

**Huston
Academy**

**Student-Parent
Handbook**

2022-2023



Huston Academy

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to Huston Academy! We wish this year to be an especially productive experience for each student. For this to happen, we must all work together: students, parents, and staff. This Student/Parent Handbook is designed to help us accomplish this goal.

The Handbook is an overview of our school's goals, services, and rules. It is an essential reference book describing what we expect of our students and parents, what they can expect of us, and how we will achieve our educational mission. We have attempted to make the language in this Handbook as straightforward as possible. Please note that the term "parent" is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Handbook is divided into five sections.

Section 1 – includes general information regarding school policy and procedures.

Section 2 – provides important health and safety information

Section 3 – provides information about academics and grading

Section 4 – is especially for parents, with information regarding parental rights.

The Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board Policy. Please be aware that the Student Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy and procedure that affect the Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications. In case of conflict between Board Policy and any provision of this Handbook, the provision that was most recently adopted by the Board of Directors will be followed.

We ask our parents to review the entire Handbook with their students and to keep it as a reference during this school year. Parents or students with questions about the material in this Handbook should contact the Principal.

On behalf of the entire Huston Academy staff and community, best wishes for a great 2022-2023 school year!

Sincerely,

Carol Taylor
Huston Academy Principal

Huston Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT
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SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statement

Huston Academy believes all students can achieve excellence in a positive, challenging, educational environment that stimulates their interests, channels their energy, and develops their abilities. Huston Academy is committed to providing a safe, non-traditional learning environment for students with distinct needs for these educational services. Recognizing the individual strengths and intrinsic worth of all students, Huston Academy's primary purpose is to attract and motivate students to attend school regularly, to achieve measurable improvement in their academic, employment, social and life skills, and to graduate from an accredited high school. It is also, Huston Academy's purpose to provide students with opportunities to become responsible community members and achieve employment success in the 21st century.

Erath Excels Academy Administration

Superintendent/Title I Coordinator	Mike Scott
Principal	Carol Taylor
Business Manager	Debbie Smith
PEIMS Coordinator	Kathy Smith
Special Education Director	Sadie Mayes

Erath Excels Academy Board of Directors

Greg Hamilton	President
Nancy Allen	Vice- President
Mrs. Linda LaMarca	Secretary/Treasurer
Mrs. Debra Miller	Member
Jackie James	Member
Mike Scott	Member

Regularly scheduled school board meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month at Huston Academy Conference Room. Official notices of the Board Meetings are posted on the door of Huston Academy, 680 Peach Orchard Rd., Stephenville, TX 76401.

Quick References

Whom to see when you need information about...

Report Cards/ Progress Reports	Kathy Smith
Teacher Conferences	Individual Teachers
Student Records	Kathy Smith
Medicine at School	Receptionist/School Nurse
Release of your child at School	Receptionist
Standardized Testing	Debbie Smith
Withdrawing your Child	Administration
Social Services	Carol Taylor
Discipline Matters	Carol Taylor
Career and Technical Education	Carol Taylor
Dual Credit	Carol Taylor

All of the above staff members can be reached at 254-965-8883.

Charter Schools in the State Of Texas

In February of 1996, the Texas Legislature authorized the creation of state chartered schools. These are public schools required to meet state accreditation requirements. Charter schools are designed and managed by concerned teachers, parents, administration and community members. Charter schools are independent public schools that are allowed to operate free from the traditional bureaucratic and regulatory red tape that confines public schools. Freed from such micro-management, charter schools design and deliver programs tailored to educational excellence and community needs. Because they are schools of choice, they are held to the highest level of accountability – consumer demand.

Once the charter is created, it is submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. The charter is granted to a 501(c)(3) non-profit Organization. The non-profit organization governing our school is called Erath Excels! Academy, Inc. The school has created a Board of Directors to create and implement the policies and procedures of the charter school. The school must conduct itself in agreement with its charter. Charter schools are accountable to the State Board of Education and are monitored by the Texas Education Agency to insure that they meet both state and federal guidelines.

About Huston Academy

Huston Academy is a Texas Public Charter School located in Stephenville, TX that offers an educational choice for high school students ages 14-21 whose needs are not met in the traditional public school setting. Huston Academy believes all students can achieve excellence in a positive, challenging, educational environment that stimulates their interests, channels their energy, and develops their abilities. We are committed to providing a safe, nontraditional learning environment for students with distinct needs for these educational services.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Huston Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or gender, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. Huston Academy complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expends upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

As required by Title IX, Huston Academy does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement also applies to admission to and employment

with Huston Academy. Questions about issues related to Title IX may be referred to Huston Academy's Title IX Coordinator (identified below), to the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Any questions or concerns about Huston Academy's compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements.

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender and sexual harassment, is Mike Scott, Superintendent, 680 Peach Orchard Rd., Stephenville, TX 76401, 254-965-8883, msscott@erath-excels.org
- The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator(s), for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Carol Taylor, Principal, 680 Peach Orchard Rd., Stephenville, TX 76401, 254-965-8883.
- The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Mike Scott, Superintendent, 680 Peach Orchard Rd., Stephenville, TX 76401, 254-965-8883.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination, may be directed to Mike Scott, Superintendent, 680 Peach Orchard Rd., Stephenville, TX 76401, 254-965-8883.

Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)

Erath Excels Academy and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district, compiled by TEA
- The district's financial management report, which includes the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA: and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Accountability information can be found on the Huston Academy website. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at TEA Performance Reporting Division and the TEA homepage.

General Admission and Enrollment Information

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in the school's charter, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. The total number of students enrolled in Huston Academy shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by Huston Academy based on occupancy limitations, code compliance and staffing requirements as deemed necessary

In accordance with state law, Huston Academy does not discriminate in its admission policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.

