 21
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00 (Grades 9-12)	September 21
End of Quarter 1	October 7
Fall Break	October 10-11
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00 (Grades 9-12)	October 26
Veterans Day (no school)	November 11
Thanksgiving Holidays	November 21-25
End of Quarter 2	December 15
Semester 1 Exams	December 16, 19, 20
Holiday Break	December 21 – January 3
School Resumes	January 4
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)	January 16
Faculty/Staff Professional Development Day (no school for students)	February 16
Winter Break	February 17-20
End Quarter 3	March 10
Short-Term	March 20-24
Spring Break	March 27-31
Good Friday	April 7
Jr./Sr. Prom	April 15
Senior Recognition (11:00 AM)	April 26
Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00 (Grades 9-12)	April 27
AP Exams	May 1-12
Last Day for Seniors	May 12
Senior Award Ceremony (2:00 PM)	May 12
Senior Exams	May 15-17
End of Quarter 4	May 18
US Award Ceremonies	May 22
Review Day Early Dismissal	May 22
US Graduation (6:00 PM)	May 25
Semester 2 Exams	May 23-26

IMPORTANT HOUSTON ACADEMY LINKS

- Houston Academy website: <http://www.houstonacademy.com>
- We Lunch It (Subs & More): <http://www.welunchit.com/>
- PowerSchool: <https://houstonacademy.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

HA STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Houston Academy is a student-centered institution that educates students within the Wiregrass Area. This handbook is intended to define the rights and responsibilities of school members, enabling all members to learn and function in harmony within the community.

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.

PHILOSOPHY

Houston Academy is a college preparatory school. As such, the curriculum is implemented with the goal of developing our students into outstanding scholars and citizens. The teachers who implement the educational program 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 to participate in the increasingly global world. HA strives to help individual students to develop their personal, intellectual, physical, artistic, and social selves to their utmost capability. We endeavor to develop students who enjoy thinking, analyzing, and expressing. We intend for our students to make a significant difference in their community.

Admission to Houston Academy is without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, 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 has zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind against students, parents, 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 in accordance with the proper chain of command.

COMMUNICATION/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. Issues will be resolved as privately as possible and with the best interest of the student(s) at heart.

Upper School students are encouraged to speak directly to their teacher(s) when they have an academic issue or concern or to the counselor for social-emotional concerns. Parents

should only become involved after the student has attempted to resolve the issue independently. If a student is unable to resolve the issue or are dissatisfied with the appropriate faculty member's response, the parent should request a meeting with the teacher and student. If the issue remains unresolved, a joint meeting between the Head of Upper School and the involved parties will be scheduled. As a last resort, the parent may request the intervention of the Headmaster. The Board of Trustees is not involved in the daily operations of the school and exists to create plans and to set policies that ensure the long-term future of the school.

HONOR CODE & HONOR SYSTEM

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 Upper School students are expected to uphold specific standards of conduct:

- Students will exhibit honesty in all endeavors and encourage active participation in the spirit and ethics of the Honor Code.
- Honor Pledges: At the beginning of each test or quiz and at the bottom of each assignment or student piece of work, students will sign the following statement pledging that they have not received, given or used unauthorized assistance of any kind: "My signature affirms my honor."

Students should always assume that **ALL** assignments are "pledged" unless the teacher specifically states otherwise. Any infraction of the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council, which will serve as the mediator for the Honor Code.

TYPES OF HONOR 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 Dean of Students who will report it to the Honor Council. Honor violations include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Copying or cheating of any kind
- Unauthorized sharing or receiving of another student's work
- Sabotage
- Falsification
- Lying
- Stealing
- Unauthorized use of another person's property

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 HONOR COUNCIL

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

- 5 Senior Representatives (the four Juniors from the previous year and one member elected at large)
- 4 Junior Representatives
- 4 Sophomore Representatives
- Dean of Students

The Chief Justice, a Senior, will be elected by majority vote of the elected Honor Council. New students must wait one year before being eligible for the Council.

A quorum of nine (9) student representatives must be met in order to hold any meeting or trial.

MEMBERSHIP/ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for election to the Honor Council, a student must have attended Houston Academy for the two previous semesters and have an exemplary disciplinary and honor code record. Annual elections will take place during the last month of school. Members of the Discipline Committee cannot be members of the Honor Council.

If a member of the Honor Council commits a Major Infraction, they will automatically be dismissed from the Council and the Dean of Students will name a replacement based on the results of the original voting process.

HONOR CODE VIOLATION PROCEEDINGS

Prior to any hearing, a preliminary investigation of any violation will be held. After the investigation, the Dean of Students will contact parents, and a trial date will be scheduled. The students and faculty advisors will work closely with the Dean of Students 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 statements describing the charges against them and their rights and responsibilities.
- The Dean of Students will work with the Honor Council and the accused student to ensure confidentiality and to protect the rights of the student(s) including civil and privacy rights.

HONOR COUNCIL HEARING AND CONSEQUENCES

The Council will determine guilt through a majority vote. In the case of a tie, the Chief Justice will cast a vote to break the tie. The Honor Council will come to consensus on the consequences and those consequences will be presented to the Head of Upper School except in the case of Expulsion in which the Headmaster gives final approval. In addition to the consequences assigned, if the guilty party is a member of the National or the Junior National Honor Society, the violation will be reported to the Faculty Council for consideration. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Consequence: Zero for part or all of an assignment/assessment and/or loss of credit for the course.
- Detention
- Saturday School
- Honor Probation
- Loss of privilege (exam, free period, etc.);
- In-School-Suspension (ISS)*
- Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)*
- Dismissal
- Expulsion
- Alternative Consequences: an approved apology, redoing work, revocation of senior privileges, community service, etc.

**Students that are suspended may not participate or be a spectator at any school related activities (practice/game/etc.).*

STUDENT CODE OF 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, HA offers and honors a setting in which all students can learn in a safe and caring environment. At Houston Academy, we embrace the diversity of our community, learn from our differences, and build on our students' and faculties' 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. In the final analysis, good will, compassion, kindness, respect for individuality, and common sense should guide in dealings with all students.

RESPECT/HARASSMENT/BULLYING/HAZING

As a school community, we aspire 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 discipline.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to verbal 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, 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.

HA students are expected to be UPSTANDERS, not BYSTANDERS. Bystanders may be assigned an infraction for not taking actions to intervene during any conflict or destructive situation. Any retribution taken against students that report incidents will be treated as Major Infractions (defined below).

DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

The HA Student Code of Conduct is based on a tier system with all infractions classified as Minor or Major Infractions. Students must be aware that they are representatives of Houston Academy on and off campus and as such are answerable to the school and held to high standards at all times.

MINOR INFRACTIONS

The primary responsibility for classroom and school management lies with the teachers, administrators, and adults on campus or supervising activities held off campus. Teachers will manage and assign discipline consequences for Minor Infractions of class/school rules and

report the infraction to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will assign consequences for general violations of school rules (uniform, cell phone, tardies, etc.).

Minor Infractions include but are not limited to:

- Accumulation of tardies
- Minor classroom misbehavior/disruptions
- Minor disruptions of any school activity
- Not complying with general school/classroom rules
- Inappropriate language or gestures
- Minor misuse of technology
- Not being prepared for class (HW, appropriate materials/books, etc.)
- Not disposing of waste appropriately
- Driving or parking violation
- Dress code violation
- Lanyard/ID violation
- Food/drink violation
- Minor public display of affection (handholding, sustained embraces, sitting or standing with any part of the body draped on, around, or over another's, etc.)
- Being present in an unsupervised area or area off limits to students
- Minor violation of cell phone or Acceptable Use of Technology policy
- Failing to return any communication in a timely manner
- Failing to attend assigned tutorial
- Missing an assigned detention
- Other minor actions that are not consistent with the mission of the school

Consequences for Minor Infractions include but are not limited to:

- Detention(s)
- Saturday School
- Restitution
- Revoking privileges
- Application of a Contract (discipline, academic, uniform, attendance, etc.)
- Counseling
- Reflection papers or assignments

The teacher or the Dean of Students will assign one or more consequences from the list above depending upon the severity of the infraction. Please note that consequences will vary depending upon the infraction and/or extenuating/aggravating circumstances.

The student and the Dean of Students must be notified of all Minor Infractions. Detentions will be served before, during, after school, or on a Saturday. In order to arrange transportation or to notify coaches, a student and their guardian will be given a minimum of one day's notice before the time of any detention to be served outside of regular school hours.

If the same Minor Infraction is repeated more than three times in a semester or if five or more Minor Infractions are accumulated in any given semester, it will be treated as a Major Infraction.

MAJOR INFRACTIONS

For repeated behaviors or more serious rule violations, the Dean of Students and Head of the Upper School will meet with all parties involved and complete a preliminary investigation into the incident. If the Administrative Team deems that a Major Infraction occurred, the student and the guardian will be informed and the case will be managed by the Administrative Team or sent to the Discipline Committee or Honor Council (depending upon the nature of the situation). A student may be suspended from regular schooling processes during the investigation and discipline process.

Major Infractions include but are not limited to:

- Repetition of minor infractions (3 of the same Minor Infraction or 5 total Minors in a semester)
- Safety and security breaches that endanger the school community
- Possession or consumption of alcohol, tobacco or tobacco products including electronic cigarettes
- Possession or consumption of illegal or harmful drugs or drug paraphernalia;
- Possession of weapons (firearms, knives, fireworks, etc.)
- Dishonesty/Lying/ Insubordination
- Fighting or aggressive physical contact of any kind
- Stealing/Theft
- Vandalism/Willful destruction of property
- Disrespect
- Harassment/bullying/hazing/racism/intimidation of any kind
- Sexual harassment
- Inappropriate public displays of affection (kissing, inappropriate touching, etc.)
- Misuse of technology and or accessing inappropriate online content at school
- Taking still images, video/audio recording of a community member without their knowledge or consent
- Use of school logo without permission or the creation of fake school or community member social media accounts without permission
- Leaving campus without permission or skipping class
- Failing to report or intervene in a situation that causes harm to an HA community member
- Violation of any Contract (admission, attendance, uniform, discipline, probation, etc.) assigned by the school
- Violations of the Honor Code
- Any action that significantly disturbs the learning environment
- Any action that causes harm to an individual or the community's/school's integrity
- Any additional action that is deemed a Major Infraction by the Administration

Should the Head of School, Headmaster, Discipline Committee, or Honor Council conclude that a Major Infraction was committed, one or more consequences from the list below will be implemented taking into consideration extenuating and aggravating situations. Consequences for Major Infractions may include but are not limited to:

- Revoking of privileges
- Restitution
- External Counseling
- Saturday School
- Loss of privilege (exam, free period, etc.)
- Community Service
- In-School Isolation (ISI)
- In-School Suspension (ISS)*
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)*
- Suspension and or removal from extracurricular activities/teams
- Application of a Contract (discipline, academic, uniform, attendance, etc.)
- Disciplinary Probation
- Recommendation for Dismissal or Expulsion (must be approved by the Headmaster)

**Students that are suspended may not participate in any school related or extracurricular activities (practice/game/etc.).*

Please note:

- One or more consequences from the list may be assigned depending upon the severity of the situation.
- Consequences will vary depending upon the infraction and/or extenuating/aggravating circumstances.
- If a member of the National Junior Honor Society or the National Honor Society commits any Major Infraction (Student Code of Conduct or Honor Code), it will be reported to the NJHS/NHS Faculty Council. Upon review, the student may be separated from the Honor Society.
- Major Infractions will be reported to Coaches and they may apply additional consequences in accordance with the HA Athletic Code of Conduct.
- Students that are suspended, dismissed, or expelled from school during the upper school career (9-12) are responsible for reporting the incident to universities when applying. Houston Academy will report significant disciplinary incidents as well.

