

# UPPER SCHOOL HANDBOOK

## Houston Academy

2025-2026



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## 2025-2026 YEARLY SCHOOL CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Freshmen and New US Student Orientation                         | August 6              |
| First Day of School   | August 7              |
| Open House (6:00 PM)  | August 12             |
| Meet the Raiders, Booster Night (6:00 PM)                       | August 15             |
| Labor Day (no school)   | September 1           |
| NJHS Induction Ceremony @ 8:00 AM                               | September 17          |
| NHS Induction Ceremony @ 11:30 AM                               | September 17          |
| Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @ 12:00 (Grades 9-12) | September 17          |
| End of Quarter 1  | October 10            |
| Fall Break  | October 11-14         |
| Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @12:00 (Grades 9-12)  | October 29            |
| Thanksgiving Holidays   | November 24-28        |
| End of Quarter 2  | December 12           |
| Semester 1 Exams  | December 15, 16, 17   |
| Holiday Break   | December 18–January 5 |
| School Resumes  | January 6             |
| Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)                         | January 19            |
| Staff Professional Development Day (no school for students)     | February 12           |
| Winter Break  | February 13-16        |
| End Quarter 3   | March 6               |
| Short-Term  | March 23-27           |
| Spring Break  | March 30-April 3      |
| Jr./Sr. Prom  | April 17              |
| Senior Recognition (2:30 PM)                                    | April 22              |
| Teacher Collaboration Day/Early Dismissal @12:00 (Grades 9-12)  | April 29              |
| AP Exams  | May 4-15              |
| Senior Exams  | May 12-14             |
| US Grade 9-11 Award Ceremonies                                  | May 18                |
| Senior Award Ceremony (6:00 PM)                                 | May 18                |
| US Graduation (6:00 PM)   | May 21                |
| Semester 2 Exams  | May 19-21             |

### IMPORTANT HOUSTON ACADEMY LINKS

- Houston Academy website: <https://www.houstonacademy.com/>
- Houston Academy calendar: <https://houstonacademy.tandem.co>
- We Lunch It : <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. As such, this handbook is subject to change for the betterment of the community. Significant changes in the handbook or school policy will be communicated with our Upper School students and families.

## **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.

## **CORE VALUES**

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

- Excellence: We always give and expect our best effort—in school, in athletics, in activities, and in life.
- Honor: We do the right thing, even when it's hard.
- Respect: We value everyone.
- Responsibility: We are accountable for our words and our actions.
- Leadership: We learn to lead through authentic opportunities that focus on serving others.
- Community: We are a vibrant, close-knit learning community that values knowledge, hard work and good character.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Houston Academy is a college preparatory school. As such, the curriculum 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 ensure 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, 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 and name (on official school documents) each student based on the student's sex and name 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 is 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 the Upper School and the involved parties will be scheduled. As a last resort, the parent may request the intervention of the Head of School. 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 no 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:

- 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.

### **HONOR COUNCIL 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 Council 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 EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

All students have been given notice of this Honor Code by virtue of its publication and are required to commit to uphold the Honor Code at the Honor Code Signing Ceremony held at the beginning of the school year. Regardless of whether a student has actually read the handbook or attended the Honor Code Signing Ceremony, a student is charged with the knowledge of it. Ignorance of rules is never a defense.

Students who are called to appear before the Honor Council will be informed of the infraction they are accused of committing and will be provided the opportunity to explain their actions. The Dean of Students will work with the council and the accused student to ensure due process and to maintain confidentiality.

## 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 the Upper School for approval. If the Honor council recommends loss of credit or expulsion, the Head of School gives final approval. In addition to the consequences assigned, if the guilty party is a member of the National or the National Junior Honor Society, the violation will be reported to the Faculty Council for consideration.

Consequences for the first offense 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.
- Saturday School
- Loss of privilege (exam, free period, etc.);
- In-School-Suspension (ISS)\*
- Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)\*

Consequences for two or more offenses 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.
- Loss of privilege (exam, free period, etc.);
- In-School-Suspension (ISS)\*
- Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS)\*
- Loss of Academic Credit
- Dismissal
- Expulsion
- Alternative Consequences: an approved apology, redoing work, revocation of senior privileges, community service, etc.

*\*Students that are suspended may not participate in 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 affirm the ethic central to our school's culture and ethos.

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).

### DISRESPECT/HARASSMENT/BULLYING/HAZING/INTIMIDATION/THREATS

As a school community, we aspire to maintain an environment where all members respect each other and have the right to work, study, and enjoy learning. Disrespect, harassment, bullying, hazing, intimidation and the use of threats are prohibited and will be considered Major Infractions and may result in **expulsion**.

Students must be held to high standards to ensure a safe, secure, and productive learning environment. Failure to respect authority and failure to comply with school rules may endanger and or demean/harm others is considered disrespectful.

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 is repeated and intentional and 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.

Intimidation is an act or course of conduct directed at a specific person or group of people to cause that person/group to fear or apprehend fear. Usually, an individual intimidates others by deterring or coercing them to take an action they do not want to take.

A threat is defined as an expression of intention to harm or inflict physical or emotional injury, or damage to another person or a structure such as the school in this case.

Students that commit acts that are considered violations of the law may be reported to local authorities and may be subject to punishment beyond those assessed by Houston Academy.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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 create a significant disruption of the learning environment, compromise the integrity of the school or another individual, or cause harm of any kind (physical or emotional), students can be held accountable for his/her behavior.

Students who are called to appear before the Discipline Council will be informed of the infraction they are accused of committing and will be provided the opportunity to explain their actions. The Dean of Students will work with the committee and the accused student to ensure due process and to maintain confidentiality.

### **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
- Failure to properly check in/out of school through the main office
- Inappropriate language or gestures
- Minor misuse of technology
- Not being prepared for class (homework, appropriate materials/books, etc.)
- Not disposing of waste appropriately
- Minor driving or parking 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
- Revocation of privileges
- Application of a Contract (discipline, academic, uniform, attendance, etc.)
- Counseling
- Alternative assignment: reflection paper, research, etc.