Exclusion from Admission

As authorized by the Huston Academy charter and Texas Education Code §12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problems under Texas Education Code Chapter 37, Subchapter A may be excluded from admission and enrollment in Huston Academy.

Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery

Students wanting to attend Huston Academy must submit an application during the school's open enrollment period, which takes place **from May through June 15 each year**; and applications will be accepted in the order they are received. Once a class is full, applications will be date and time stamped and placed on a waiting list and held until space is available.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. If Huston Academy receives more applications than it has spots available in any grade level, it will conduct a random lottery. Each applicant selected during the lottery (up until all open seats are filled) will be offered admission. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order which they are drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the next school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

If an application is received after the application period has passed, the applicant's name will be added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who timely applied.

Exceptions to Lottery Process: Federal guidelines permit Huston Academy to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending Huston Academy. Preference will be given to currently enrolled student by completing a *Letter of Intent to Return* and returned to school by the designated deadline. Enrollment forms are available at the main office, and online through the Huston Academy website.

Enrollment

Prospective students and parent/guardian must attend a student and parent orientation meeting in order for the student to be eligible for admission to Huston Academy. All appropriate documentation must be brought to the meeting. The orientation meeting may include:

- Orientation and Student Handbook
- Benchmark Testing
- Student Code of Conduct

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent/legal guardian, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g. twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001

Homeless children and youth are ensured specific educational rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001. "Children and youth who are homeless" as defined and covered by this federal law, means and includes children who:

- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Are abandoned in hospitals, or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, sub-standard housing, bus or train stations.

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain policies and procedures, including proof of residency requirements; immunization requirements; educational program placement; award of credit; eligibility requirements for participating in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing; graduation requirements; and other related matters.

Student Information

Any student admitted to Huston Academy must have records, such as a report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended, to verify his/her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in Huston Academy for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in Huston Academy, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. Students will not be denied enrollment because they failed to meet this requirement.

Huston Academy will forward a student's record on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parents' consent.

Food Allergy Information

The parent of each student enrolled in Huston Academy must complete a form provided by Huston Academy that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to the school to enable it to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term "severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Huston Academy may also require information from a child's physician if the child has food allergies.

Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records, and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

Establishing Identification

Any of the following documents are acceptable for proof of identification and age: birth certificate; driver's license; passport; school ID card; records, or report card; military ID; hospital birth records; adoption records; church baptismal record; or any other legal document that established identity.

Undocumented Students

Enrollment may not be denied to children who are not legally admitted into the United States.

Residency Verification

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in Huston Academy, each student's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation, and other means, including, but not limited to:

1. A current driver's license or identification card issued by the State of Texas,
2. A recently paid rent receipt,
3. A current lease agreement,
4. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,

5. A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
6. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,
7. Visual inspection of the residence,
8. Interviews with persons with relevant information, or
9. Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1st of the school year in which the admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only)

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

Change of Home Address, Telephone Number, or Electronic Mail Address

Students who change home address, telephone number, or email address must inform the front office in writing within three school days of the change. Failure on the part of the parents/guardians to notify school of a change of address and/or telephone number will prevent the school from communicating with parents/guardians.

School Calendar

Huston Academy operates according to the school calendar adopted annually by the Board of Directors. Holidays may be used as school make-up days for days lost due to bad weather. The latest changes to the calendar will be available on the school's website.

School Hours

School Office Hours

Normal office hours are from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Students going to the office should be courteous and polite when conducting business. Students are expected to conduct their business in a prompt, mature manner and leave once they have finished.

Student Class Hours

High School begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday (Flexible schedule; depending on student credit)

Night School begins at 3:00 p.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursday; and Fridays begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 12:00 p.m.

Teacher Hours

Teachers are on duty from 7:15am until 5:15pm.

School Facilities

Use by Students Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The cafeteria is open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

A student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus, unless a teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission.

After dismissal of school is the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

Care of Building

The building is kept clean and attractive at all times and students are asked to cooperate in maintaining this standard. There are a number of wastebaskets conveniently placed, so it is not necessary to throw waste material on the floor or on the school grounds. The desktops have a hard, smooth finish to provide a good writing surface. Writing or

markings on any school property will not be tolerated. In instances where school property is marked on, broken, or otherwise abused, responsible students will be expected to pay replacement or repair costs. In addition, vandalism may be reported to local law enforcement.

Student Drivers and Parking

All student drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Students driving to school must park in the designated lot. Students may not go to their cars during the school day. Students must also drive in a manner that is safe and does not disrupt the learning environment or school community in any way. Students who fail to follow these guidelines will have their driving privileges suspended or revoked, and may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.

*Huston Academy is **NOT** responsible for any damage or loss of contents incurred to a vehicle on school grounds.*

Attendance

Consistent school attendance is an essential component of each student's education. Absence from school will affect a student's ability to succeed in class; therefore, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Additionally, state law mandates compulsory school attendance for children of a certain age, and Huston Academy's school policy deals with attendance for course credit and a student's final grade. These laws are discussed below.

Texas Compulsory Attendance Law

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between ages of six and 19 must attend school any applicable accelerated instruction programs and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. Huston Academy's staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered "truant" and subject to disciplinary action.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 19 years of age or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, Huston Academy may revoke the student's enrollment, except that Huston Academy may not revoke the enrollment on a day on which the student is physically present at school. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. Prior to revoking the student's enrollment, the school shall issue a warning letter to the student after the third unexcused absence stating that the student's enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking enrollment, Huston Academy may impose a behavior improvement plan.