DISCIPLINARY PROBATION AND DISMISSAL/EXPULSION

All students that commit a Major Infraction will be placed on Disciplinary Probation for a specified period of time unless the act is so serious that the Discipline Committee recommends and the Headmaster approves dismissal or expulsion. Being on probation means that further violations of the Student Code of Conduct (Discipline or Honor) may result in the expansion of the existing contract for that student and/or his/her dismissal/expulsion from school.

If a student is expelled from the school or the family chooses to withdraw their child before the discipline process is completed, the family is not eligible to return to HA.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The Discipline Committee is the representative voice of the Upper School community on disciplinary matters. The Head of the Upper School must approve and ensure the implementation of all recommendations of the Disciplinary Committee with the exception of dismissal or expulsion which is managed by the Headmaster.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The Discipline Committee will be formed by four student representatives (three students to hear cases and an alternate), four faculty members (three teachers to hear cases and an alternate), and the Dean of Students who acts as the Chair. Of the four students selected, one will be a Senior, two will be Juniors (one member and one alternate), and one will be a Sophomore.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for selection to the Discipline Committee, a student must have attended Houston Academy for the two previous semesters and have excellent character and exemplary discipline and attendance records. In order to create more leadership opportunities for US students, students cannot serve on the Honor Council and the Discipline Committee simultaneously.

If a member of the Discipline Committee commits a Major Infraction during their term, they will automatically be dismissed from the Discipline Committee and the Dean of Students will name a replacement.

PROCESS FOR SELECTION OF STUDENT AND FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES

Each grade level Advisor will nominate a maximum of two students (that meet the aforementioned criteria) to potentially serve and be selected to the Discipline Committee. Students that served on the committee the prior year and ended the year in good standing are automatically nominated for the next year. During the last month of the regular school year, current Freshmen and Junior students will vote and select representatives. Sophomore students will vote for two representatives (the highest vote getter will be the representative and the other will be the alternate). A student cannot simultaneously serve on both the Discipline Committee and the Honor Council.

Faculty representatives on the Discipline Committee will be selected by the Upper School Head and Dean of Students.

COMMITTEE MEMBER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the duty of all members of the Discipline Committee to be positive leaders within the community and to model exemplary behavior at all times. If a committee member does not fulfill their responsibilities or if they are brought before the Discipline Committee or Honor

Council and are found to have committed a Major Infraction, he/she will be removed from the Committee.

The Dean of Students will call and preside over the meeting. One member of the Discipline Committee will serve as secretary at each meeting and record decisions.

It is the responsibility of each member of the Discipline Committee to maintain confidentiality. If the Dean of Students believes that a member of the committee has broken confidentiality, they may be removed from the Committee, and the Dean of Students will name a replacement.

REGULAR DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Prior to any Discipline Committee meeting, the Dean of Students or the Head of the Upper School will perform a preliminary investigation into any discipline incident to determine if a Major Infraction was committed. The Dean of Students will schedule the Discipline Committee Meeting and inform the student and his/her guardian that the student will be brought before the Discipline Committee to review a possible Major Infraction of the Student Code of Conduct. The Dean of Students will present his/her findings, and the accused student will be provided the opportunity to explain his/her actions. Having heard all of the testimonies, the Discipline Committee will decide and assign consequences in accordance with the Student/Parent Handbook. The Dean of Students will communicate the conclusions to the Head of the Upper School for approval and subsequently to the student and guardian. In the case of a recommendation for expulsion, the result will be communicated to the Headmaster for consideration. If the Discipline Committee determines that a Major Infraction was not committed, they may either dismiss the case or recommend the assessment of a Minor Infraction(s). The decisions of the Discipline Committee and school administrators are final.

EXTRAORDINARY DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

If the Dean of Students determines that a discipline case requires a closed-door session due to the nature of the incident, only faculty members will hear the case and recommend consequences.

STUDENT RIGHTS

All students are expected to understand and to comply with the Student Code of Conduct at all times. Additionally, if a student's actions outside of school creates a significant disruption of the learning environment, compromises the integrity of the school or another individual, or causes harm of any kind (physical or emotional), they will be held accountable for his/her behavior and will be called before the Discipline Committee.

Students who appear before the Discipline Committee will be granted certain rights:

- They will be informed of the infraction they are accused of committing as well as their rights and responsibilities.
- They will be provided the opportunity to explain their actions.

- The Dean of Students will work with the Committee and the accused student to ensure confidentiality and to protect the rights of the student(s).

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

DEPARTMENT/DISCIPLINE	# OF UNITS	SPECIFIC COURSE REQUIREMENTS *
English	4	
Social Sciences	3	World History II, US History, Gov./Econ.
Science	4	Biology, Chemistry
Mathematics	4	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II
World & Classical Languages	3	3 units of the same language
Fine Arts	1	Art, Band, Chorus, Drama, Print Design, Digital Media, Maker Tech, Debate
Physical Education	1	Athletics and Fitness, Chorus, Drama, Band, Print Design
Electives	4	
TOTAL	24	*HA reserves the right to modify or change graduation requirements.

Please note the following:

- Credit toward graduation is given to 8th graders for successful completion any Language I class (1A & 1B); however, the grade is not factored into a student's Upper School (US) GPA.
- Credit is also given to 8th graders for successful completion of Algebra I, and the grade is factored into the student's US GPA.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All students in grades 9-12 must complete a minimum of 40 hours of service to graduate. Houston Academy partners with community organizations to provide students with opportunities to participate in service-based learning experiences. HA students may complete community service independently and/or through school clubs and organizations. Students will only receive hours for independent service if the activity is completed through an HA approved organization (the list of Pre-Approved organization available on the HA Upper School webpage), or if they receive permission from the Head of Upper School. Students must complete and hand in a signed Community Service Form within one month of completion of the service activity. Students will only earn hours for the direct service performed (no hours will be awarded for travel time, etc.), and in some cases, hours will be capped by a maximum daily/weekly allotment. The maximum allotment is 24 hours for each service project. It is also important to note that students may not earn service hours for any activity that occurs within the regular school or organization schedules.

If a student transfers to HA after the beginning of their freshmen year, the total number of hours that they are required to complete for graduation will be prorated.

Students that earn 100 hours of service between grades 9 and 12 are awarded a Service Cord that is worn at Graduation.

COURSES

All students in grades 9-11 must be enrolled in seven classes each semester and take math, science, and English every year. Of the seven courses, one may be a Study Hall; however, students that aspire to top tier universities are encouraged to strengthen their transcript by taking a greater number of academic courses in lieu of a study hall.

Senior students must be enrolled in a minimum of six classes each semester and may select to take one “free” block within the schedule provided that they do not have any academic or disciplinary issues during the school year.

COURSE CREDITS

Course credits and letter grades are assigned on a semester basis. Only courses completed at Houston Academy are posted on the Houston Academy transcript with the exception of a credit recovery course or a course taken online to replace a course that is normally part of the HA Program of Study (prior approval required).

DAILY SCHEDULE

The Upper School implements a six-day rotating cycle of seven periods. The first six classes meet at a different time each day while the seventh period meets at the same time every day.

Period	Time	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Advisory	8:00 - 8:10						
1 st	8:14 – 9:04	A	B	C	D	E	F
2 nd	9:08 – 9:58	B	C	D	E	F	A
3 rd	10:02 – 10:52	C	D	E	F	A	B
US Break	10:52 – 11:07	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
4 th	11:11 – 12:01	D	E	F	A	B	C
5 th	12:05 – 12:55	E	F	A	B	C	D
US Lunch	12:55 – 1:27	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
6 th	1:31 – 2:21	F	A	B	C	D	E
7 th	2:25 – 3:15	G	G	G	G	G	G
Tutorial	3:20 – 3:50						

INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDITS

Students may request permission from the Upper School Head to enroll in an Independent Study course if they wish to broaden their learning experience. This privilege is usually only granted to Senior students for a maximum of one semester of study. Interested students must

complete an application process, and if approved, they will be assigned an instructor/mentor to facilitate the independent course. Grades and credit on the HA transcript will be awarded using specific grading criteria established by the Administration in accordance to the nature of the independent study and the learning objectives that are established.

ADVISORY

At Houston Academy, all students are assigned an Advisor and an advisory group. Advisory provides teachers and students the opportunity to build relationships that foster a greater sense of community and belonging. The purpose and goals of the advisory program include:

- ensure that each student is known by at least one adult
- review student academic and social progress
- promote leadership skills
- promote college and career readiness
- facilitate communication and collaboration between students, the school, parents, and school organizations/teams and clubs

Note - Unlike the regular schedule that runs on a 6-day cycle, Advisory runs on a Monday-Friday schedule.

STUDY HALL

All students that have study halls are assigned a teacher and a defined meeting place. Students **MUST** be engaged in academic work during study hall. Students must take materials to the assigned class to work on during the period of study. Students that do not bring material will be sent to their lockers to find it and marked tardy in the class or receive a Minor Infraction for not being prepared for class. Students will receive an “engagement” grade in the class; however, that grade does not count toward the student’s GPA nor does it appear on the student’s transcript.

If a student arranges to meet with another teacher during their study hall, they must check in with their study hall teacher, and the subject area teacher must communicate with the study hall teacher to provide an excuse for the student to be absent for part or all of the study hall.

ONLINE CREDITS

Students may request permission from the Upper School Head to enroll in an online course if they wish to expand their learning experience or advance in a subject area. Courses that are completed online will not be placed on the HA transcript or count toward the student’s GPA. Students cannot complete courses online that are provided through school unless it is for advancement purposes.