The teacher or the Dean of Students will assign one or more consequences from the list above depending upon the nature and 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 or more serious misbehaviors, the Dean of Students and/or the Head of the Upper School will complete a preliminary investigation to determine if the case should be sent to the Discipline Council for review. Note - 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 Minor Infractions 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/Threats
- 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 or 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, Lanyard/ID, MacBook Bag Contract, Behavior/Discipline, etc.) assigned by the school
- Violations of the Honor Code
- Any additional action that is deemed a Major Infraction by the Administration

Should the Head of School, Head of the Upper School, Discipline Council, 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 circumstances. Consequences for Major Infractions may include but are not limited to:

- Revocation 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 (Behavior/Discipline, Uniform, Attendance, Lanyard, MacBook Bag, etc.)
- Disciplinary Probation
- Recommendation for Dismissal or Expulsion (must be approved by the Head of School)

*\*Students that are suspended may not participate in or be a spectator at 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 Raider Ambassadors, 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 Faculty Council. Upon review, the student may be separated from the programs.
- Major Infractions will be reported to the Athletic Director and Coaches and additional consequences may be applied in accordance with the Athletic Handbook.
- 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 when applicable.

#### **DISCIPLINARY PROBATION AND DISMISSAL/EXPULSION**

All students that commit a Major Infraction will be placed on Disciplinary Probation for a specified period of time, though the severity of the infraction may result in dismissal or 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 COUNCIL**

The Discipline Council 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 Head of School.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF THE DISCIPLINE COUNCIL**

The Discipline Council 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 FOR THE DISCIPLINE COUNCIL**

To be eligible for selection to the Discipline Council, 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 Council simultaneously.

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

#### **SELECTION OF STUDENT AND FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE DISCIPLINE COUNCIL**

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 Council. 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 Council and the Honor Council.

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

#### **DISCIPLINE COUNCIL MEMBER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the duty of all members of the Discipline Council 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 Council or Honor Council and are found to have committed a Major Infraction, he/she will be removed from the Council.

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

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

#### **REGULAR DISCIPLINE COUNCIL PROCEDURES**

Prior to any Discipline Council 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 Council Meeting and inform the student and his/her guardian that the student will be brought before the Discipline Council 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 Council 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 Head of School for consideration. If the Discipline Council 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 Council and school administrators are final.

#### **EXTRAORDINARY DISCIPLINE COUNCIL 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.



## ARRESTS AND CRIMINAL CHARGES

In the event a student is arrested or charged with a crime, the parent must inform The Head of the Upper School within a two day period of time. HA retains the right to discipline any student whose actions outside school negatively impact the overall school environment or his/her ability to continue at HA.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

### COURSES AND COURSE CREDITS

All students in grades 9-12 must be enrolled in seven classes each semester, a minimum of six of which are credit earning (Note, credit is not awarded for Study Halls). Students must take four core classes (Math, Science, Social Studies and English) each semester as well as a World Language (W.L.) class until the W.L. graduation requirement is met. Of the seven required classes, students may enroll in one semester of Study Hall each semester (unless enrolled in Advanced Placement Chemistry, in which case students may only take one semester of Study Hall). The only exception to this rule is in Grade 12 when Senior students are permitted to have a Free Period in lieu of a Study Hall.

Course credits and letter grades are assigned on a semester basis with 0.5 credits awarded per class, per semester, for each class successfully passed. Only courses completed at Houston Academy are noted on the Houston Academy transcript and count toward the HA GPA.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students must meet the minimum academic and community service graduation requirements to earn an HA Diploma.

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2027 AND BEYOND

| Department/Discipline       | # of Units | Specific Course Requirements *  |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|
| English                     | 4          |   |
| Social Sciences             | 4          | 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, Creative Writing, Sci. Fi. & Fantasy |
| Physical Education          | 1          | Varsity Athletics, PE, Health Science, Chorus, Drama, Band, Print Design  |
| Electives                   | 3          |   |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>24</b>  | *HA reserves the right to modify or change graduation requirements.   |

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2026

| 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, Creative Writing |

|                           |           |   |
|---------------------------|-----------|---|
| <b>Physical Education</b> | 1         | Athletics and Fitness/PE, Chorus, Drama, Band, Print Design, Health Science, Maker Tech |
| <b>Electives</b>          | 4         |   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>24</b> | *HA reserves the right to modify or change graduation requirements.                     |

Please note the following:

- HA reserves the right to modify/change graduation requirements as needed.
- A description of each course offered at HA, prerequisite courses for enrollment in the course, and the type and amount of credit awarded for each course is listed in the Course Description document.
- The first year course requirement (unit) for Foreign Language can be earned by 8<sup>th</sup> graders for successful completion of a Foreign Language 1B class (French, Latin, or Spanish); however, the grade is not factored into a student's Upper School GPA.
- The course requirement for Algebra I may be earned by 8<sup>th</sup> graders for successful completion of Algebra I, and the grade is factored into the student's Upper School GPA.

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDIT**

Senior students may request permission from the Head of the Upper School to enroll in an Independent Study course if they wish to broaden their learning experience. Independent Study courses may not be used to replace any courses offered within the HA Program of Study. All Independent Study courses will be completed through enrollment in an approved online course (see Counselor for options). Requests to enroll in an Independent Study must be received a minimum of six weeks in advance of the start of the Semester. Independent Study courses will be graded using a Pass/Fail grade scale and will count as 0.5 elective credits but will not count toward the student's Upper School Cumulative GPA. Students will be assigned a meeting place and mentor to monitor attendance and student progress toward the completion of the online course.

### **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 is available on the HA Upper School webpage), or if they receive permission from the Head of the 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. Twenty-four (24) hours is the maximum allotment for each service experience or for a full week of service to one organization. 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 his/her freshman year, the total number of hours that they are required to complete for graduation will be prorated. If the transfer student completed service while enrolled at their previous school (grades 9-11), students may submit verification of service hours completed. Students that earn 100 hours of service between grades 9 and 12 are awarded a Service Cord that is worn at Graduation (see Graduation Cord information).