Note to Parents: *Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or part of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under the Texas Family Code § 65.003 (a).*

Huston Academy shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent is needed to discuss the absences.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee to determine whether the absences were due to extenuating circumstances and how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade.

The Attendance Review Committee will consider the following factors when determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absence:

1. All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered, with consideration given to special circumstances as defined by the Texas Education Code.
2. For a student transferring into Huston Academy after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
3. In reaching consensus about a student's absences, the Attendance Review Committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
4. The Attendance Review Committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
5. The Attendance Review Committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
6. The Attendance Review Committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
7. The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the Attendance Review Committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the Attendance Review Committee determines there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the Attendance Review Committee's decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent or designee. The appeal notice must be postmarked to the following address within 10 days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied:

Huston Academy
680 Peach Orchard Rd.
Stephenville, TX 76401

The appeal notice will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board of Director's meeting. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Absence and Tardiness

When a student must be absent from school, parents are asked to call the school each day the student will be absent. Upon returning to school, the student must bring a note, signed by the parent, or a medical excuse signed and dated by a provider that describes the reason for the absence. Notes should be presented to the front office before class on the first day of the students return following the absence. The note should explain the reason for the absence, but this may not guarantee an excused absence.

Although every effort should be made to schedule appointments with healthcare professionals at times other than school hours, if a student returns to school the same day or attends part of the day prior to the doctor's appointment and presents a doctor's note verifying the appointment, the absence is excused and the student is counted present. In order for a student to be released for a medical appointment, the student must be picked up by the parent at the front office or the parent must send a note to have the student released to go to the medical appointment. The school may call to verify the appointment. Students found guilty of forgery or other falsification of parent notes, health care professional notes, or other documents will be disciplined and the absence classified as unexcused.

Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law. Huston Academy reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

Huston Academy recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

Excused Absences

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

1. Religious holy days;
2. Required court appearances;
3. Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
4. Service as an election clerk;
5. Sounding "TAPS" at a military honors funeral; and
6. Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's return to campus.
7. For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who need to attend:
 - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
 - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

A junior or senior student's absences of up to two days per school year related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus Principal or designee, follows the school's procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work due to the absence.

Students may also be excused for their appointment at the Department of Motor Vehicles to take the driving test, as long as documentation is provided.

Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student visiting with his or her parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. The district will permit no more than three excused absences per year for this purpose.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and services as an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by Huston Academy.

The only additional excused absences are for personal illness, death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, or member of the immediate household), a school-related absence or an absence approved in advance by the School Principal or designee due to extenuating circumstances.

Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the Principal due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence.

There is no academic penalty for an unexcused absence unless the unexcused absence is due to truancy. Excessive absences can result in loss of credit.

Tardiness and Late Arrival

Students are responsible for getting to school and to class on time. Students will sign the tardy book whenever they are tardy for class. The school day begins at 7:30 am. A student is tardy if they arrive after 7:30 am. Three tardies equal one absence. A student will be counted tardy each class period if they are not in the classroom when the bell rings. Parents will be contacted and/or a meeting will be scheduled due to excessive tardies. Teachers are responsible for marking students tardy on the attendance system, and the school office references this information to maintain records of the number of times a student is late for class. A student is considered absent if they are 15 minutes late for

class. Students will be required to make up tardies through either detention or Friday school; this decision will be the decision of the Principal.

Any error in marked absences or tardies must be reported to the front office. Parents should maintain accurate records of the date and reason for each absence of the student.

Make Up Work

If a student misses a class for any reason, a teacher may assign make-up work that incorporates the instructional objectives for the class and that will assist the student to master the essential knowledge and skills necessary to meet subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. Teachers will provide students and parents with additional information regarding penalties for failure to complete make-up work within the time allotted, and the process for making up tests missed due to absence. Different tests may be administered to students who miss the regularly scheduled tests. Written assignments may be requested over and above what was done in class.

Parents wishing to request make-up assignments due to a student's absence should contact the attendance officer on the second day of the absence. Teachers are allowed 24 hours after the request to provide this make-up work.

Driver's License Attendance Verification

The Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") is required to verify the attendance records of a student between the ages of 16 and 18 that is seeking to obtain or renew a driver's license. In order for DPS to access this information or, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the attendance information to DPS, written parental permission must be obtained. Students may obtain the required Verification of Enrollment form from the school office.

Hall Passes

Class time is important to teaching and learning time. Students should be present in class from the opening bell to the closing bell. The Huston Academy staff may use discretion when students ask to leave class for any reason. Students must have an official hall pass from the classroom teacher. Students should have hall passes visible at all times outside a classroom. The student must use facilities nearest the classroom from which he/she is excused. Students with medical problems necessitating frequent bathroom use should present a doctor's note. Students will move through the hallways in an orderly fashion.

Release of Students from School

A student (including a student 18 years and older) shall not be released from school at times other than regular dismissal hours except with proper permission. Parents signing a student out early from school must provide a reason and official identification. The administration may verify any note that the student brings signed by the parent giving the student permission to leave the school. Students will only be released to the parent. The parent must notify the office if the student will need to leave early with someone other than the parent.

Additionally, state rules require that parental consent be obtained before a student under the age of 18 may leave campus at any point in the school day.

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments or meetings with other professionals should be scheduled at times when the student will not miss instructional time, if possible.

Closed Campus

Students are not permitted to leave the campus for lunch. Parents and guardians only are welcome to eat lunch with their child in the cafeteria. Parents may only bring lunch for their own children. Students and adults may not bring in or give away food to other students during lunch times.

Leaving the Campus

Once a student arrives at school, he/she is not permitted to leave campus at any time during the school day without administrative permission, except students who have completed their school day.