SUMMER CREDITS

Students may apply to complete an academic course during the summer in order to advance levels in specific subject areas (usually math). Only pre-approved courses, offered directly by HA, will be noted on the student’s HA Transcript.

GRADING SYSTEM

Houston Academy reports Semester Grades using a Letter Grade system with the following equivalencies:

GRADE POINT AVERAGES

Houston Academy calculates Grade Point Averages (GPS) by assigning GPA points to each letter grade:

Prior to 2022-23, the following system was implemented to calculate GPAs.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Grade Point Average *
A+	100-98	4.3
A	97-93	4.0
A-	92-90	3.7
B+	89-87	3.3
B	86-83	3.0
B-	82-80	2.7
C+	79-77	2.3
C	76-73	2.0
C-	72-70	1.7
D	69-65	1.0
F	Below 65	0.0

Beginning in 2022-23, the following system will be implemented to calculate GPAs.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Grade Point Average *
A+	100-98	4.3
A	97-93	4.15
A-	92-90	4.00
B+	89-87	3.3
B	86-83	3.15
B-	82-80	3.0
C+	79-77	2.3
C	76-73	2.15
C-	72-70	2.0
D	69-65	1.0
F	Below 65	0.0

CALCULATING SEMESTER GRADES

Houston Academy reports letter grades that are based on a numerical average. Semester grades are calculated in the following manner:

- Cumulative GPA courses: Quarter 1 (42.5%) + Quarter 2 (42.5%) + Semester Exam (15%)
- All Courses GPA Courses: Quarter 1 (50%) + Quarter 2 (50%)

CUMULATIVE GPA VS. ALL COURSES GPA

- **Cumulative Grade Point Averages** (GPA) are calculating using the final grades in all core courses (Math, Science, English, Social Studies, and Foreign Languages) as well as grades from any elective courses that have a capstone experience (exam or portfolio). Please note that the Cumulative GPAs also includes Algebra I which is normally taken in grade eight but is considered and evaluated using US Grading Policies.
- **All Courses Grade Point Averages** (GPA) include all courses taken during a student's Upper School career with the exception of any Study Hall.

REGULAR TESTS AND TESTING SCHEDULE

All HA instructional staff are required to schedule tests in advance to ensure that students are adequately prepared and not required to complete more than two tests on any given day. Students should be given a minimum of two days' notice before any test. A test is defined as any summative evaluation that requires more than half of an academic period. If a student misses a test for any reason, they are expected to make up the test on the day that they return to school (during class or after school) or on the day indicated by the teacher. Failure to make up a test on the date and time decided upon by the teacher can result in a 0.

HOMEWORK AND AT HOME ASSIGNMENTS

Homework is a significant and meaningful part of the curriculum at HA. It serves to instill in students the formation and development of good study habits as well as to reinforce the learned skills and concepts taught in class. Homework will be assigned regularly in all academic classes. If a student misses a class for any reason, they are expected to send in homework electronically whenever possible or must hand in the assignment upon their return to school. If a student fails to hand in the homework in a timely manner, they will have points deducted in accordance with the classroom teacher's policy.

Teachers also will regularly assign at home assignments (projects, essays, etc.). This work is designed to provide students alternative ways to express their learning. If a student is absent from class on the day that an assignment is due, they are expected to submit the work electronically. If a student fails to hand in the work in a timely manner, points will be deducted in accordance with the classroom teacher's policy.

MAKE UP WORK

Work missed due to an absence, including school related activities, **MUST** be made up; however, it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation justifying the absence, and he/she must also contact the teacher or a classmate to determine what work is required. The teacher will set a timeline for the completion of any missed work. Completion of work missed due to unexpected absences should take approximately the same time as the time missed from class (i.e., one day missed, one day to make up work).

If a student is knowingly going to miss a class for any reason, they are required to complete a Pre-Arranged Absence Form. Failure to complete the Pre-Arranged Absence Form may result in the absence being considered "Skipping School", and a grade of 0 may be assigned for all schoolwork that is missed.

All make up work must be completed by the end of each quarter of study unless extenuating circumstances arise. In this case, the student may receive a grade of Incomplete (INC) and the Head of Upper School, in collaboration with the student's teachers, will establish a finite timeline for the student to complete any work.

EXAMS AND CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES

All students in grades 9-12 are required to take either a one hour and a half or a two-hour Semester Exam or complete a culminating (Capstone) experience in each academic subject that counts toward the student's Cumulative GPA unless they fulfill the requirements and qualify for an Exam Exemption. An exam period is scheduled at the end of each Semester of study, and students take a maximum of two semester exams per day. Exams count for 15% of a student's semester grade. The two days prior to the exam period are reserved for review.

EXAM EXEMPTIONS (GRADES 9-11)

Students in grades 9-11 will be allowed to exempt one Semester Exam each semester if they comply with the following requirements:

- Academics: A student must have a minimum grade of 90% (A-) in both Quarters prior to the Semester Exam.
- Attendance: Students must comply with attendance policies.
- Discipline: Students may not have any Major Infractions of the Student Code of Conduct or the Honor Code.
- AP (full-year course) Exams: All AP students that are enrolled in full year AP courses may exempt the Semester 2 Exam provided that they are in good standing and are committed to taking the AP exam. *

**If a student does not attend study sessions leading up to the exam or clearly makes no effort to complete the exam to the best of his/her ability, he/she will be required to complete a HA second semester exam and may lose the AP designation on his/her transcript.*

Please note that the following conditions apply to Exam Exemptions:

- No exemptions will be allowed in a one semester course regardless of whether it is an AP, Honors, or college preparatory class.

- Students will not be allowed to exempt the same exam (class) both semesters.
- AP students in full-year AP courses cannot exempt the Semester 1 Exam.
- Students cannot exempt a “Capstone” experience in a class that does not have an exam.

SENIOR EXAM EXEMPTIONS

Seniors must take **ALL** first semester exams; however, they may exempt Semester 2 exams in year-long courses if they earn a minimum grade of 80% (B-) in both Q3 & Q4 in addition to meeting all other requirements for general exemptions (Discipline, Honor Code, Attendance Policy, etc.). Seniors must complete second semester exams in all classes that only meet in the second semester (i.e. AP Economics, Economics, Sociology, etc.).

If a Senior violates any school policy (Attendance, Uniform, Discipline, Honor, etc.) the rules and regulations for Exam Exemptions are changed in accordance with the established policy (Grade requirement will be increased from an 80% (B-) to a 90% (A-) minimum standard for Q3 and Q4).

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized testing measures provide valuable data to HA teachers to assess academic progress as well as individual and program strengths and weaknesses. Data from standardized testing may also be used as a measure to determine student placement in AP and Honor courses. The dates for all standardized testing are posted on the school calendar and website.

Freshmen and Sophomores take and are billed for the cost of the ACT 9/10 and PSAT 9/10. Juniors are given and billed the cost for the PSAT (NMSQT), the ACT, and the SAT. All Juniors and Seniors are encouraged to sign-up for additional testing dates through the ACT and College Board websites.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT (TUTORIALS)

Upper School teachers are available to provide academic assistance to their students after school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3:15-3:45 PM. Teachers may also schedule tutorials in the morning due to scheduling conflicts. Students that are not meeting academic expectations will be required to attend tutorial sessions. Tutorials must take priority over extracurricular activities. Failure to attend tutorials may result in the assignment of a Minor Infraction. Repeated failure to attend tutorials has natural consequences but also may result in the suspension of privileges such as participation in extracurricular activities.

LEARNING SERVICES

Learning Services are available to students that have a diagnosed learning issue based on a comprehensive battery of tests performed by an external, HA approved practitioner. The Learning Services Department will develop an Academic Support Plan for students that have updated testing/diagnosis. Only students that have approved Academic Support Plans

(ASPs) can receive accommodations in HA classes. Families that wish to receive modifications on any standardized test (ACT, AP, SAT, etc.) must apply for modifications to the testing organization*.

**The School Counselor will assist and guide families that wish to request modifications on standardized tests or accommodations in HA courses.*

FAILED COURSES

No credit will be awarded if a student earns a grade below 65% in any class at Houston Academy. Students may recover a maximum of one full-year credit or two half credits during their career in the Upper School (grades 9 – 12). A student that has a cumulative GPA of greater than 2.0 may be afforded the opportunity to recover an additional 0.5 credits depending on the conditions of their Academic Probation. All credit recovery work must be completed within the timeline and in accordance to the parameters established by the school. Students may make-up failed courses that are graduation requirements in one of the following manners:

- Credit Recovery: The student completes a credit recovery course through Houston Academy. If the student passes the credit recovery course, the credit recovery credit and grade will be placed on the HA transcript; however, the grade will not be factored into the student's GPA.
- Repeat the Course: If the schedule permits it, a student may select to repeat a failed course at HA and both the new and old grade will be posted on the transcript and used to calculate the student's GPA.

The Head of the Upper School must approve any deviations from these guidelines. It is also important to note that all students must earn a minimum of six credits and maintain an overall average of 70% or higher in order to be eligible for AHSAA athletic teams.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student will be placed on Academic Probation if a student earns:

- A Cumulative GPA below a 2.0 (GPA based on core courses)
- an F in any class
- a D in more than one class

A student will be placed on Academic Probation at the end of any semester of study for any of the conditions listed above. If a student is placed on Academic Probation, the student will sign an Academic Contract and **MUST** demonstrate adequate progress in the class or classes in which they are not meeting the standard(s). Student privileges and participation in activities and athletics may be limited if they are placed on probation. A failure to meet any of the conditions established in the Academic Contract will result in the student's case being reviewed by the Administrative Council for possible academic separation from school.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts will be printed within two days of receiving a request from the student or guardian provided that the student is in good standing at Houston Academy. Students must request a transcript a minimum of 48 hours in advance of any college application deadlines.

For college counseling purposes, student transcripts are uploaded to Naviance (college counseling software), and universities subsequently download student transcripts from Naviance.

REPORT CARDS

Parents and students may access and review student grades at any time online via PowerSchool. Report cards are sent home electronically at the end of each quarter of study with the exception of the fourth quarter when a printed, paper copy is mailed home. Parents and students are responsible for continuously reviewing grades and should communicate and report any concerns to the teacher.

STUDENT PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Houston Academy encourages students, parents, and staff to schedule teacher conferences **whenever** they have questions or concerns about a student's academic progress. Students are encouraged to take ownership for their learning and to meet with teachers before or after class to review their grades and to receive assistance when required.

Parent appointments may be arranged by sending a written note or email to the appropriate faculty member. Parents are not permitted to make unannounced visits to teachers and may not enter instructional areas at any time without registering in the front office and receiving a pass. The Administrative Team also requests that parents respect faculty members' personal time and avoid contacting teachers outside of regular school hours. The preferred contact method is via email. Note - faculty emails are provided on the school website.