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The Upper School implements a six-day, seven period, rotating schedule where the first six classes (A-F) rotate on a daily basis, while the last period of the day, seventh period (G), is stationary and meets at the same time every day. HA also runs a number of alternative schedules to accommodate special events.

| Period          | Time          | I        | II       | III      | IV       | V        | VI       |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Advisory        | 8:00 - 8:10   | Advisory | Advisory | Advisory | Advisory | Advisory | Advisory |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 8:14 - 9:04   | A        | B        | C        | D        | E        | F        |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 9:08 - 9:58   | B        | C        | D        | E        | F        | A        |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 10:02 - 10:52 | C        | D        | E        | F        | A        | B        |
| US Break        | 10:52 - 11:10 | Break    | Break    | Break    | Break    | Break    | Break    |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | 11:14 - 12:04 | D        | E        | F        | A        | B        | C        |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 12:08 - 12:58 | E        | F        | A        | B        | C        | D        |
| US Lunch        | 12:58 - 1:27  | Lunch    | Lunch    | Lunch    | Lunch    | Lunch    | Lunch    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | 1:31 - 2:21   | F        | A        | B        | C        | D        | E        |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | 2:25 - 3:15   | G        | G        | G        | G        | G        | G        |
| Tutorial        | 3:15 - 3:45   |          |          |          |          |          |          |

### ADVISORY

At Houston Academy, all students are assigned an advisor and an advisory group. Advisory provides teachers, administrators, and students the opportunity to build knowledge and relationships that foster a greater sense of community and belonging.

### 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, will be marked tardy in the class, or will 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.

### SENIOR FREE PERIOD

Senior students may request a free period in lieu of a study hall during their senior year. The Senior Free Period is a privilege that can be revoked at any time if the Senior fails to meet the conditions established in the Senior Free Period and Permission to Leave Campus Agreement that must be signed by the Senior and his/her guardian before the beginning of the school year.

### ONLINE CREDITS

Students may request permission from the Head of the Upper School to enroll in an online course if they wish to expand their learning experience. Courses that are completed online will not be placed on the HA transcript or count toward the student’s GPA unless the online course is approved as an Independent Study.

### GRADING SYSTEM

Houston Academy reports Semester Grades using a letter grade system based on the percentage grades that students earn throughout each quarter of study on homework, classwork, projects, quizzes, tests, etc. Each individual teacher assigns quarter grades in accordance with the policies established by each department in the Upper School and publishes these policies in a Course Syllabus.

## GRADE POINT AVERAGES

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

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 was 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                   |

## HA GPA TYPES: CUMULATIVE GPA vs. ALL COURSES GPA

- **Cumulative Grade Point Averages** (GPAs) are calculated using the final semester grades in all core courses that have a “capstone” experience (exam or portfolio).
- **All Courses Grade Point Averages** (GPAs) are calculated using final semester grades in **all** courses taken during a student’s Upper School career with the exception of Study Hall.

## CALCULATING SEMESTER GRADES

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

- Cumulative GPA Courses:
  - Honors and College Prep Courses: Quarter 1 (42.5%) + Quarter B (42.5%) + Semester Exam (15%)
  - Advanced Placement Courses: (40.0%) + Quarter B (40.0%) + Semester Exam (20%)
- All Courses GPA Courses:
  - Quarter 1 (50%) + Quarter 2 (50%)

## **HONOR ROLLS**

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

- Head of School List: a student must have a GPA of 4.0 or higher
- Head of Upper 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 determined using the student's semester Cumulative GPA (core academic courses).

## **REGULAR TESTS AND THE TESTING SCHEDULE**

All HA instructional staff are required to schedule tests in advance to ensure that students are adequately prepared and are 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 or major evaluation. A test is defined as any summative evaluation that requires more than half of an academic period (twenty five minutes or more). 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, after school, or during their study hall) or on the day indicated by the teacher in accordance with the policies outlined in the teacher's Course Syllabus. Failure to make up a test on the date and time decided upon by the teacher will have academic penalties and could result in a 0.

Only students that have approved Academic Support Plans through the Learning Services Department are eligible for extra-time on tests. Although extra-time may be given to approved students, the student must complete the test on the same day that it is scheduled and may be required to arrive at school early, to stay after school, and/or to use their study hall to complete the test.

## **HOMEWORK AND AT-HOME ASSIGNMENTS**

Homework is a meaningful part of the curriculum at HA and an important component of the educational program. In addition to reinforcing skills and concepts taught in class, homework is essential in forming and developing health study habits. Homework will be assigned regularly in all academic classes. If a student misses a class for any reason, they are expected to hand in homework electronically or in paper form upon their return to school. If a student fails to hand in the homework in a timely manner, academic penalties will be applied 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 of any kind, including school related activities, **MUST** be made up. The teacher will set a timeline for the completion of any missed work. As a general guideline, students should be given one day to make up work completed for each period of class missed. It is the student's responsibility to contact a peer and/or the teacher to catch up on notes and to inquire about what work needs to be made up. Students that fail to make up the work in a timely manner will receive academic penalties in accordance with the policies and procedures established in the Course Syllabus.

If a student is knowingly going to miss a class for any reason, they are required to complete a Pre-Arranged Absence Form in order to facilitate communication, to allow the student to complete work in advance whenever possible, and to clarify expectations in terms of make-up work.

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 the Upper School, in collaboration with the student's teachers, will establish a finite timeline for the student to complete any work.

### **SEMESTER EXAMS AND CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES**

All students in grades 9-12 are required to take a one hour and a half (90 minute) exam or complete a capstone experience (usually a portfolio) in lieu of an exam at the end of each semester in courses that count toward the student's Cumulative GPA.

Students that are enrolled in Advanced Placement Exams must take a two hour (120 minute) exam at the end of the first semester for full-year courses or at the end of the applicable semester for half-year courses.

### **SEMESTER 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 an 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 that counts toward the Cumulative GPA, 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; however, students are not required to take the second Semester Exam if they take the applicable College Board standardized test.
- 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 **ALL** 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, Discipline, Honor, etc.) the rules and regulations for Exam Exemptions are changed in accordance with the established policy.

### **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 take and are billed for the cost of the PreACT 8/9; Sophomores take and are billed for the cost of the PreACT and PSAT (NMSQT); Juniors take and are billed the cost for the PSAT (NMSQT), and the ACT. All Juniors and Seniors are independently encouraged to sign-up for additional testing dates for the ACT and SAT.

### **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 with 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.

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 Scoir (college counseling software), and most universities subsequently download student transcripts from this platform.