Should any student need to leave the campus for any reason, he/she must have the permission of any administrator and **must sign out in the office**. Failure to obtain such permission and/or failure to sign out will result in an unexcused and/or truancy absence. **Students should not ask** to leave the campus during the school day to get materials. Students may not sign themselves out and go home alone.

Withdrawing From School

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student under 18 years of age may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. Huston Academy requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. Parents may obtain a withdrawal form from the school office. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled, and must sign the withdrawal request to document that the student will continue to be enrolled in a school as required by compulsory attendance laws.

A student who is 18 years of age or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records.

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

Involuntary Withdrawal

Huston Academy may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 19 for non-attendance if:

- the student has been absent 10 consecutive school days, and
- repeated efforts by the school to locate the student have been unsuccessful
- a student who has accumulated 20 or more unexcused absences

Additionally, Huston Academy may revoke the enrollment of a student 19 years of age or older who has more than five unexcused absences in one semester.

Dress Code and Grooming

Huston Academy recognizes the individual strengths and intrinsic worth of all students. It is our primary purpose to attract and motivate students to attend school regularly, graduate from high school, become responsible community members and achieve employment success in the 21st century. We believe students will be more conducive to learning if they are placed in an environment where they are accepted for “who they are on the inside” and not “how they look at the outside”. Therefore, we will begin our school year with a very general dress code. If problems arise as a result of the present general dress code; teachers, parents and students will meet and design a more stringent dress code.

The Dress Code is as follows:

- Students must wear shoes, no house shoes are allowed.
- No pajama pants (bottoms).
- Abbreviated clothing, such as midriff shirts, spaghetti straps, or backless tops or dresses, transparent clothing, is not permitted.
- Hair shall be kept clean and well-groomed. Bangs must be kept out of the eyes.

- (Fingertip Rule/Length Standard) Shorts and skirts must meet the tips of the fingers with the arm extended to the student's side. Skirts featuring high slashes or slits are not appropriate for school. The length standard will be applied to the top of the slash/slit.
- Students that wear leggings, yoga pants, etc must also wear a shirt or dress over the top of them which adheres to the fingertip rule.
- No sunglasses are to be worn in school unless medically prescribed.
- No tank tops, no cleavage or midriffs, or under garments exposed.
- No trench coats.
- No handkerchiefs/bandannas or anything with a gang affiliation.
- No metal chains other than jewelry.
- No body piercings that protrude away from the student's body.
- No jewelry with spikes and/or anything that could be considered a weapon.
- Slogans, pictures, and advertisements which promote alcohol, tobacco, drugs, acts of violence, guns, weapons, death, dismemberment, disfigurement, or other lewd, offensive, vulgar items are prohibited.
- The school administration has the final decision making authority of any issue which relates to the dress and grooming policy.
- Students who engage in extracurricular activities or school trips shall comply with the requirements as to dress and grooming as may be required by the director, teacher, or as the community or activity dictates.

Students who fail to meet these guidelines or whose appearance is disruptive to school activities may be given an oversized T-shirt or sweater to wear over inappropriate clothes or may be sent home to make necessary changes. Students who refuse to make the necessary changes may result in In-school suspension, Out-of-school suspension or could lose other school privileges.

Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action. The school administration has the authority to make the final decision concerning fads, etc. and to insure compliance with this dress and grooming policy.

Prohibited Items and Activities

Clubs, Gangs, And Organizations – Types Not Permitted

“Fraternity” or “Sorority” type clubs, where the club selects its members rather than membership being open to all students, are forbidden. Secret societies and “gangs” are also forbidden. Texas Education Code §37.121 (d)

A “public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or “gang” means an organizations composed wholly or in parts of students of primary or secondary schools that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking in additional members from the student enrolled in school on the basis of the decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of the student in the school who is qualified by the rules of the school to fill the special aims of the organization.” The term does not include an agency for public welfare, scholarship societies, or other similar education organizations sponsored by state or national education authorities. *Texas Education Code §37.121 (d)*

Gang Markings, Graffiti, Insignias, Etc.

Gang type insignia, marking, dress, membership, and other activities are strictly prohibited; items with such markings on them may be confiscated and released only to parents in a conference in which the nature of the markings will be explained. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Laser Pointers

Due to their potential danger and distraction to the learning environment, laser pointers are not permitted on campus. When collected from a student, a laser pointer will be returned only to the parent of the student.

Permanent Markers

All permanent markers, which are often used to make such markings, are banned from the campus. These items will be confiscated and released only to parents. The only felt-tip markers allowed on campus are highlighters.

Public Display of Affection

Public display of affection is prohibited at Huston Academy. Students are subject to disciplinary action for public displays of affection.

Student Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, notebooks, calculators, headsets, etc. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. Fees for materials used in any program in which the resultant product is in excess of minimum requirements and, at the student's option, becomes the personal property of the student. Fees may not exceed the cost of materials.
2. Membership dues in student organizations or clubs, and admission fees or charges for attending extracurricular activities when membership or attendance is voluntary.
3. Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
4. Fees for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel. However, any student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety established by the Board.
5. Fees for items of personal use or products that a student may purchase at the student's option, such as student publications, class rings, annuals, and graduation announcements.
6. Fees specifically permitted by any other statute.
7. Fees for an authorized, voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
8. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by Huston Academy.
9. Fees for items of personal apparel that become the property of the student and that are used in extracurricular activities.
10. Parking fees and fees for identification cards.
11. Fees for driver training courses, provided that such fees shall not exceed the actual Huston Academy cost per student in such programs for the current school year.
12. Fees for courses offered for credit that require the use of facilities not available on the school premises or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school's regular staff, if participation in the course is at the student's option.
13. Fees for courses offered during summer school, except that the Board may charge a fee for a course required for graduation only if the course is also offered without a fee during the regular school term.
14. A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the school the student attends to and from that school, except that the Board may not charge a fee for transportation for which Huston Academy receives funds under Education Code 48.151(d).
15. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required under Education Code 25.092.
16. If Huston Academy does not receive any funds under Section 48.151 and does not participate in a county transportation system for which an allotment is provided under Section 48.151(i), a reasonable fee for the transportation of a student to and from the school the student attends.
17. A fee for enrollment in an electronic course provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) in accordance with Education Code 30A.155.