COUNSELOR AND COLLEGE COUNSELING CONFERENCES

The US Counselor is available to meet with any students or parents that have social or academic questions or concerns. Regular counseling conferences (including college counseling) will be scheduled for students throughout the year. Attendance at these conferences is required unless the student has a school conflict. In the case of a conflict, the student is expected to communicate with the counselor before the appointed time in order to reschedule.

HONOR ROLLS

At the end of each semester, an Honor Roll will be announced and published. The following types of Honors are recognized:

- Headmaster's List: a student must have a GPA of 4.0 or higher
- Head of School's List: a student must have between a 3.75 and 3.99 GPA
- Raider's List: a student must have between a 3.52 and 3.74 GPA

Note - Honor Roll is established using the student's semester Cumulative GPA (core academic courses).

END OF THE YEAR AWARDS

US students are eligible to receive awards at the end of the year based on their grades as of May 1st. Awards are given in each course for:

- Superior Award: highest grade
- Outstanding Award: second highest grade
- Raider Award: student that demonstrates high character and effort

GRADUATION CORDS AND HONORS

Graduating students in good standing with Houston Academy are eligible for special recognition at the Senior Awards Program and at Graduation during Commencement in accordance with the following criteria for Honor Medals, Cords, and Stoles.

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN:

To be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, students must have attended Houston Academy for their Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. Only courses taken at HA count toward determining the Valedictorian and Salutatorian: Administration will use the HA Cumulative GPA at the end of the first semester of the Senior year to select the students who earned the first and second rank in the graduating class. During the third and fourth quarters, Administration will monitor the selected Valedictorian and Salutatorian closely for any changes in grades, study habits, responsibility, etc. If any negative behavior occurs during either quarter, including Student Code of Conduct infractions or Honor Code violations, the selection of Valedictorian or Salutatorian can be reviewed and changed. Students selected are entitled to wear the Valedictorian and Salutatorian Medal.

ACADEMIC HONORS:

To be eligible to graduate as an Honor Graduate, students must have attended Houston Academy for their Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. Only courses taken at HA count toward determining Honors Graduates: Administration will use the HA Cumulative GPA to make the selections at the end of the third quarter of the Senior year. During the fourth quarter, Administration will monitor the selected Honor Graduates closely for any changes in grades, study habits, responsibility, etc. If any negative behavior occurs during the last quarter, including Student Code of Conduct infractions or Honor Code violations, the selection of Honor Graduates can change. Students selected are entitled to wear the Academic Honor Cord for their level of achievement.

Houston Academy recognizes three levels of Honor Graduates:

- Summa Cum Laude: students must have earned a Cumulative GPA of 4.0 or higher
- Magna Cum Laude: students must have earned a Cumulative GPA between 3.75 and 3.99
- Cum Laude: students must have earned a Cumulative GPA between 3.52 and 3.74

ATHLETICS:

Student in good standing with the Athletic Department who met any of the following criteria are eligible to wear the Athletics Honor Cord:

- Participated on a total of five (5) **varsity** sport teams during years in Upper School
- Participated in the same **varsity** sport for three (3) years in Upper School

Note - participation is defined as being rostered for 50% or more of the regular season games as well as all playoff rosters.

HOUSTON ACADEMY ATHLETICS STOLE

Student who have excelled in Athletics, as demonstrated by earning at least 18 Merit Points in accordance with the following standards, are entitled to wear the Houston Academy Athletics Stole:

- 1 Merit Point per year of participation on a **varsity** sports team during grades 7-12
- 1 Merit Point for serving in a leadership role, such as Team Captain (season)
- 2 Merit Points for making Super 12 First Team or All State in a team sport per season
- 2 Merit Points for an individual State Title (#1s in golf, tennis, etc.)
- 1 Merit Point for each member of a relay team or tennis doubles that win a State Title (#1s) in track, swimming, tennis, etc.
- 3 Merit Points for being on the playoff roster of a team that wins a State Title

FINE ARTS:

The Fine Arts Department has specific criteria that students must meet in accordance with their discipline (Visual Arts, Chorus, Band, Majorettes, Dance, Drama, and Print Design) in order to merit a Fine Arts Cord.

VISUAL ARTS

Students in good standing with the Visual Arts Program who met either of the following criteria are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord:

- Completed Visual Arts classes at least three years (3.0 credits) during grades 9-12, submitting artwork to at least one regional competition each year

CHORUS

Student in good standing with the Chorus Program who met any of the following criteria are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord:

- Performed with the Chorus all four years during grades 9-12
- Performed with Chorus Club all years four years during grades 9-12
- Named to All State at least one year during grades 9-12

BAND

Students in good standing with the Band Program who met either of the following criteria are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord:

- Performed with the Band all four years during Upper School
- Named to All State at least one year during Upper School

MAJORETTES

Students in good standing with the Band Program who performed with the Majorettes all four years during Upper School are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord.

DANCE

Students in good standing with the Dance Team who performed with the Raiderettes all four years during Upper School are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord.

DRAMA

Students in good standing with the Drama Program who met any of the following criteria are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord:

- Performed in a drama production all four years during Upper School
- Performed a lead role in a drama production at least one year during Upper School
- Served in stage management and production all four years during Upper School

PRINT DESIGN

Students in good standing with the Journalism Program who met either of the following criteria are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord:

- Served on the Yearbook staff all four years during Upper School
- Served as an Editor at least one year during Upper School

HOUSTON ACADEMY FINE ARTS STOLE

Students who have excelled in Fine Arts, as demonstrated by earning at least 16 Merit Points in accordance with the following standards, are entitled to wear the Houston Academy Fine Arts Stole:

- 0.5 Merit Points for each year of participation in an extracurricular activity such as Harmonics, Jazz Band, drama production, etc.
- 1 Merit Points for each year of participation in a fine arts class and/or drama class (1.0 credits per year).
- 1 Merit Point for serving in a Fine Arts leadership role, such as Team Captain, Editor, Drum Major, lead in a school drama production, etc.
- 1 Merit Point for winning a regional Fine Arts award.
- 2 Merit Points for winning a state Fine Arts award.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY:

Graduating members of the National Honor Society who are in good standing by May 1st in accordance with the Houston Academy NHS charter and chapter regulations are entitled to wear the NHS stole.

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Students who earned 100 or more hours of community service during their Upper School career by May 1st are entitled to wear the Community Service Honor Cord.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION:

Students in good standing by May 1st with the Student Government Association who met either of the following criteria are eligible to wear the SGA Honor Cord:

- participated as members of the SGA all four years in Upper School
- served in an executive position in the SGA Upper School

STUDENT AMBASSADORS:

Students in good standing by May 1st with the Student Ambassador Program and served at least two years as Raider Ambassadors are eligible to wear the Student Ambassadors Honor Cord.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE/ HONOR COUNCIL:

Students who met either of the following criteria are eligible to wear the Discipline Committee/ Honor Council Cord:

- served at least two years on the Discipline Committee or Honor Council
- served at least one year on the Discipline Committee and one year on the Honor Council

HOUSTON ACADEMY LEADERSHIP STOLE

Students who have excelled in Leadership, as demonstrated by earning at least 15 Merit Points in accordance with the following standards, are entitled to wear the Houston Academy Leadership Stole:

- 1 Merit Point for each year served on the SGA
- 1 Merit Point for each year served as a Raider Ambassador
- 1 Merit Point for each year served on the Discipline Committee or the Honor Council
- 1 Merit Point for each year served on the National Honor Society
- 1 Merit Point for each year served as a House Captain
- 1 Merit Point for serving on the executive committee of NHS, SGA
- 1 Merit Point for leading in Fine Arts as Editor, Drum Major, Team Captain, etc.
- 1 Merit Point for leading in Athletics as a Team Captain (season)
- 0.5 Merit Point for each year of leading an approved extracurricular school club/organization
- 0.5 Merit Points for participating in external partner programs that focus on Leadership (Dothan Youth Leadership, Boys/Girls State, etc.)
- 2 Merit Points for completing more than 200 hours of community service

COURSE SELECTION POLICY

HA is committed to offering a challenging program of study that provides students with a diverse selection of courses that prepares students to enter top universities throughout the country. Students typically make their course selections in March. Students are placed in groups in accordance with the schedule parameters and a need to balance and provide an equitable learning environment for all students. For this reason, as a rule, parents and students cannot request specific teachers.

DROP/ADD PERIOD:

Students have one week upon entry to class to drop/add courses. The counselor and the course teacher must approve any change in a student's schedule. The Head of Upper School will give the final approval if any changes are required outside the Drop/Add period.

Students may be removed from an Honors or Advanced Placement class due to failure to complete summer assignments, excessive absences, low grades, disruptive behavior, or any other reason deemed appropriate by the Counselor, Teacher, and/or Head of Upper School.

HONORS AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) CLASSES:

Given the desire for students to pursue academic excellence and rigor, HA has developed guidelines for enrollment in Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The intent of this policy is to ensure that students can succeed in a rigorous course of study. Students considering enrolling in an Honors or AP course should do so understanding that the curriculum requires more time and commitment than a non-AP/Honors course. Participation in extra-curricular activities, family obligations, etc. should be weighed carefully in the decision to enroll in any Honors/AP course. AP and Honors guidelines include:

- Given the rigorous requirements of AP classes, HA recommends the following in terms of the maximum number of AP classes that a student can enroll in by grade level:
 - Grade 9,10 = 1-2 per year
 - Grade 11,12 = 3-4 per yearStudents that wish to enroll in more classes than the recommended number are required to complete an approval process.
- Students that wish to enroll in Honors/AP classes should have a minimum average of 90% or higher in the prerequisite course, receive a recommendation from the prerequisite teacher, and demonstrate excellence on standardized testing (above the 65th NPR). If a student is not recommended for an AP/Honors class they may appeal the decision; however, enrollment is not guaranteed.
- Honors, PreAP, AP Labs, and semester AP classes receive a quality point of 0.5 while AP full year classes receive a 1.0 quality point when calculating GPA.
- A student electing to enroll in an Honors/AP course is expected to maintain a high level of achievement, to complete the course. Students that do not maintain a minimum of a C+ average may be recommended and/or required to withdraw from the course or move to the regular academic equivalent of the course.
- A student may only withdraw from an Honors/AP course during the first weeks of the year (or the first weeks of the semester in the case of a one-semester AP course). Other than those times, withdrawals are not permitted.
- AP students are **REQUIRED** to pay for and take the AP test in the Spring. If a student does not take the AP test, the AP label will be removed from the student's transcript, and GPA weighting will also be removed.