### **STUDENT GRADES AND 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.

### **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 the 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 the 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/AP course should do so understanding that the curriculum requires more time and commitment than a College Prep course. Participation in extracurricular activities, family obligations, etc. should be weighed carefully in the decision to enroll in any Honors/AP course. AP/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 year

Students 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 and AP Labs earn a 0.5 quality point and AP 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, the GPA weighting will also be removed, and the student will be required to take the semester exam.

### **STUDENTS REQUESTING TO MOVE TO HONORS MATH PATH**

Students that wish to request a move from a College Prep. to an Honors Math path 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 COURSE 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 Upper School foreign language credits which will require advanced work at a W.L. IV and/or AP level.

## **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: Newly admitted students 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, 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 educational experiences on campus and in the Wiregrass area. 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.

Students that register to participate on trips will sign contracts that establish behavioral expectations leading up to and during the trip itself. Students that commit egregious major infractions during the regular school year may lose the privilege to attend Short-Term travel trips. If a student misbehaves on a trip, they are responsible for any costs associated with the misbehavior as well as any costs accrued if the child must be isolated or sent home.

During Short-Term, all Junior students are required to perform an external internship (job shadowing) with professionals in the student's field of interest.

In rare cases, students may propose "alternative" Short-Term projects. Proposals for alternative projects must be completed by March 1<sup>st</sup> 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 the Administrative Council upon their return to the school.

## **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 charged a \$20 fee and subsequently provided an HA Lanyard and Student ID that also serves as their Access Card; this "ID" is distributed at the beginning of each school year or upon a new student's enrollment. 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 and wear their lanyard with the accompanying ID on them at all times. If a student forgets their ID on any given day, he/she must:

- Report to the main office between 7:45 and 8:15 AM to pick up a temporary ID from the main office.
- Return the temporary ID to the main office between 2:20 and 2:35 PM.

If a student loses their ID altogether 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 (around the neck).
- Only use the ID for personal use and not lend 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 checks out a temporary lanyard/ID and fails to return it by the end of the same day or by 8:15 AM the next day, they will be assigned a Lanyard/ID Violation and serve a detention.
- If a student forgets his/her lanyard/ID and signs out a Temporary ID between 7:45 and 8:15 AM three times in a Semester it will be considered a Lanyard/ID Violation and will result in a detention.
- If a student forgets his/her lanyard/ID and does not sign out a Temporary ID during the morning window, it will be considered a Lanyard Violation and result in a detention.
- If a student receives four Lanyard/ID violations in a semester they will be required to sign a Lanyard/ID Behavior Contract and will be assigned Saturday School.
- Failure to comply with the conditions established in the Lanyard/ID Behavior Contract will result in a Major Infraction.
- 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. The school reserves the right at any time to search lockers on the school premises.

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.

Students should not carry all of their books in their backpacks as that is the purpose of the locker and as 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.

## **BACKPACKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT**

The HA schedule has been designed to allow students the opportunity to visit their lockers and to change out their books multiple times throughout the day. For this reason, and to not further congest or obstruct walking paths in the classrooms, hallways, and stairwells, small backpacks are encouraged and large backups and backpacks on wheels are prohibited in the Upper School. Students should leave sports equipment and bags in the Upper School locker room on a hook or in their locker. Items that are not in a locker or hung on a hook may be removed and placed in the lost and found. Computers are required to be carried in school-approved computer bags.

## **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.

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 at 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. Senior students may not leave campus for morning break unless it is aligned with his/her 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.

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

Students will eat lunch in their designated areas:

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

Note - on nice days, students in grades 9-12 may eat in the Amphitheater if no other activity is scheduled in the area.

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 be present to sign the student out in the office (telephone permission is not acceptable) and the students must sign in at the office again upon returning to campus.

### **VENDING MACHINES**

Vending machines are available in the EDC Commons; however, they are only to be used before school, at break/lunch, or after school, 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 volunteers from the HA Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). RR 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 through the PTO.

### **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 the LS Librarian 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 in the Technology Department 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 the 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](http://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.

## 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.

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

**Parents/guardians must provide written justifications for all absences.** Justifications can be provided in any of the following manners:

- Made in advance of the absence by providing a written note and/or having the student complete a Pre-Arranged Absence Form.
- Sending an email ([attendance@houstonacademy.com](mailto:attendance@houstonacademy.com)) a minimum of twenty-four hours in advance of the absence.
- Sending a note with the student upon his/her return to school.

Attendance is taken by the classroom teacher in the first ten minutes of each individual class (seven classes a day plus advisory) versus on a daily basis. Parents and students are expected to monitor their attendance records on Power School and to report any issues in a timely manner.

All absences, hereby referred to as *regular absences*, are treated the same for record keeping purposes at HA with the exception of school related absences and excused absences (see below).

## APPOINTMENTS

Students arriving after 8:00 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. If this is not possible, parents are encouraged to schedule appointments during study hall.

### **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 are asked to complete the Pre-Arranged Absence Form (available in the main office) and to attach a letter justifying and explaining the absence to the form. It is the responsibility of the student to have the form signed by all of their teachers and submitted to the Head of the Upper School for approval prior to the scheduled date of the absence. The purpose of the Pre-Arranged Absence Form is to stimulate a conversation between the student and his/her teacher. Part of the conversation between the student and the teacher should be to pre-arrange dates that missed work must be submitted or missed assessments will be taken.

### **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

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 due 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 = parent's 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.

### **SCHOOL RELATED ABSENCES**

If a student is absent due to **school-related activities** (field trips, athletic events, or an approved college visit), the absence will be labeled 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 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.

Please note that student-athlete participation in practice and games when absent is governed by a separate set of rules and regulations described here: 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 in advance of the visit.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Excused absences include documented surgeries and prolonged absences due to illness/injury, absences due to a death in the family, and absences due to an order to appear in court. These absences will be noted as “excused” absences and will not count toward the total number of absences when considering attendance records.

For prolonged absences due to prolonged illness/injury, the following conditions must be met:

- The student’s physician that diagnosed and treated the illness/injury must provide a medical excuse.
- The student must hand in the medical excuse provided by the attending physician to the main office in a timely manner which is defined as a maximum of one week after the student’s return to school). Failure to provide the medical excuse within a seven day period means that the accrued absences will not be considered excused absences.
- The illness/injury must have resulted in three or more consecutive full-day (all seven periods) absences from school.

In order for an absence due to a death in the family to be noted as an excused absence, the parent must communicate with the Head of the Upper School via email or provide a written notification.