Huston Academy may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver must be made in writing to the Superintendent or Principal and include evidence of inability to pay.

Check Policy

Checks written to the school or any school organization must include on the front of the check the name(s) of the student(s) involved in the transaction, driver's license number, and home phone number. Post-dated checks will not be accepted.

In the event that a check written to Huston Academy is returned unpaid by your bank, Huston Academy or its agent will redeposit your check electronically. Additionally, Huston Academy may charge a \$25.00 bank fee. The use of a check for payment is your ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE of this policy and its terms.

Graduation Commencement Activities

One graduation ceremony will be held at the end of the school year.

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents/legal guardian will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation – such as the purchase of invitations, cap and gown, and senior pictures – both the student and parent/legal guardian should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation.

Graduation Participation

Students must satisfactorily complete all coursework requirements for graduation to be allowed to participate in commencement activities and ceremonies.

The fact that academic requirements for graduation have been met does not guarantee participation in the graduation ceremony. Final authority rests with the principal regarding a student's participation in the graduation ceremony. Participation is a privilege, not a right.

Students will be required to wear appropriate graduation attire.

Invocations and Benedictions

School officials shall not direct the performance of a formal religious exercise at promotional and graduation ceremonies.

Teacher Conferences

Parents and teachers are encouraged to establish and maintain frequent communication about student progress. A student or parent who wants information or has a question or concern should talk first with the appropriate teacher, counselor, or administrator. A parent who wants to meet with a teacher may call or email for an appointment during the teacher's conference period or may request that the teacher call the parent during a conference period or at another mutually convenient time. Students and parents may expect teachers to request a conference (1) if the student is not maintaining passing grades or achieving at the expected level of performance (2) if the student is a behavior problem or (3) in any other case the teacher considers necessary.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

Parents may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and field of study of the certification or degree. Parents also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide service to your child.

Substitute Teachers

The school is fortunate to have capable people to help whenever regular teachers are ill or are attending conferences. A substitute teacher is an important visitor whose impressions of the school will be carried into the community.

Students should be as polite, helpful, and considerate as they would be to any regular teacher. Substitute teachers operate with the authority of the regular teacher.

Textbooks and Curriculum Materials

Textbooks are the property of Huston Academy. State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum material are provided free of charge for each subject or class, except for dual credit course. Materials must be used by the student as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued damaged materials should report the damage to the teacher. The student to whom a textbook or curriculum materials is issued is responsible for the lost, stolen, or damaged book or material.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. However, a student will be provided textbooks and educational materials for use during the school day.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

As a parent/legal guardian, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Food Service

Huston Academy participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches. Guidelines set by the Texas Department of Agriculture (“TDA”) and United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) are followed to meet the nutritional needs of all students. Menus may be obtained at the school office.

Students must confine eating and drinking to the cafeteria. Lunch trays, paper, food, cans, bottles, and other litter should be cleared from the area before leaving. No food or drink will be permitted in the hallway or classrooms, without authorization from appropriate school personnel. Students who violate these regulations may be disciplined.

State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines

The TDA places strict limits on any food or drink provided or sold to students other than through Huston Academy’s food and nutrition services. More detailed information may be obtained at the school office or online at www.squaremeals.org.

Drinks – Bringing in Outside Beverages

Only sealed bottled or canned drinks will be allowed on premises. The drinks must not be opened before the student enters the school building. The student must check the drink in with the campus secretary immediately upon entering the building. Any student that does not follow these guidelines will be directed to dispose of the drink. Drinks can only be consumed during breakfast or lunch time and cannot be consumed during class time. “Energy” drinks are prohibited at all times and at all school events. Bottle water that has been checked in with the campus secretary is the only beverage that students are allowed to consume in class.

School Sponsored Trips

Many trips are arranged for students during the school year, either curricular, or extra-curricular. Students making a school trip are expected to travel by bus or school-endorsed transportation. Huston Academy field trip permission forms are required for all school trips. All District and school rules are in effect on school trips. Eligibility for all school trips will be determined by the school administration. Students who participate in school-sponsored trips shall be required to ride in transportation provided or arranged by the school to and from the event. Exception may be made if the student’s parent or guardian personally requests that the student be allowed to ride with the parent or guardian and presents a *written request to the Principal the day before the scheduled trip* that the student be allowed to ride with

an adult designated by the parent. The District shall not be liable for any injuries that occur to students riding in vehicles not provided by the school.

Transcripts and Academic Achievement Records

Huston Academy maintains an academic achievement record (transcript) for each student enrolled. Transcripts list complete personal student data, give complete scholastic grades, and report student activities, honors, and scores on standardized achievement tests. Requests for transcripts should be made to the campus Principal. Students are provided with free official transcripts. Official transcripts may be picked up from the front office. Grade point average and class rank are recalculated at the end of each semester and updated transcripts are not available until the end of the third business week after the end of the semester.

Tutorials

Under current law, a student not passing a class may be required to attend tutorials and if they do not, may be counted as truant. All students are encouraged to attend tutorials for their own benefit.

Transfer Requests

As a parent/legal guardian, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25. 0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus.
- To request a transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault.

Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work

Teachers may display student work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, Huston Academy will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Huston Academy website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. Huston Academy will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

As a parent, if you do not want your child's artwork, special projects, photographs, and the like to be displayed on the district's Website, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication, you must notify the Principal in writing.

Distribution of Materials or Documents

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the Principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the Principal.

Non-School Materials from Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the Principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in five school days.

A student may appeal a Principal's decision. Any student who posts non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the Principal's approval will be removed.

Non-School Materials from Others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by district or by a district-affiliated school-support organizations will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy. To be considered for distribution, any non-school materials must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Principal for prior review. The Principal will approve or reject the materials within five school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy.

Prior review will not be required for:

1. Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
2. Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community groups meeting held after school hours in accordance to policy or a non-curriculum related student groups meeting held in accordance to policy.
3. Distribution of electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

Electronic Device Policy

Electronics, games/toys, cameras/equipment, video cameras, radios, audio recording devices, laser pointers, and portable electronic music devices will not be permitted on campus or on school-provided transportation at any time except for instructional purposes with teacher permission and supervision. Any of the above items brought to school by a student for other than educational purposes will be kept in the school office and may be picked up by a parent. Items may be held in the school office until the conclusion of the school year. Replicas, fakes, and/or look-a-like weapons are forbidden on the campus. Game cards and other items commonly traded or exchanged are also not permitted on campus. Buying, selling, or trading anything of this nature on campus is prohibited. **The school is not responsible for the replacement of any confiscated, lost, or stolen items.**

Telecommunication Devices

For safety purposes, the school permits students to possess cell phones; **however**, cell phones must remain turned off during instructional time, including during all testing. The cell phone may only be used during breakfast, lunch, or before/after school. Parents please do not call or text message students on cell phones during class time. Please call the school at (254) 965-8883 to leave a message for your child.

Any phone collected from a student will result in the following consequences:

- **1st time offense:** cell phone will be collected and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Parents will be notified of the violation.
- **2nd offense:** cell phone will be collected and will require a parent(s) to pick up the phone from school personnel.
- If the problem continues, we will search the student before school to prevent cell phone use during school time. Also, the student will be required to leave his/her cell phone at home or in the school office until their day ends.

Cell phone offenses will not accumulate from one semester to the next.

Please note that if your phone is taken up, the messages and pictures on the phone can be looked into by school personnel.

Office Telephones

The office telephones are for school business, and may be used by students only in cases of emergency and with permission from authorized school personnel. The phone may be used only in-between classes, during breakfast, or before/ after school. Class will not be interrupted to deliver phone messages unless the message is from a parent and pertains to an emergency and/or is approved by administrator.

Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag. Parents may submit a written request to the Principal or designee to excuse their student from reciting a pledge. Students are still responsible to conduct themselves with appropriate behavior during the pledge and moment of silence. Stand quietly, remove hats, toboggans, etc. and not cause any disruption.

State law requires that one minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that Huston Academy provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

Recitation of the Declaration of Independence

For all public schools in Texas, the week of September 17 is designated as “Celebrate Freedom Week.” During that time, social studies classes will provide instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and students in grade 3 and above will recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence. A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, Huston Academy determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

Prayer and Meditation

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

Lost and Found

Any student wishing to search through the lost and found box should check in with office personnel first. Any valuable items turned in are kept in the office. The school is not responsible for any lost/found items. All unclaimed items will be donated to a charity periodically throughout the year.

Site-Based Advisory Committee

Each campus must have a site-based advisory committee. The site-based advisory committee serves exclusively in an advisory role to assist the administrator in implementing planning processes and site-based decision making in accordance to Board policy and administrative procedures. The committee shall be chaired by the principal/designee. Guidelines for site-based advisory committee are available at each campus.

SECTION 2: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

Mental and Physical Health Resources

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

- [Texas Health and Human Services](#)
- National Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health

Huston Academy has adopted Board policies that promote student physical and mental health, including:

- Food and nutrition management,
- Wellness and health services,
- Medical treatment,
- Physical examination,
- Immunizations,
- Communicable diseases,
- Crisis intervention,
- Trauma-informed care,
- Student safety,
- Child abuse and neglect,
- Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and
- Freedom from bullying.

Huston Academy has also developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement these policies. Please contact the Superintendent for information on these policies and procedures.

Student Safety

Student safety on campus or at school-related events is a high priority of Huston Academy. With safety in mind, Huston Academy has implemented safety procedures. However, Huston Academy can address only part of the challenge; the essential remaining part is the cooperation of students, including:

1. Avoiding conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
2. Following the Student Code of Conduct and any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the administration or teachers.
3. Remaining alert to and promptly reporting safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
4. Knowing emergency evacuation routes and signals.
5. Following immediately the instructions of teachers, and other district employees overseeing the welfare of students.

Parents can assist by keeping emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies to medications, etc.) and by teaching their children safety rules. Please contact the school administrator to update any information. Having current information will be of critical importance should an accident or injury occur that requires medical attention. Should it become necessary to call EMS, the expense will be incurred by the parent, guardian or managing conservator.

Alcohol –Free School Notice

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Huston Academy property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off Huston Academy property. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

Tobacco-Free School Notice

Huston Academy strictly enforces prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, Juuls, vapes, or any other electronic vaporizing device, by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. Smoking and/or the use of tobacco products in any form is prohibited within 1000-foot radius from Huston Academy and within all enclosed facilities of the school including a vehicle used to transport students to school related activities. Students shall not possess or use tobacco products including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, or chewing tobacco, on school premises or at school –related functions. It is prohibited by law, in the state of Texas, for a minor (anyone under the age of 18) to possess, purchase, or consume tobacco products. Any student found to be in possession on school property or at a school function will be referred to the school administration/and or referred to local law enforcement as a discipline measure.