STUDENTS REQUESTING TO MOVE TO HONORS COURSES

Students that wish to request a move from a regular to an Honors course are required to:

- Make the request before the completion of the school year.
- Complete a designated summer program of study to prepare for an examination that will be performed on the timeline established by the school.

- Demonstrate competency and readiness for advanced learning opportunities on the advancement examination.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLACEMENT FOR NEW ADMISSIONS

All students that are new to the Upper School will be required to enter Spanish I or Latin I (when available) unless they completed language courses at their previous school or have alternative language experiences. In order to determine proper placement, students may be required to complete an initial foreign language placement exam. After examining the results of the placement exam, the school will make a placement recommendation. Placement recommendations may include a summer program of study, retesting, and/or being placed in an equal, lower or higher level.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ADVANCEMENTS

Houston Academy recognizes that students are naturally gifted in languages. Students that wish to advance levels are required to:

- Make the request before the completion of the school year.
- Complete a designated summer program of study to prepare for an examination that will be performed on the timeline established by the school.
- Pass the advancement examinations(s) with a minimum grade established by the Department Head to show competency and readiness for advanced learning opportunities.
- Commit to completing the same number of foreign language credits including Advanced Placement levels.

SUMMER READING AND ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

All students are assigned summer reading and assignments in English, History and academic AP and Honor elective courses. Students will be evaluated on the summer work during the first week of classes and any work that is not handed in promptly will be assigned a 0 grade.

Students that are enrolled in AP or Honors course(s) that did not complete the work will be assigned a 0 and may be required to drop the course.

Note: New admission students to HA may be allotted extra time to complete summer assignments in the case of late enrollments or exempted from the work in the case of enrollments that occur after the regular start date.

SHORT-TERM POLICY

During the week prior to Spring Break, all Upper School students will participate in a Short-Term experience. During this time, all normal class activities cease and students register for a variety of educational experiences that are provided by our staff and members of the community. Students may select to attend educational field trips or to complete unique courses of study on campus.

Short-Term is considered a vital part of the school curriculum and participation is mandatory. Most Short-Term experiences require additional payments, especially those that include travel outside of Dothan.

During Short-Term, all Junior students are required to perform an internship (job shadows) with professionals in the community.

In rare cases, Sophomore and Senior students may propose “alternative” Short-Term projects. Proposals for alternative projects must be completed by March 1st to be considered by the Administrative Council. Only proposals that provide students with quality learning experiences will be considered, and students that have their proposals accepted will be required to document and present their learning to Administrative Council upon their return to the school.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Research shows a strong link between school attendance and academic achievement. Each day a student is absent or late is a missed opportunity to learn, and it deprives the student of the opportunity to interact with both teachers and fellow students. For this reason, whenever possible, trips and dental or medical appointments should be scheduled so that students do not miss class.

Parents/guardians must provide written justifications for all regular absences.

Justifications can be provided in any of the following manners:

- Made in advance of the absence by providing a written justification and having the student complete a Pre-Arranged Absence Form.
- Sending an email on the morning of the absence.
- Sending a written note with the student upon his/her return to school.

If a student is absent due to **school-related activities** (field trips, athletic events, or an approved college visit), the absence will be labelled as an SRA and will not be counted against the student’s attendance record provided that the student attends the event and makes up any assigned work.

All students returning to school following a regular absence or pre-arranged absence, must report to the office before returning to class. The office will provide the student with an “Entry Slip” to confirm that the student was absent for a justified reason (written) and therefore notifies and authorizes the teacher to work with the student to make-up missed assignments/evaluations.

If a student is absent on the day that an assignment (essay, project, etc.) is due, they must submit all work electronically. If the work cannot be submitted electronically due to the nature of the assignment, the student must contact the teacher and make alternative arrangements. The student will be assigned academic penalties if these conditions are not met. If a student is absent on the day of an assessment (quiz or test), they must make up the assessment on the day that they return to school or at the time established by the teacher.

All students are strongly encouraged to visit universities and colleges as part of the College Counseling program. Students that schedule college visits and provide documentation (online registration or email confirmation) of the visit when completing the Pre-Arranged Absence Form will receive a School Related Absence (SRA). Students that do not complete the Pre-Arranged Absence Form or fail to provide adequate documentation, will be marked absent and may receive 0s on missed work.

All questions regarding attendance requirements should be directed to the Head of Upper School. The Attendance Policy is further elaborated within the Absence Policy below.

Please note that attendance for student-athletes is governed by a separate set of rules and regulations described below in the Athletics Policies and Procedures section.

SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Students that are unable to attend school due to prolonged medical absences may solicit permission to participate in synchronous learning during their absence if the absence is expected to last more than two days. Synchronous learning does not equate to in-person learning; therefore, periods of synchronous learning should not exceed more than five (5) days.

APPOINTMENTS

Students arriving after 8:10 AM must sign in at the office upon their arrival at school. Students who must depart campus before 3:15 PM for an appointment (medical, court date, etc.) must present a note from a parent or guardian prior to 7:55 AM that day confirming the appointment. The student will be given a pass in order to be dismissed from class at the appropriate time.

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 5 classes in any given class in a semester may lose their Exam Exemption privilege and that a continued accumulation of absences could lead to a loss of course credit.

TARDINESS

Students will be on time for all classes, meetings, and assemblies. The classroom and advisory teacher will record tardies 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 may be required to make up any missed work/time or may be assigned a 0 if the tardy was not justified.

For attendance purposes, if a student is more than 10 minutes late for a class, he/she is considered absent from that class and can be assessed a Major Infraction for “skipping school” unless they provide a justified excuse.

Students arriving to school after 8:10 AM will be counted as absent; therefore, they must report to the office to sign in with an excuse.

Consequences for excessive tardies include:

- 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 detentions, suspensions, or the removal of privileges (exam exemption, Senior free period, etc.).

ABSENCES

HA community members understand that excessive absences undermine the educational experience of a child and have a negative effect on academic performance. All absences are considered unexcused unless they are school related or justified. Students are required to provide documentation justifying their absences. Students that fail to do so may be assigned a 0 on any tests or assignments that they did not hand in or complete.

Valid reasons for missing a class include:

- Any school related absence;
- College visits (DOCUMENTED);
- Personal illness or scheduled healthcare appointments (DOCUMENTED);
- Court appearances;
- Family medical emergency or death in the immediate family;
- Pre-Arranged Absences that are approved in advance by the Head of Upper School.

If a student's absence cannot be avoided during a regular school day, the student will be given the opportunity to make up essential assignments provided that the absence is justified (Pre-Arranged, School Related, emergency situation, excused by a doctor, etc.).

Consequences for excessive absences for students in grades 9-11 include:

- If a student is absent more than five (5) classes, regardless of the reason for the absence, the family will be notified, and the student is automatically placed on an Attendance Probation.
- If a student is absent more than 7 classes in any semester of study without justification, he/she will be required to attend Saturday School.
- If a student is absent more than 9 classes, and he/she/the guardian has not provided justification(s), he/she may lose their exam exemption privilege and/or be required to attend Saturday School.
- If a student is absent more than 12 classes, he/she will lose their exam exemption, and the school may choose to not offer an enrollment contract the next school year.

Consequences for excessive absences for Senior students include:

- If a Senior is absent more than five (5) classes in any semester, regardless of the reason for the absence, they will be notified and are automatically placed on an Attendance Probation.
- If a Senior is absent more than 7 classes in any subject in either semester of study without justification, he/she will be required to attend Saturday School or lose their Senior Privilege for a defined period of time.
- If a Senior is absent more than 9 classes in the first semester of study, their free period will be removed, and he/she will be assigned to a Study Hall. If a Senior is absent more than 9 times in any class in the second semester, the minimum qualification standard of 80% in both Quarter 3 and 80% in Quarter 4 to exempt exams will be increased to 90% and he/she will be required to attend Saturday School.
- If a student is absent more than 12 classes in any class in either semester, he/she will lose their exam exemption all together.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES:

The school's vacations are both generous in number and length; therefore, Houston Academy expects parents and students to observe the dates specified on the school calendar. Students that plan to miss school due to any pre-arranged absence must complete the Pre-Arranged Absence Form (available in the main office) and have the form signed by all of their teachers and submitted to the Head of Upper School for approval no less than two school days prior to the absence. The student must request all assignments from his/her teachers and make appropriate arrangements to take any missed tests or quizzes in advance or upon return to the school (at the discretion of the teacher).

If the student fails to complete or follow the procedures outlined above, it may result in the academic consequences (0 on assessments and assignments) and disciplinary consequences (Major Infraction for skipping school).

If a student is not meeting the academic, disciplinary, or attendance expectations, pre-arranged absences may not be granted.

SCHOOL RELATED ABSENCES:

Students that miss school when representing Houston Academy in local, state, or national competitions or events will be assigned a School Related Absence (SRA). Additionally, students that participate in college visits may receive SRA provided that the student provides documentation (email correspondence or itinerary) and completes the Pre-Arranged Absence form a minimum of two days in advance of the visit.

ILLNESS

If a student is ill or injured, he/she is encouraged to seek medical help with the goal of returning to school in a safe and timely manner. If a student is vomiting, sick to his/her stomach, or has a fever or any illness that is contagious, he/she should remain at home or

will be immediately sent home if they are present on campus. The student may not return to school until he/she is symptom free and/or fever free for a 24-hour period (without medication). If a student has a prolonged absence to illness or injury, he/she must communicate with the administrative team to develop a plan in the best academic interest of the student.

Upon a student's return to school, he/she should always provide a written excuse in accordance to the following recommendations:

- Absence of one day = parents excuse
- Absence of more than one day = medical excuse

If a student returns to school but is unable to participate in physical education or any other activity/class, he/she must provide a note from his/her doctor. If the student is not able to participate for an extended period of time, he/she will also be required to be cleared by a doctor before he/she can return to regular physical activity.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND FORCE MAJEURE

The school reserves the right to cancel school or dismiss students early in the case of any force majeure. In situations of inclement weather or force majeure, the school will send an emergency alert (email, text, and message) to all parents with as much advance notification as possible.

If a school closure is expected to last more than one day or if a total of three days is missed within the same semester of study, HA will implement its "Remote Learning Policy".

As part of the remote learning policy, all students **MUST** continuously check their email, PowerSchool, and Google Classroom to see what work is assigned. All work assigned during remote learning experiences will count toward the student's grades as well as GPA, and regular grading policies will apply to all work.