In the case of a court order leading to an absence, the parent must provide documentation to the Head of the Upper School within seven days of the scheduled court appearance.

In the case of a planned surgical procedure, the parent must provide a medical excuse to the Head of the Upper School within seven days of the surgery. The medical excuse should also detail the number of days required to recover and heal before returning to school.

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

HA community members understand that excessive absences undermine the educational process and have a negative impact on a student’s academic performance. For this reason, the school will apply the following policy for excessive absences:

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

- If a student accrues five (5) regular absences, the student will be placed on Attendance Probation.
- If a student accrues seven (7) regular absences, and he/she is not in good academic standing, he/she will be required to attend mandatory tutorial sessions.
- If a student accrues (9) regular absences in exam-based classes, he/she may forfeit his/her Exam Exemption Privilege in the subject in which the absences occurred. If the nine (9) absences occurred in non-exam-based subjects, he/she may be assigned Saturday School.
- If a student accrues twelve (12) classes, he/she will be called before the Administrative Council, and the Admin. Council will determine whether or not to award the student credit. The Admin. Council will examine all written justifications provided by the parents for the student’s absences. If a student is not awarded credit, they will be required to repeat the course at HA.

Consequences for excessive absences for Senior students in the first semester include:

- If a Senior accrues five (5) regular absences in any class, the family will be notified and the student will be placed on Attendance Probation.
- If a Senior accrues seven (7) regular absences in any class in any semester of study and he/she is not in good academic standing, he/she will be required to attend mandatory tutorial sessions and/or lose their Senior Free Period off campus privilege.
- If a Senior accrues nine (9) regular absences in any classes, he/she will be required to attend Saturday School.
- If a student accrues twelve (12) regular absences in any classes, he/she will be called before the Administrative Council and the Admin. Council will determine whether or not to award the student credit. The Council will examine all written justifications provided by the parents for the student's absences in making the decision. If a student is not awarded credit, they are required to repeat the course at HA.

Consequences for excessive absences for Senior students in the second semester include:

- If a Senior accrues five (5) regular absences in any class, the family will be notified and the student will be placed on Attendance Probation.
- If a Senior accrues seven (7) regular absences in any class and he/she is not in good academic standing, he/she will be required to attend mandatory tutorial sessions and/or lose their Senior Free Period off campus privilege.
- If a Senior accrues nine (9) regular absences in any exam-based subject in the second semester, the minimum exam exemption standard of 80% in both Quarter 3 and 80% in Quarter 4 will be increased to 90%. If the Senior misses nine (9) non-exam-based classes, he/she will be assigned Saturday School.
- If a Senior accrues (12) or more absences in any class, he/she will lose their exam exemption altogether.

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. Failure to make up a missed quiz or test on the day assigned by the teacher will result in academic penalties in accordance with the policy established in the Course Syllabus.

### **PROLONGED ABSENCES AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS**

Attendance and participation in class is considered to be an integral part of the educational experience at Houston Academy and is managed in accordance with the absence policies established by the school. Understanding that each day absent results in missed assignments and assessments, HA will work with students that have justified absences to develop educational plans that assist the student to keep up with his/her schoolwork. It is the student's responsibility to maintain continuous contact with his/her teacher and to fulfill all the required work within the established timelines provided by the school. If the student misses twelve or more days of school in any given semester, regardless of the justification, will go before the Administrative Council and be at risk of not earning credit.

### **ABSENCES DURING SEMESTER EXAMS**

Students may not be absent during semester exams for any reason other than illness. If a student must miss exams days for any reason, exams may not be done in advance and must be made up upon the students return.

### **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 Grand Hall.

### **CHECKING IN/OUT**

The safety and security of our students is our number one priority at all times. For this reason, all students must check in and out of the main office if they arrive late or are returning to school from an absence mid-day. When checking in or out, students must provide a note/email indicating that they had their parent’s permission to be late/absent or the school will call home to verify the reason. It is highly recommended that when required, students are checked out during class transition times (4 minute passing period between classes) so that regular classes are not interrupted. Students may not check out after the last transition period of the day (2:21-2:25 PM) to avoid further congesting carpool lines and interrupting regular end of the day dismissal procedures.

Students that fail to properly check in or out of school will be assigned a Minor Infraction for failing to follow school rules and procedures. Students that are not in class for any reason during school hours without parental permission verified by a school administrator will be considered to have “skipped school,” and they will be assessed a Major Infraction.

### **TARDINESS POLICY**

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 will be required to make up any missed work/time and 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 class” unless he/she provides a justified excuse.

Consequences for excessive tardies include:

- Students who accumulate 3 tardies in an individual class in a Semester will be assigned a Minor Infraction.
- Students who receive 3 minor infractions for accumulated tardies in a Semester will receive a Major Infraction.

Please note that Advisory is considered a class and that unexcused absences (failure to report to Advisory within the 10 minute period) is considered a tardy, not an absence.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

Houston Academy believes personal wellness is a vital part of student success. Houston Academy is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. The HA Community takes all comments and behaviors regarding self-harm seriously. If a student states that they may harm themselves or others, internal protocols are in place to help secure the safety of the student and the school community. This protocol includes in-school counseling, mandated external counseling, and/or potential removal from the environment.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

Zoghby’s was selected and announced as the official uniform provider for Houston Academy in the Spring of 2022. Uniforms can be purchased online or at the retail store located at 2943 Montgomery Hwy., Dothan, AL.

### **GENERAL UNIFORM POLICY:**

All shirts, bottoms, and outerwear must have the HA logo except the plaid skirt. Students are expected to be in proper uniform from the time they enter campus in the morning to the time that they exit at the end of the day. Students are expected to be in regular uniforms in all classes except PE unless a special event is taking place or they are given special permission to wear alternative HA clothing. 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 Uniform Infraction and may be removed from class until the proper uniform is procured.

Additional Notes:

- Senior students have the privilege of selecting a unique color that they may substitute for the regular HA polo shirt during their Senior year.
- Each student will dress in accordance with the sex assigned to that student on his/her Birth Certificate.
- 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.
- The administrative team retains the right to determine if any article of clothing is inappropriate or distracting and therefore cannot be worn to school.