Drug-Free School Notice

Huston Academy believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, Huston Academy prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Huston Academy also prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of look-alike substances and/or synthetic substances designed to imitate the look and/or effects of illicit drugs. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

Should a Huston Academy teacher, administrator or staff person have reasonable suspicion that a student might be under the influence of an illegal drug, local law enforcement officials will be called immediately. Students found in violation of this policy will be referred to local law enforcement as a discipline a student, a student’s belongings, and a student’s vehicle whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that one contains articles or materials prohibited by law. Parents will be notified if the dog alerts during the search of their child’s belongings. Huston Academy is not responsible for any loss or damage resulting in an investigation or search by law enforcement authorities.

Asbestos Management Plan

Huston Academy works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings, and has developed an Asbestos Management Plan. If you have any questions or would like to examine the school’s plan in more detail, please contact the Superintendent.

Bacterial Meningitis Information

State law specifically requires the Huston Academy to provide the following information:

➤ **What is bacterial meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Meningitis caused by bacteria is the most likely form of the disease to cause serious, long-term complication. It is an uncommon disease but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

➤ **What are the symptoms of bacterial meningitis?**

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, seizures, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion and sleepiness and lethargy. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots or purple patches on the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. The more symptoms, the higher the risk, so when these symptoms appear seek immediate medical attention.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

➤ How serious is bacterial meningitis?
Bacterial meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast. If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. However, in some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with permanent severe health problems or disability.

➤ How is bacterial meningitis spread?
Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions (such as coughing or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

➤ How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?
Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis.* The vaccines are safe and effective (85-90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 1-2 weeks after the vaccines are given and lasts from three to five years depending on vaccine.

➤ What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?
You should seek prompt medical attention.

➤ Where can you get more information?
Your family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services offices to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions>.

Communicable Diseases

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the school Principal or designee so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. School authorities will report those students who are suspected of having a reportable condition. A list of reportable conditions can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/>.

Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- Meeting resubmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

Please contact the Principal or designee if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether a child should stay home.

Diabetes Management

Students with diabetes may possess equipment and medication used in the treatment of diabetes during the school day and at school-related events given conditions. According to Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 168, a diabetes management and treatment plan must be developed and implemented by the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment. This plan must evaluate the student's ability to manage diabetes and his/her level of understanding of diabetes and must be signed by the parent and physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment. An individual health plan must be implemented by the school and must incorporate components of the student's diabetes management and treatment plan. In accordance with the student's individualized health plan, which incorporates the diabetes management and treatment plan signed by the parent and physician that indicates the student's ability to manage diabetes and his/her level of understanding of diabetes, a school shall permit a student to attend to the management and care of his/her diabetes, which may include:

1. Performing blood glucose level checks;
2. Administering insulin;
3. Treating hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia;
4. Possessing necessary monitoring and treatment equipment designed for diabetes care; and
5. Attending to the management of his/her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school ground, or at any school-related activity.

Immunization Requirements

The State of Texas requires every child in the state be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read "2022—2023" Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K-12." For specific immunization requirements, please contact the Principal or visit the Texas Department of State Health Services at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/>.

Proof of immunization may be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

Provisional Enrollment

All immunizations should be completed by the first date of attendance. The law requires that students be fully vaccinated against the specified diseases. A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specific age-appropriate vaccine required by this rule. Students must not be overdue for the next dose in a series to be considered provisional. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school.

A nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and the school shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered. Schools shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Additional guidelines for provisional enrollment of students transferring from one Texas public or private school to another, students who are dependent of active duty military, students in foster care, and students who are homeless can be found in the TAC, Title 25 Health Services, Sections 97.66 and 07.69.

Documentation

Since many types of personal immunization records are in use, any document will be acceptable provided a physician or public health personnel has validated it. Validation includes a signature, initials or stamp. An immunization record generated from an electronic health record must include clinic information and the provider's signature/stamp, along with the vaccine name and vaccination date (month, day, and year). An official record generated from a health authority is acceptable. An official record received from school officials, including a record from another state is acceptable.

Exemptions

Texas law allows (a) physicians to write medical exemption statements which clearly state a medical reason exists that the person cannot receive specific vaccines, and (b) parents/guardians to choose an exemption from immunization requirements for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. The law does not allow parents/guardians to elect an exemption simply because of inconvenience (for example, a record is lost or incomplete and it is too much trouble to go to a physician or clinic to correct the problem). Schools should maintain an up-to-date list of students with exemptions, so they may be excluded in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

Instructions for requesting the official exemption affidavit that must be signed by parents/guardians choosing the exemption for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, can be found at www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx. The original Exemption Affidavit must be completed and submitted to the Huston Academy.

For children claiming medical exemptions, a written statement by the physician must be submitted to Huston Academy. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exist, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

Emergency Medical Treatment

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, Huston Academy will seek emergency medical treatment unless the parent has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.) Please contact the school officials to update any information.

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact Huston Academy to let us know if he/she will not be attending that day. Students must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication and must be free of vomiting/diarrhea without the use of diarrhea suppressing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the front office. If Huston Academy determines that the child should go home, the Principal or designee will contact the parent.

Head Lice

Head lice (which is not an illness or disease) are common among children, and may spread easily through contact during play or when students share items such as headphones, brushes, combs, hat, or other items that come in contact with hair. If Huston Academy observes that a student may have head lice, an appropriate administrator will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student needs to be sent home and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse.

Administration of Medication

All Medications

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. A parent/guardian or any student 18 or older must complete a medication form for all medications (non-prescription and prescription medications). All medicine must be presented in an original container, properly labeled and checked into the school office upon arrival on campus. This request must be submitted annually and is active only for the current school year. Failure to comply with the medication policy will result in a Code of Conduct violation.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner (“ANP”) and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas.