SENIOR OFF-CAMPUS PRIVILEGES

Seniors may leave campus at lunch and during their free periods. Parental permission for this privilege must be on file in the office. At certain times during the year, individual appointments, group meetings, etc. may be scheduled during what is normally considered a "free period". Failure to attend the appointment/event may result in loss of the free period. Seniors who are not meeting the academic standards may have this privilege revoked until their progress can be reviewed and their grade(s) improve. Students that do not comply with the established rules and regulation in the Student/Parent Handbook may also have this privilege revoked. Students that have their privilege revoked will be assigned to a Study Hall and/or required to eat in Dunning Hall.

CHECKING IN/OUT

Students may not leave campus for any reason during school hours without parental permission that is verified by a school administrator.

Students must check in at the main office if they arrive late or are returning from an absence mid-day, and they must provide a note indicating that they had their parent's permission. Students that do not abide by this policy will be considered to have "skipped school", and they will be assessed a Major Infraction.

GENERAL POLICY

VISITORS TO CAMPUS

For the safety of our students, **ALL** parents, guests, and visitors must check in at the main office and receive a name badge in order to be present on campus. A Visitor Pass must be worn for the duration of the visit, and visitors are not permitted to be in instructional areas unless they are accompanied by an HA community member. Students from other schools are not allowed to be on campus during school hours at any time for social purposes. Alumni who wish to visit faculty are requested to visit during the upper school lunch and before/after regular school hours.

MEDICATION

No medication will be administered to a student without a parent's written permission. Written permission for prescription medication must include date, name of medication, dosage, and times to be administered. These medications must be given to the school counselor. At no time should students have any medication, prescription or nonprescription, in their possession.

STUDENT LANYARDS/STUDENT IDs AND ACCESS CARDS

All HA US students are all provided an HA Lanyard and an integrated HA Student ID/HA Access Card at the beginning of each academic year and/or upon his/her enrollment to HA (one card that will be referred to as "ID"). The ID serves as a way to identify students and also serves as an access card to open designated external doors during defined hours. IDs may be required to attend HA events that are free to students on campus and externally (HA home games, matches, etc.).

Students must have their Lanyard with the accompanying ID on them at all times. If a student forgets their card at home, he/she can request a temporary card from the Advancement Office to use on a temporary basis. If a student loses their ID all together and/or a temporary ID, they will be required to pay a \$20.00 replacement fee.

Students that are assigned an ID are required to sign a contract and agree to:

- Wear the lanyard/ID in a manner in which it is visible to all community members.
- Only use the ID for personal use and not loan the ID to anyone else including members of the community/family.
- Ensure that all doors are closed after opening.
- Report to a faculty member if any unauthorized person has an ID or is on campus without a Visitor ID.

- Report to a faculty member if any door remains open or a locking system is not functioning properly.
- Request a temporary lanyard/ID if he/she forgets their ID at home. It is also the student's responsibility to return the temporary ID at the end of the day.
- Request and pay for a replacement ID when required.

Failure to comply with the above provisions will result in disciplinary consequences and places the members of our community in danger. Discipline consequences include but are not limited to:

- If a student forgets their lanyard three times in a quarter, they will be assigned a minor infraction and serve a detention.
- If a student fails to return a temporary lanyard within forty-eight hours (48), they will be assigned a minor infraction and serve a detention.
- If a student endangers our community by not following the Student Lanyard/ID contract, they may be assigned a major infraction.

LOCKERS

Lockers and locks must be rented at the beginning of the school year. The Dean of Students distributes lockers and locks. Lockers should be locked during the day and after school. The school will not be responsible for items taken from unlocked lockers. Students must return their lock and locker in good order at the end of the year. Failure to do so will result in a \$10 replacement fee.

For security reasons, the US locker room will be opened at 7:30 AM and locked at 4:30 PM. Students may not call school personnel to come to the school to open the locker area after school hours. The school reserves the right at any time to search lockers on the school premises.

Students should not carry all of their books in their backpacks as that is the purpose of the locker and books are heavy and can be extremely cumbersome. Backpacks should be used, primarily for bringing items to and from school and for picking up and storing books between classes and at break and lunch. Students are NOT allowed to use their car as a locker.

CARS / PARKING

Bringing a car on campus and parking on campus is a privilege. Any reckless driving or violation of parking rules will result in the loss of this privilege. The school reserves the right to search cars located on school premises, and students will be held accountable for any items that are found within their vehicle that violate school rules.

Parents, guests and visitors are asked to use the visitor parking areas in the front driveway and in the Lower School parking lot. Please do not park in a space on the Upper School side.

Students who are licensed to drive may rent reserved parking spaces for \$5 from the Dean of Students. Students who do not rent a parking space may not bring a vehicle to school. Students may not bring any other type of vehicle other than a traditional car, SUV, or truck and they may not tow trailers or any other objects.

Students must park in their assigned spot and display the HA Parking Permit. HA Parking Permits are available through the Dean of Students. If a student's assigned spot is taken for any reason, the student must park in visitor parking. On some days during the school year, students will not be permitted to park on campus or will be requested to park at an alternative site (Westgate). On these days, shuttle buses will be provided to assist students to arrive to school on time.

Students may not be in the parking lot during school hours except upon their arrival and/or departure from school. Students may not go to their cars during the school day without the explicit permission of a faculty member. All books, lunches, and other items needed for the day should be put in the students' lockers upon his/her arrival on campus.

Although qualifying Seniors have the privilege to leave campus during their lunch and/or their free period, they may NOT loiter in their cars when leaving or coming back to school. No Senior student may leave campus for morning break unless it is aligned to a Senior Free Period. All students, including Seniors, must attend advisory and all assemblies and pep rallies.

RESTROOMS

Houston Academy provides three sets of Restrooms for all students, faculty, staff and visitors. "Boys/Mens" restrooms are for use only by any student whose Birth Certificate designates him to be a male. "Girls/Womens" restrooms are for use only by any student whose Birth Certificate designates her to be a female. The School's third set of restrooms are single-toilet restrooms, and any person for any reason may use the Unisex restrooms regardless of that person's Birth Certificate.

MORNING, BREAK AND AFTER SCHOOL

Students must be in supervised areas at all times during the school day. Before school, at break, and after school, students may either be in the US Courtyard or the EDC Commons. Students may not be in the gym or any classroom at any time unsupervised.

LUNCH

No food can be delivered to the school during the regular school day from any source (home or delivery). Three lunch options are available for our grade 9-11 students:

- Students can bring lunch from home in the AM and leave it in their locker.
- Students can pre-order lunch from the school approved catering service We Lunch It.*
- Students can purchase food using cash or their school account through Raider Retail.

Students will eat lunch in their designated areas:

- Grades 9 & 10 eat in the Elizabeth Dove Cook Grand Hall (GH)
- Grade 11 eats in the Commons.
- Grade 12 eats in the Commons or are off campus.

All trash must be placed in a bin, and any spills or messes must be cleaned up by the student.

Students in grades 9-11 may not leave campus for lunch unless they are in the company of a parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must sign the student out in the office (telephone permission is not acceptable). The students must sign in at the office again upon returning to campus.

**The school catering service provides a convenient lunch for students that must be ordered online through the We Lunch It website.*

VENDING MACHINES

Vending machines are available in the EDC Commons. Vending machines should only be used before/after school and at break/lunch understanding that food is not allowed in classrooms and that there is limited time to transition from class to class.

RAIDER RETAIL

Raider Retail (RR) is located in the Commons and is staffed by HA PTO volunteers. It is open Monday through Friday at Break and Lunch. There are healthy options available such as yogurt, cheese, fruit, and water in addition to routine snacks. For convenience, parents may open RR accounts for student use and fund the accounts via checks (made out to HA PTO, with the responsible parent's name and cell phone number listed) or via Venmo. A record is kept of what is bought and can be reviewed online. 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. Cash is also accepted if a student does not have an account.

All proceeds from Raider Retail sales are donated back to the school. RR is a great volunteer opportunity for parents and a good way to meet and become familiar with HA community members.

FOOD AND DRINK IN THE CLASSROOMS

Proper hydration and nutrition are essential to efficient brain function and effective learning; therefore, students are strongly encouraged to drink water during the school day. Students are asked to use either a plastic water bottle or a refillable bottle that has a sealable top that will not spill. Refillable bottles cannot exceed 1 liter (32 oz.) in volume. Students may not enter class with Styrofoam or plastic "take-out" cups.

Food is not permitted in the classrooms at any time unless an organized class activity that involves food is scheduled.

LOWER SCHOOL LIBRARY POLICY

The Lower School Library (LSL) is typically open from 7:30 – 3:45 PM on Monday through Thursday, and it closes at 3:45 PM on Friday. While the LSL is a dedicated Lower School instructional area, students and teachers may email Mrs. Jeffcoat if they have specific requests in references to the space or resources that it contains.

COPY MACHINES AND PRINTING

Students are expected to print and make copies of any assigned work at home. Not having ink at home is not an acceptable excuse for not handing in work on time. Students may print and make copies in the Technology Lab when necessary.

CHALLENGING CURRICULUM CONTENT

Parents have the right to challenge curricular content due to religious or cultural beliefs. Parents and students that have concerns must communicate with the Head of Upper School and complete a process that includes a justification for the challenge and a plan to complete alternative work.

TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Tuition does not include the cost of school supplies, textbooks, and/or workbooks. Students may purchase their books from any online 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. Students are expected to have procured the proper textbooks by the first day of school. Failure to do so will affect the academic performance of the student and may result in the assignment of a Minor Infraction for not being prepared for class.

CHEWING GUM

Recent educational research suggests that chewing gum may enhance learning and test-taking proficiency. Given that teachers have primary responsibility for comportment in their own classroom, teachers may prohibit gum chewing in their rooms. It should also be acknowledged that gum may pose a safety issue in science laboratories and may be prohibited. Additionally, students may be prohibited from chewing gum if they dispose of it improperly or chew it at inappropriate times (e.g., during ceremonies). We believe, however, that if gum chewing is allowed, students will be more likely to dispose of it properly.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

All Upper School students are provided with a school-issued laptop computer to use for educational purposes. The school uses filtering to limit student access to noneducational-related content during the school day. Any student that uses their computer inappropriately

will receive an infraction (Major or Minor) and disciplinary consequences. Students may only use audio earphones in classrooms when the teacher provides explicit permission to do so and audio earphones must be connected to the student's laptop.

The following general rules apply to the use of any electronic device by HA community members:

- Under no circumstance can a student use an electronic device to post or take a picture, video, or recording of any nature of any community member without his or her consent;
- Under no circumstance can a student use an electronic device to post or share any information that can be deemed as disrespectful or demeaning to any community member;
- HA is a mandatory reporter; therefore, the use of any electronic device to create, distribute, or promote content that may be construed as illegal will be reported to the proper authorities in addition to any consequences that are taken by the school.