### **OUTERWEAR**

The following items are considered part of the regular HA uniform outerwear:

- HA Half-Zip Pullover (gray)
- HA Soft Shell Jacket (gray)
- HA Pullover Sweatshirt (gray)
- HA Crewneck Cardigan (gray)
- HA Letterman's Jacket available for purchase through Herff Jones

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.). The collar of the HA polo shirt should be visible regardless of the outerwear item being worn.

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.

On rainy days, HA students can wear rain jackets and use umbrellas; however, they should be left in the US locker room. Ideally, rain coats will reflect school colors.

### **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. On cold days, students can wear long sleeve compression or thermal shirts (form fitting and seamless without visible brand names) under the collared uniform shirt; however, sweaters, hoodies, etc. cannot be worn under or over the uniform shirt.
- **Skirt/Skort:** The HA plaid skirt/skort is designed to fall to the top of the knee cap and must be worn in a modest manner. A minimum separation of five inches between the skirt hem and the shirt tail/outwear bottom is required. Students wearing skirts without built-in liners should wear bloomers or shorts underneath their skirt.
- **Short/Pants:** An 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, navy, gray, black or white). No jogging pants or yoga pants are permitted.
- **Socks:** Socks of solid (matching) school colors (royal, navy, gray, 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:** Closed toe brown or black shoes (Wallabees, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) or matching athletic (tennis) shoes that are predominately white, black, blue or gray with limited accent color(s) are required. Accent colors should ideally be school colors and may not include glitter, stars, stripes, etc. Open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, heels, crocs, and boots are not considered part of the regular uniform shoes.

### **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, too short, or too baggy.

- Any visible garment worn under the regular uniform polo shirt must be solid white, gray, 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 (HA plaid, white, gray, 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.
- Piercings must be confined to the ear and earrings must be studs or close-fitting hoops and may not be distracting (gauges and industrial bars are not permitted).
- Visible tattoos are not allowed.
- Distracting make-up and hair are not permitted. Hair must be a natural color.
- 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).
- All articles of clothing, especially outerwear, should be labeled with the student's name.

## **MALES 9-12**

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

- **Shirt:** White, royal blue or light blue HA polo shirt (long or short sleeve) of athletic or knit material. Students can wear long sleeve compression or thermal shirts under the collared uniform shirt; however, sweaters, hoodies, etc. cannot be worn. Long sleeve shirts must be form fitting and seamless without visible brand names.
- **Short/Pant:** HA short/pants 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 pants.
- **Socks:** Socks of solid school color (royal, gray, black or white) are required. If the brand is visible, it must be a single logo and may not include stripes, bands, etc.
- **Shoes:** Closed toe brown or black shoes (Wallabees, deck/boat, saddle oxfords, etc.) or matching athletic (tennis) shoes that are predominately white, black, blue or gray with limited accent color(s) are required. Accent colors should ideally be school colors and may not include glitter, stars, stripes, etc. Open toe shoes/sandals/flip flops, heels, crocs, and boots are not considered part of the regular uniform shoes.

## **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 undergarments cannot 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, gray, 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 and/or hair colors are not allowed. Hair must be of a natural color and not two toned. Hair must be kept neat and out of the student's face and may not cover the face or eyes at any time. Students may be asked to pull their hair back so as not to be distracting. No "mohawks" or other distracting haircuts or hair colors are allowed.
- If present, facial hair must be well groomed and maintained.
- No visible piercing(s) 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: Uniform Infraction and Warning.
- Second Offense in a Semester: Uniform Infraction and Detention.
- Third Offense in a Semester: Uniform Infraction and Detention
- Fourth Offense in a Semester - Uniform Infraction, Saturday School and Uniform Contract
- Failure to comply with the conditions established in the Uniform Contract will result in a Major Infraction.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM**

Students are required to wear a solid school color short (navy, royal, black, white, or gray) and a Raider t-shirt. There must be a separation of a minimum of three to five 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/grades. 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. Raider Day attire is considered:

- Jeans (**blue** denim that reach the ankle) with no holes or fraying;
- A school approved Raider top (shirt/sweater/hoodie/jacket).
- Dress boots are permitted to be worn with jeans.

Please note the following:

- If a student is not in Raider Day gear, then they are expected to be in compliance with all regular uniform policies.
- If a student chooses to wear jeans and boots, he/she **must** bring athletic shoes to participate in Physical Education classes.
- The administration may declare additional Raider Days on days other than Fridays.

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

## **HOUSE DAYS**

The first Wednesday of every month is designated a “House Day” to promote House spirit. House Day attire is considered:

- Jeans (**blue** denim that reach the ankle) with no holes or fraying;
- The approved House T-Shirt.
- Dress boots are permitted to be worn with jeans, otherwise regular uniform shoes.

Please note the following:

- If a student is not in House Day gear, then they are expected to be in compliance with all regular uniform policies.
- Only regular Uniform Outerwear may be worn on House Days. No hoodies, sweatshirts, etc.
- If a student chooses to wear jeans and boots, he/she **must** bring athletic shoes to participate in Physical Education classes.

## **SPIRIT / THEME DAYS**

Students are encouraged to participate in Spirit Days by dressing in the designated theme that is approved by the Head of the Upper School. 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 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.

## **DRESS FOR SCHOOL-RELATED EXTRACURRICULAR EVENTS OFF CAMPUS**

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

## **DRESS FOR 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.

## **DRESS FOR 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.

## **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 non educational-related content during the school day. It also blocks social media on all school-owned devices. Any student that uses their computer inappropriately or attempts to bypass filtering will receive an infraction (Major or Minor) and disciplinary consequences. Students may use audio in classrooms only when the teacher provides explicit permission to do so and then must use earbuds connected to their laptop. All technology used on



campus falls under the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which has been signed and agreed to by each student and his/her parent. HA will not be responsible for any loss or theft of personal electronic devices.

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, email, 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 cause any kind of disruption to the educational community or are 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. Because of the increase in cracked screens, laptops must be transported in a padded computer bag, with a shoulder strap, that fits a 13-inch MacBook Air well. They can no longer be carried in a backpack.

### **MACBOOK BAG VIOLATIONS**

Violations of the MacBook Bag 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: MacBook Bag Infraction and Warning.
- Second Offense in a Semester: MacBook Bag Infraction and Detention.
- Third Offense in a Semester MacBook Bag Infraction and Detention
- Fourth Offense in a Semester - MacBook Bag Infraction, Saturday School and Technology Contract
- Failure to comply with the conditions established in the Technology Behavior Contract will result in a Major Infraction.