While these rules and regulations have been designed to address the use of technology on campus, incidents of inappropriate use of technology off campus that causes any kind of disruption to the educational community or is disrespectful to a member of the community will not be tolerated and will result in the assignment of an infraction and disciplinary consequence in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

All students are expected to bring their laptop fully charged to all classes on a daily basis. Failure to do so may result in an infraction for not following school rules. All technology falls under the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which has been signed and agreed to by each student and each parent. HA will not be responsible for any loss or theft of personal electronic devices.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES / CELL PHONES / WEARABLE DEVICES

Houston Academy believes that the learning environment should not be interrupted at any time and that distractions within the classroom and school setting must be avoided. For this reason, all personal electronic devices, including cell phones, smart watches, wearable technology, etc., **MUST** be turned off and stored out of sight (preferably not on their person). Access to personal electronic devices may also be restricted at school-related activities that take place off campus or before/after regular school hours (field trips, tutorials, etc.).

If any child or parent has an emergency and needs to communicate, they must do so through the main office.

Consequences for using a personal electronic device while on campus during school hours or restricted times include:

- First Offense in a Semester: Minor Infraction = Detention and seizure of the device. The device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

- Second Offense in a Semester: Minor Infraction = Saturday School and seizure of the device. The device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- Third Offense in a Semester: Major Infraction = Seizure of device and referral to the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee will assign consequences and return the device to the student following the Discipline Committee meeting.
- Subsequent offenses will be managed in accordance with the ruling of the Discipline Committee.

*The recommended consequence for a Major Infraction of this type includes but is not limited to: In School Suspension, loss of privilege (Exam Exemption Privilege, Senior Privilege, NJHS/NHS, etc.) and a Behavior Contract/Probation.

Any refusal to surrender the device will result in an additional referral for a Major Infraction for insubordination.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

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 technology. It is, therefore, important that all parents and students are familiar with the school's policies regarding its use. Each year, as part of the completion of the required online Information Update Form, the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Laptop Contract are signed electronically. Those documents give details of the policies and procedures concerning the use of technology by our students. Below are some of the most basic policies. Please see the Parent page of the Houston Academy website for the full AUP and Laptop Contract.

- During school hours, school computers are for educational use only. Students may not play games, listen to music, or watch videos except when part of a teacher's assignment (i.e. adding music to an iMovie or watching an assigned video). Use of social networking sites, including but not limited to, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Twitter, and Vimeo, is prohibited during school hours.
- Instant messaging, blogging, and participating in chat rooms are prohibited on campus except as part of an assigned, in-class activity that is supervised by faculty or administration.
- 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.
- Cyber-bullying is strictly prohibited and is subject to appropriate consequences including prosecution. This applies whether the cyber-bullying occurs on or off our school campus.
- Students may not use school printers to print invitations, flyers, campaign information, game cheat sheets, or any other material deemed non-educational or inappropriate.
- 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 this Student Handbook.

- 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.
- Students may not enter any area protected by a password unless authorized to do so.

UNIFORM POLICY

Lands' End (online) and Sandra Jeans (store front retail in Dothan) are the official uniform providers for Houston Academy. All shirts, bottoms, and outerwear must have the HA logo except the plaid skirt. Once students enter campus in the morning, they are expected to be in proper uniform regardless of the time that they arrive. Students are expected to be in regular uniforms in all classes except PE or if they are given special permission to wear alternative HA clothing for special events. Faculty will continuously review and report violations of the Uniform Policy to the Dean of Students. Students that are not in uniform will receive a minor infraction and may be removed from class until the proper uniform is procured.

Note - Senior students have the privilege of selecting a unique color that they may substitute for the regular HA polo shirt during their Senior year.

Note - Each student will dress in accordance with the sex assigned to that student on his/her Birth Certificate.

Note -- If the student is wearing an accessory or piece of outerwear that does not conform with the dress code, it will be retained and handed back to the student at the end of the school day by an administrator.

OUTERWEAR

The following items are considered part of the regular HA uniform and are available through Lands' End or Sandra Jean:

- HA Squall Parka or Lined Rain Jacket (navy or royal blue)
- HA Puffer Jacket (royal blue)
- HA Fleece Jacket or Vest (navy or royal blue)
- HA Cardigan (females)
- HA Blazer (males and females)
- HA Knit Sweater (males and females)

The HA Letterman Jacket purchased through Herff Jones is also approved outerwear.

HA apparel that does not meet the outerwear criteria above (sweatshirts, hoodies, warmups, etc.) that are sold by Raider Retail, HARaiderwear.com, or obtained through an HA team, club, or organization, may **ONLY** be worn on Raider Days (Fridays). Blankets, generic and/or HA, are never allowed during school days/hours.

Note - if outerwear is worn, students must still comply with all aspects of the dress code that includes wearing regular uniform attire underneath (collared shirt, belt, etc.).

FEMALES' 9-12

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

- Shirt: White, royal blue or light blue HA polo shirt (long or short sleeve) of athletic or knit material or an HA button-down dress shirt.
- Skirt/Skort: HA plaid skirt/skort must fall between the top of the knee and the bottom of the quadricep muscle and have a minimum separation of five inches between the skirt hem and shirt tail.
- Short/Pant: HA short or pant of athletic or knit material.
- Tights and Leggings: If worn, tights and leggings must be form fitting and seamless without visible brand names. Tights and leggings must reach the ankle and be tight to the ankle. Tights and leggings must be a solid school color (royal, grey, black or white). No jogging pants or yoga pants are permitted.
- Socks: Socks of solid (matching) school colors (royal, grey, black or white) or the HA branded socks are required. If the brand is visible, it must be a single logo and may not include stripes, bands, etc.
- Shoes: Low-cut athletic (tennis) shoes (matching) which are predominately white, black, blue or grey with no more than one solid accent color (preferably a school color). Closed toe brown or black shoes (Wallabees, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) are acceptable. No open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, heels, crocs, boots or high cut shoe of any kind, etc. are allowed.

FEMALES' GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Uniforms must be neat and clean. Clothing with stains, holes, tears, or fraying cannot be worn at school.
- Uniforms should fit well, be modestly cut, and should not be too tight or too baggy.
- Any visible garment worn under the regular uniform shirt must be solid white, grey, or royal blue and may not contain any visible logos.
- The midsection must be fully covered by the shirt, even when the arms are raised.
- Hats, caps, sunglasses, or other headgear are not permitted on campus at any time from arrival until dismissal.
- Females may wear headbands that are school colors (white, grey, black, or royal blue).
- No athletic/club jackets, sweatshirts, etc. may be worn except on Raider Days.
- Distracting jewelry is not permitted. Necklaces must be worn on the inside of the shirt. Earrings should not extend significantly beyond the ear lobe.
- Piercings must be confined to the ear and may not be distracting.
- Visible tattoos are not allowed.
- Distracting make-up and hair are not permitted. Hair must be a natural color.
- All articles of clothing, especially outerwear, should be labeled with the student's name.
- No accessory or 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 accessory or article of clothing may be worn that may distract from the learning environment (this includes any political message, slogan, or direct promotions).

The administration retains the right to determine if any article of clothing is inappropriate or distracting and therefore cannot be worn to school.

MALES' 9-12

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

- Shirt: White, royal blue or light blue HA polo shirt (long or short sleeve) of athletic or knit material OR an HA button-down dress shirt.
- Short/Pant: HA short/pant of athletic or knit material.
- Belt: A solid color belt (brown or black with no patterns) or the HA branded belt must be worn at all times with the HA short and pant.
- Socks: Socks of solid school color (royal, grey, black or white) are required. If the brand is visible, it must be a **single logo** and may not include stripes, bands, etc.
- Shoes: Low-cut athletic (tennis) shoes (matching) which are predominately white, black, blue or grey with no more than one solid accent color (preferably a school color). Closed toe brown or black shoes (Wallabees, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) are acceptable. No open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, heels, crocs, boots or high cut shoe of any kind, etc. are allowed.

MALES' GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Uniforms should fit well, be modestly cut, and should not be too tight or too baggy.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times so that the belt is visible and shirts should not come untucked when the student's arms are raised.
- Male shorts may not be rolled up and no undergarments can be visible.
- No athletic/club jackets, sweatshirts, etc. may be worn except on Raider Days.
- Any visible garment worn under the uniform shirt 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.
- Distracting haircuts or hair colors are not allowed. Hair may be no longer than the bottom of the collar in the back and may not be any longer than top of the eyebrow in the front. Hair must be of a natural color and not two toned.
- If present, facial hair must be well groomed and maintained.
- No visible body piercing or tattoos are allowed.
- Male students cannot remove their shirts on campus at any time.
- All articles of clothing, especially outerwear, should be labeled with the student's name.
- No accessory or article of clothing may be worn that may distract from the learning environment (this includes any political message, slogan, or direct promotions).
- 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.

Violations of the uniform policy will result in a disciplinary infraction and repeated violations will result in more severe disciplinary consequences. Discipline consequences include but are not limited to:

- First Offense in a Semester: Minor Infraction
- Second, Third, and Fourth Offense in a Semester: Minor Infraction and Detention
- Fifth Offense in a Semester: Major Infraction = Saturday School & loss of privilege (Exam Privilege, Senior Privilege, NJHS/NHS, etc.) and Behavior Contract.
- Additional Offenses will be managed in accordance to the conditions outlined with the Behavior Contract.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students are required to wear a solid school color short (navy, royal, black, white, or grey) and a Raider t-shirt. There must be a separation of a minimum of 5 inches between the shirt line and the bottom of the short at all times. Girls shorts must be modest and appropriate for the school setting.

Students that do not dress in the appropriate PE uniform may not be permitted to participate in PE class and will lose participation points. Repeated violations of the PE uniform policy will result in a discipline referral and will significantly lower a student's grade.

RAIDER DAYS

Fridays are designated "Raider Days" to promote school spirit. Students are required to wear regular uniform shoes (no boots, etc.) and socks. Raider Day attire is considered:

- Jeans (**blue** denim that reach the ankle) with no holes or fraying;
- Any approved HA shirt and outerwear (T-shirt, sweatshirt, or athletic jersey/jacket).

Students must adhere with regular school uniform policies if they elect not to participate in Raider Day.

SPIRIT DAYS

Students are encouraged to participate in Spirit Days by dressing in the designated theme that is approved by the Upper School Head. Although uniforms are not required these days, student attire must still be appropriate, considered to be in "good taste", and not distract from the learning environment or create conflict of any kind. 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. Students that do not comply with the above standards on theme days will not be permitted to enter class until they procure appropriate dress. Students that do not participate fully in the designated spirit theme must wear regular uniform and adhere to regular school policies.