### **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 or they may request permission to use a cell phone from the classroom teacher or supervisor on duty.

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 Council\*. The device will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- Subsequent offenses will be managed in accordance with the ruling of the Discipline Council.

\*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.

Note - 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 Technology 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, emailing, 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 cyber-bullying occurs on or off our school campus.
- Students are not to open, read, or alter another student's work either on the computer or in the cloud. 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.

## **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 encouraged to sign up for one or more School Organizations or Clubs.

All clubs and organizations must develop a system of governance with internal rules and regulations and also must have a Faculty sponsor that oversees and supervises all activities. Students may belong to multiple clubs and organizations; however, in some cases, due to the amount of time required, students may not hold executive leadership positions in multiple organizations.

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. The Ambassador program provides student leaders to assist in admission and college connection efforts, special 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 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 Charters in order to qualify and maintain their membership. Any violations or infractions of the Student Code of Conduct or Honor Code will result in the student being referred to the NHS/NJHS Faculty Council for review in accordance with the HA 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. The SGA has a charter that governs membership responsibilities and duties.

#### **THE BLUE ZONE**

The Blue Zone pep club works as a support group to promote school spirit. The Blue Zone organizes and implements a variety of events throughout the school year and helps raise awareness of HA 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, Enable, The Harbor, Interact, Love in Action, etc.

## **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 or an approved alternative uniform. Clubs may change from one year to the next; however, some examples of HA clubs that have been offered include but are not limited to:

### **LANGUAGE CLUBS**

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

### **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.

### **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.

### **JV. AND VARSITY SCHOLARS' BOWL**

Jr. and 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.

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

Students in good standing with Houston Academy are eligible for recognition at end of the year award ceremonies and during Commencement in accordance with the following criteria:

### **END OF THE YEAR SUBJECT AREA AWARDS**

US students are eligible to receive subject area awards at the end of the year based on their grades and accomplishments earned at Houston Academy as of May 1<sup>st</sup>. To be eligible for subject area awards in full-year classes, students must have attended the full year. Students that are

mid-year admissions are only eligible for awards in semester courses. Awards are given by subject area at Award Ceremonies for:

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

#### **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 when determining the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Administration will use the weighted 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 at the Commencement ceremony.

#### **GRADUATION CORDS**

Graduating students in good standing with Houston Academy are eligible for recognition at the Senior Awards Program and at Graduation during Commencement in accordance with the following criteria for Honor Medals, Cords, and Stoles. Only those years of participation and any recognitions earned while enrolled at Houston Academy are considered for award purposes.

#### **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 Honor Graduates: Administration will use the HA Cumulative GPA at the end of the first semester of the Senior year. During the third and 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:**

Students who are in good standing with the Athletic Department and meet either 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 four (4) years in Upper School or the same sport for five years (5) through a combination of participation on junior varsity and varsity in the Middle and Upper Schools

*Note - participation is defined as being rostered on a **varsity** team for 50% or more of the regular season games as well as all playoffs.*

**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 a minimum of 2.0 credits of Visual Arts classes, one of which must have been Advanced Portfolio or Studio Honors Art and entered a recognized regional/state/national competition each school year they studied Visual Arts.
- Completed a minimum of 2.0 credits of Visual Arts and won an award at a recognized regional/state/national competition.

**CHORUS**

Students 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/Show Choir a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Performed in Harmonix a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Performed with Chorus/Show Choir a minimum of two years and named to All State Chorus 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 a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Performed with the Band a minimum of two years and named to the All State Band at least one year during Upper School.

**MAJORETTES**

Students who performed with the Majorettes a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year, are entitled to wear the Fine Arts Honor Cord.

**DANCE**

Students in good standing with the Dance Team who performed with the Raiderettes a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year, 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:

- Enrolled and performed in the drama class a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Performed in an extracurricular musical production a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Performed in a musical production a minimum of two years, a minimum of one as a lead role during Upper School
- Served on the stage/tech crew a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Served on the stage/tech crew a minimum of two years and acted as the Stage Manager in a drama production a minimum of one year 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 a minimum of three years during Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- Served on the Yearbook staff a minimum of two years during, one of which included serving as a Section Editor at least one year during Upper School

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

Students who earned 100 or more hours of community service during their Upper School career by May 1<sup>st</sup> are entitled to wear the Community Service Honor Cord. Transfer students may present community service hours earned and documented by their prior High School and those hours will be considered for award purposes.

#### **STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION:**

Students in good standing by May 1<sup>st</sup> 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 for a minimum of three years in the Upper School, one of which was the Senior year.
- served in an executive position in the SGA during Upper School

#### **RAIDER AMBASSADORS:**

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

#### **DISCIPLINE COUNCIL / HONOR COUNCIL:**

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

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

#### **GRADUATION STOLES**

Graduating students that have made exceptional contributions to Houston Academy are eligible for recognition at the Senior Awards Program and at Graduation during Commencement in accordance with the following criteria for Stoles. Only those years of participation and any recognitions earned while enrolled at Houston Academy are considered for award purposes.

### **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY:**

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

### **HOUSTON ACADEMY ATHLETICS STOLE**

Students who have excelled in Athletics, as demonstrated by earning at least 16 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 with a maximum of 8 total points being awarded for participation
- 3 Merit Points for being on the playoff roster of a team that wins a State Title
- 3 Merit Points for being named to the All State First Team (all classifications)
- 2 Merit Points for being named to the All State Second Team (all classifications)
- 2 Merit Points for for being named and playing in the North/South All Star Team
- 1 Merit Point for being named to the All State Team for school classification (3A/4A/5A, etc.)
- 1 Merit Point for being named to the Wiregrass Super 12 or Super 12 Player of the Year (season)
- 1.5 Merit Point for an individual State Title (cross country, individual track events, golf #1s, tennis #1s, etc.)
- 1.0 Merit Points for each member of a relay team (track or swim) or tennis doubles team (#1s) that wins a State Title

### **HOUSTON ACADEMY FINE ARTS STOLE**

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

- 0.5 Merit Points for each semester of participation in a fine arts class (drama, dance, chorus, art & digital media).
- 0.5 Merit Points for participation in an extracurricular activity such as Harmonics, Musical Production, etc.
- 0.5 Merit Points for serving as a Band Squad Leader or Yearbook Section Editor.
- 1 Merit Point for serving as Band Captain, Drum Major, Yearbook Editor in Chief
- 0.5 Merit Point for serving as a lead in a school drama production, or as Stage Manager
- 0.5 Merit Points for serving as a Student Director or Choreographer or other leadership role in a drama or choral production
- 0.5 Merit Points for qualifying for a Collegiate Honor Band.
- 1 Merit Point for winning a recognized regional/district Fine Arts award.
- 2 Merit Points for winning a recognized state Fine Arts award.
- 3 Merit Points for winning a recognized national Fine Arts award.