SCHOOL RELATED EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS OFF CAMPUS

Students must wear regular uniforms to any school related extra-curricular event that takes place off campus unless otherwise stipulated and approved by the event supervisor and the Head of Upper School.

SPECIAL EVENTS DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS

If non-HA uniforms are approved to be worn for special events during the regular school day, students must follow the guidelines established by the school. For events that require students to dress up, “business attire” (something that you would wear to a job or scholarship interview) will be required.

SPECIAL EVENTS OUTSIDE REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS

For events such as Prom, Homecoming, or the Sadie Hawkins dance, age and school appropriate formal wear is required. HA expects students to dress in a conservative manner that is consistent with our core values.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND CLUBS

Houston Academy sponsors a variety of clubs and school organizations. Students are encouraged to participate in school activities as an important component of an integral education. Students are required to sign up for one Service Club and are also encouraged to sign up for at least one School Organization or Club.

All clubs and organizations must develop internal rules and regulations and a system of governance. Students may belong to multiple clubs/organizations; however, they may only hold a leadership role in one club/organization. Every club/organization must have a Faculty sponsor that manages and supervises activities.

Some clubs and organizations will have dues, and all clubs will require participation of the students in activities outside the regular schedule. Students that do not fulfill their responsibilities and designated roles may be removed from the club/organization.

Houston Academy prohibits any clubs and organizations that are created or operated for the purposes of advocating or advancing sexuality and gender-based themes and any clubs or organizations to promote or participate in sexual activities or sexual discussions of any kind. This prohibition does not apply to the School’s curriculum.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

HA offers students the opportunity to participate in a variety of school organizations to further the school’s mission and to build school spirit and leadership skills. Organizations include but are not limited to:

RAIDER AMBASSADORS

Houston Academy Student Ambassadors are a prestigious team of HA's top student leaders who participate in special events in an official capacity. These students act as liaisons between the school and prospective students, their families, guests, alumni, business partners, and friends of the school. The Ambassador program provides student leaders to assist in admission efforts, college connection efforts, campus wide events, and to promote the image of Houston Academy in Dothan and the surrounding community.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY AND NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Honor Society is an organization that recognizes students that who have displayed outstanding, character, scholarship, leadership, and citizenship. Students must meet the minimum GPA requirement and comply with the conditions outlined in the Houston Academy NHS/NJHS Charter in order to qualify and maintain their membership.

Students must maintain an exemplary discipline and academic record and participate in all NHS/NJHS activities in order to maintain membership. Any violations or infractions of the Student Code of Conduct or Honor Code will result in the student being referred to the Faculty Council for review in accordance with the NHS/NJHS Charter.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Student Government Association (SGA) is the students' representative body. It promotes school spirit, sponsors the homecoming activities, and organizes activities throughout the year. In the spring, the student body elects a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer to serve as officers for the upcoming year. Students must apply to be members to serve on SGA. The SGA has a charter that governs membership responsibilities and duties.

OTHER SCHOOL CLUBS

Many school clubs have specific requirements for membership as well as membership fees. Club members often represent Houston Academy in competitions or seminars throughout the school year. When representing the school, students must wear appropriate school uniforms. Clubs may include but are not limited to:

THE BLUE ZONE

The Blue Zone Pep Club works as a support group to promote school spirit. The Blue Zone sponsors tailgates at various athletic events and helps raise awareness of Houston Academy student activities.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUBS

Houston Academy partners with local and global organizations to provide students with opportunities to participate in service-based learning experiences. At the beginning of each academic year, students may sign up for a service club. Clubs include: The Ark, Harbor, Interact, etc.

LANGUAGE CLUBS AND LANGUAGE HONOR SOCIETIES

Students may sign up to participate in language clubs and honor societies to enrich their understanding and mastery of a language.

ARCHERY CLUB

Students may sign up to participate in archery and represent HA at competitions throughout the local area and state.

CHESS CLUB

Students involved in the chess club receive instruction in the fundamental strategies and tactics of chess. In addition, they engage in weekly matches with fellow club members.

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) promotes Christian values through participation in internal and external activities.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is an educational simulation and/or academic competition in which students learn about diplomacy, international relations, and the United Nations. MUN involves and teaches research, public speaking, debating, and writing skills, in addition to critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership abilities.

ROBOTICS

The Robotics club takes students of all interests and they work together in building a robot for competition. This involves taking a real-life problem designed by engineers within the community and challenges the students to solve the problem using a variety of methods.

SCHOLARS' BOWL

Sr. Scholars' Bowl is open to students in grades 9-12. Students study and practice together to prepare for participation in academic competitions throughout the state.

MATH TEAM

The Math Team members are typically selected by the US Math teachers and students represent the school at Math Competitions throughout the state.

SPECIFIC ATHLETIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ANTICIPATED ATHLETIC TEAMS FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

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

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cheerleading (V, JV)	Archery (club)	Boys Baseball (V, JV, JH)
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)
Girls Volleyball (V, JV, JH)	Boys Basketball (V, JV, MS)	Girls Tennis (JV, V)
Boys Swimming (V)	Girls Basketball (V, JV, JH)	Boys Soccer (V, JV, MS)
Girls Swimming (V)	Wrestling (V)	Girls Soccer (V, JV)
	Indoor Track (V)	Boys Track & Field (V)
		Girls Track & Field (V)
		Girls Softball (V, JV)
		ESports

AHSAA STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

All students must have the following information properly signed and on file in the Athletic office before they may practice.

1. Birth Certificate
2. Concussion Consent Form
3. Student Release Form
4. Physical
5. Sportsmanship Certificate

All forms may be found on the AHSAA website or Houston Academy's website.

DIRECTIONS FOR SPORTSMANSHIP REQUIREMENT

All athletes are required to register on the www.nfhslearn.com and to complete 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. For additional rules regarding eligibility and participation, please contact the Athletic Director or visit the AHSAA website at www.ahsaa.com.

Students that do not comply with Sportsmanship rules and regulations are required to pay any fines that are assessed by the AHSAA. Students may reduce their fines by completing an online sportsmanship class.

ACADEMIC RULE AND ELIGIBILITY

Students in grades nine through twelve must have passed all core courses during the last two semesters of study and have a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in six courses (4 core courses and 2 electives*).

**does not include Study Hall*

TRANSFER RULE AND ELIGIBILITY

The AHSAA clearly establishes rules and regulations that determine eligibility for any students that transfers to HA after the completion of 6th grade. These rules are subject to change and should be reviewed on the AHSAA website if any family is considering a move.

Students are not considered eligible until their cases have been reviewed by the administrative team and, in some cases the AHSAA. Once approved, students have to be officially registered and attend school a minimum of three days once the school year has begun. Students that are not eligible for any reason may be permitted to practice with teams; however, they cannot play or be rostered in any varsity sport during their period of ineligibility.

TRYOUTS

Students are encouraged to contact coaches or the Athletic Director for tryout information and dates. Once tryout dates are established, they will be posted on Tandem Calendar. Students must attend all tryouts or provide a written justification for their absence in order to be selected for a team.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ON GAME DAY AND PRACTICE DAY

Student athletes must be in school in order to be able to participate in any athletic game or match. Student athletes that are absent for more than one period on a game day must request permission from the Head of the Upper School in order to be “eligible” to play in game. Special permission may be granted to a student to miss more than one school period if he/she had a prearranged appointment and/or received prior approval to be absent from the Head of Upper School.

If a team is authorized to have an early dismissal for a game/match, students must attend all morning classes.

Regardless of the return time to campus after a late game (home or away), students are expected to be present at for first class the next day (8:00 AM) unless the Head of School gives special permission to miss any class.

Student athletes must be in school a minimum of four class periods to be able to practice after school.

Student athletes that violate this policy (Game Day and Practice Day) will be suspended for the next game on a first offense and multiple games for a second offense. A third violation may result in the student losing the privilege to participate on any HA team.

GAME SCHEDULING

No games or practices will be scheduled the week before or the week of exams or AP tests. Please note that exceptions may be made for playoff games; however, the Head of Upper School must approve those games. Additionally, no games may be scheduled during Short-Term. Coaches may schedule games during school holidays; however, coaches must communicate with the players and parents before tryouts and make this expectation clear to student athletes.

Coaches ideally will schedule:

- No more than two games a week, one of which should be played on a Friday or Saturday.
- No more than one away game that requires more than an hour and a half of total travel time.

Only regional or sectional games will be rescheduled in the case of any cancellation.

Coaches will also make significant efforts to minimize student absences from class by scheduling games (taking into considering the travel time) outside of regular school hours. Coaches must present a proposed schedule to the Athletic Director for approval a minimum of two months prior to the start of the season. Additionally, coaches must present out of season training schedules to the Athletic Director by January 1st.

TUTORIALS AND REGULAR CLASSES

All student athletes must have the opportunity to attend tutorial sessions before or after school without consequence from the coach. Coaches, teachers, and students must work collaboratively to maximize student academic and athletic talent; therefore, coaches must encourage student athletes to attend tutorials and study sessions whenever available, and teachers are asked to work with athletes to assist them to manage their schedules and to make up any work missed due to team sporting events. Student athletes must attend all regularly scheduled classes and may only be pulled from class for away games, never for home games or practice purposes. Students cannot postpone a scheduled test or project due date due to a missed class or late night because of a game.

SUMMER WORKOUTS

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

ATHLETIC FEES

Houston Academy recognizes and promotes the importance of interscholastic activities and therefore budgets and covers all of the major costs for all student athletes to participate in AHSAA sanctioned sports. Houston Academy signs-out game day uniforms to all student athletes in addition to practice uniforms for some sports. If students fail to return the uniforms or any equipment that they are assigned, they will be charged replacement cost fees. Fees may also be collected to cover the costs of: meals, travel costs for games or camps, lodging for camps, banquets, etc. In some cases, coaches may provide student athletes the option to voluntarily purchase additional gear (shoes, warmups, bags, practice jerseys, etc.). HA will take steps to minimize these costs by using common warm-up suits and allowing students to wear approved warm-up jackets as part of the general outerwear Uniform Policy.

Parents are responsible for purchasing all personalized equipment, gear (shoes, warm-ups, etc.), and jerseys, preferably through online team purchasing sites.

BANQUETS

At the end of each season, individual sports celebrate the end of the season with banquets where awards are given in accordance to the criteria developed by the coaches. Students and families must pay fees to cover banquet costs.

SUMMER CAMPS (AWAY)

Students are responsible for paying all costs for camps that are run off campus as well as any fees for coaches, chaperones, etc. Students may request permission to perform fundraisers to lower team costs; however, all fundraisers must be approved by the Advancement Office and the Head of the Upper School.

Updated September 28, 2022

Houston Academy 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.*