### **HOUSTON ACADEMY LEADERSHIP STOLE:**



Students who have excelled in Leadership, as demonstrated by earning at least 12 Merit Points in accordance with the following standards, are entitled to wear the Houston Academy Leadership Stole:

- 2 Merit Points for completing more than 200 hours of community service
- 1-2 Merit Points for serving on the SGA Executive (2=President, 1.5=VP, 1.0=Sec./Treasurer)
- 0.5 Merit Points for each year served on the SGA
- 1.5 Merit Point for each year served as a Raider Ambassador
- 1 Merit Point for each year served as a House Captain
- 1 Merit Point for each year served on the Discipline Council or the Honor Council
- 0.5 Merit Points for serving on the National Honor Society executive council
- 0.5 Merit Points for each year served on the National Honor Society
- 0.5 Merit Points for each year served on the Blue Zone executive council
- 0.5 Merit Points for serving as a Senior Officer
- 0.5 Merit Points for participating in external partner programs that focus on Leadership (Dothan Youth Leadership, HOBY, Boys/Girls State, etc.)

## SPECIFIC ATHLETIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Athletic Director will publish and communicate an Athletic Handbook that provides specific guidelines and policies that govern athletics at Houston Academy. In addition to the Athletic Handbook, all HA students must comply with all rules and regulations established by the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). For any questions regarding rules and regulations involving interscholastic sports participation, please contact the Athletic Director.

### ANTICIPATED ATHLETIC TEAMS FOR THE 2025-2026 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)            | Boys Bowling (V)             | Boys Baseball (V, JV, MS)  |
| Boys Cross Country (V, JV, MS)  | Girls Bowling (V)            | Boys Golf (V)              |
| Girls Cross Country (V, JV, MS) | Cheerleading (V, JV)         | Girls Golf (V)             |
| Football (V, JV)                | Boys Basketball (V, JV, MS)  | Boys Tennis (JV, V)        |
| Girls Volleyball (V, JV, MS)    | Girls Basketball (V, JV, MS) | Girls Tennis (JV, V)       |
| Boys Swimming (V)               | Wrestling (V)                | Boys Soccer (V, JV, )      |
| Girls Swimming (V)              | Indoor Track (V)             | Girls Soccer (V, JV)       |
| ESports                         |                              | Boys Track & Field (V,JV)  |
|                                 |                              | Girls Track & Field (V,JV) |
|                                 |                              | Girls Softball (V, JV)     |

### AHSAA STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

All students must have the following information properly signed, uploaded and or completed online to Dragonfly (AHSAA online information management system) before the student may practice on an annual basis.

- Updated Medical and Demographic information
- Complete the Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation Form
- Upload Physical Evaluation (completed/cleared)

- Upload Birth Certificate
- Complete Concussion Consent Form
- Complete NFHS Sportsmanship Course and upload Certificate
- Complete Acknowledgement of Athletic Handbook
- Complete Houston Academy Transportation Form
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest

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

#### **DIRECTIONS FOR SPORTSMANSHIP REQUIREMENT**

All athletes are required to register with [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) and complete the sportsmanship elective course for students. The course is free. Note: In Dragonfly, under the sportsmanship requirement, you can go directly to the NFHS website and take the course which will automatically transfer you your Dragonfly profile when completed. Please print and maintain a copy of the certificate for your records.

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 6<sup>th</sup> grade. These rules are subject to change and should be reviewed on the AHSAA website and with the HA Athletic Director if any family is considering a move.

Transfer students are not considered eligible to practice with any HA team until they have withdrawn from their previous school and have been officially enrolled at Houston Academy. Transfer students must also complete all AHSAA and HA requirements on Dragonfly and cannot participate or be rostered in any sport until they are deemed eligible.

#### **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 currently participating in any in-season sport are not allowed to selectively miss practices/games to attend tryouts and must communicate with both coaches (in and out of season coaches) to develop a plan. Students should provide written justifications for any absences during tryouts if they wish to play on the team.

#### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ON GAME DAY AND PRACTICE DAY**

Student athletes must be in school to be eligible to participate in practice and games/matches. The following rules apply to student athletes in terms of participation:

- Student athletes must be in school a minimum of four class periods to practice on the same day.
- Student athletes can only miss one class in a day to be considered "eligible" to play in a game/match on the same day. Note - 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 for additional periods from the Head of the 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 for advisory and the first class the next day (8:00 AM) unless the Head of the Upper School gives special permission to miss any class.

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 will be scheduled the week of exams and practices will be limited in accordance to the policies outlined in the Student Athletic Handbook. Please note that exceptions may be made for playoff games; however, the Head of the Upper School must approve those games. Additionally, no games may be scheduled during the Short-Term period. Coaches may schedule games during school holidays; however, coaches must communicate with the players and parents before tryouts and the season begin in order to make this expectation clear to student athletes.

Coaches are expected to make significant efforts to minimize student absences from class by scheduling games/matches/meets outside of the regular school hours. Students may not use a late night return time from a game as an excuse to be absent from school the next morning.

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

Fees may also be collected to cover the costs of banquets, meals and costs associated with transportation and lodging for practices, games, tournaments, and camps, etc.

**TEAM SPIRIT GEAR**

In some cases, coaches may provide student athletes the option to voluntarily purchase additional team spirit gear (shoes, warmups, bags, practice jerseys, etc.), some of which may be worn on Raider Days.

**BANQUETS**

At the end of each season, individual sports celebrate the end of the season with banquets or team gatherings where awards may be 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 June 28, 2025*

## 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.*