Prescription medication labels must include the student’s name and instructions, and be clearly legible.

Written instructions from a physician or ANP are required and must include the following information:

1. Name of the student
2. Name of the medication
3. Reason the medication is being given
4. Specific amount to be given
5. Time the medication is to be given, and
6. The method used to administer the medication.

Changes to daily medications require written instruction from the physician or a NP and written permission from the parent. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for advising the school office that a medication has been discontinued.

Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life threatening conditions, and students with these conditions may be allowed to possess and self-administer prescription medications for those conditions during the school day or at school-related events. Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires the student to demonstrate his/her ability to self-administer the medication for the physician or licensed health care provider and the school administrator. Requirements also include written authorization from the student’s parent and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school office indicating the student is capable of independently administering his/her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication. With these safeguards in place, the student may possess and self-administer his/her prescribed medication at his/her discretion during school hours or at school related events.

Written authorization to self-administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication should be updated annually unless otherwise indicated by the physician.

Medication in a student’s possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

Seizure Management Plan

The parent of a student with a seizure disorder may seek care for the student’ seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school activity by submitting to Huston Academy a copy of a seizure management and treatment plan developed by the parent and the physician responsible for the student’s seizure treatment. The plan must be submitted to and reviewed by Huston Academy:

1. Before or at the beginning of the school year;
2. On enrollment of the student if the student enrolls after the start of the school year; or
3. As soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student.

A seizure management and treatment plan must:

1. Identify the health care services that student may receive at school or while participating in a school activity;
2. Evaluate the student's ability to manage and level of understanding of the student's seizures; and
3. Be signed by the student's parent and the physician for the student's seizure treatment.

Steroid Notice

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Huston Academy does not permit steroid use. A notice shall be posted in a conspicuous location(s) in the school where physical education classes are conducted.

Dyslexia and Related Disorders

From time to time, students may be tested and, where appropriate, treated for dyslexia and related disorders in accordance with programs, rules and standards approved by the State of Texas. Parents will be notified should Huston Academy determine a need to identify or assess their student for dyslexia and related disorders.

Health Screening

Fitness Testing

According to requirements under state law, Huston Academy will annually assess the physical fitness of students. Huston Academy is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

Spinal Screening

All students who meet Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

A parent who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by Huston Academy must submit to the Principal or designee documentation of a professional examination which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to Huston Academy during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

Exemption: A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Principal or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Vision and Hearing Screening

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS). Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the TDSHS or a local health department, and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

Exemptions: A student is exempt from screening requirements if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the student or, if the student is a minor, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the Principal or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Acanthosis Screening for Diabetes

Children in certain grades identified by the state must be screened for warning signs of diabetes.

Exemption: A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent must submit to the Principal or designee on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

Preparedness Training

Huston Academy will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students in grades 9-12. The instruction may be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

Huston Academy will annually offer students in grades 9-12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Huston Academy prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of school policy.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that is negatively affects the student.

Prohibited Harassment

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. This also includes cyber-bullying or any types of harassment via social media using the Internet, cell phones, or other technologies.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Examples of harassing conduct that may not meet the definitions of sexual harassment but that may subject a student to disciplinary action include, but not limited to the following:

1. Touching (arm, breast, buttock, or other parts of the body)
2. Verbal comments of offensive nature
3. Name-calling, including racial or sexual epithets
4. Spreading sexual rumors
5. Leers, stares, howling, catcalls, whistles, making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively, facial expressions (winking, kissing)
6. Sexual or “dirty” jokes
7. Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
8. Using the computer to leave sexual messages
9. Sheared pants that are revealing above mid-thigh
10. Pressure for sexual activity
11. Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following, stalking
12. Conversations that are too personal
13. “Rating” an individual on a scale from 1 to 10
14. Obscene T-shirts, hats, pins
15. “Wedgies” (pulling underwear up at the waist so it goes in between the buttocks)
16. Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
17. Rape
18. Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
19. Touching oneself sexually in front of others
20. Graffiti
21. Repeatedly asking someone out when he or she isn’t interested
22. “Slam books” (list of student names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)
23. “Making out” in the hallway
24. Bullying with words or actions

Gender-based harassment

Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student’s gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student’s gender, or the student’s failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender.

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student’s actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student’s academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs threats to hurt the student or the student’s family members or members of student’s household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Retaliation

Huston Academy prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a school investigation, is subject to appropriate discipline.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment, or believes that another student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the acts to a teacher, counselor, Principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent.

A student shall not be required to report prohibited harassment to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX Coordinator and/or the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator may be directed to the Superintendent. If a report is made directly to the Superintendent, Huston Academy shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

Investigation of Complaints

After receiving a complaint of prohibited discrimination or harassment, Huston Academy may, but need not, require the student to prepare a written report. Oral complaints will be reduced to written form. Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate authorized school official shall promptly authorize and undertake an investigation. Following completion of the investigation, the authorized school official will prepare a written decision regarding the complaint, including the determination of whether prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred.

When appropriate, Huston Academy may take interim action to avoid additional opportunities for discrimination or harassment. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and any others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. If the results of the investigation establish that prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred, Huston Academy shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the discrimination or harassment and prevent its recurrence. Huston Academy may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if Huston Academy concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

Confidentiality

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

Appeals

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Huston Academy grievance procedure. A student shall be informed of his/her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.

Freedom from Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Hazing

Bullying

Huston Academy prohibits bullying as defined by this section, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expressions through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by Huston Academy that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described above is considered bullying if that conduct:

- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; an
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of Huston Academy.

Cyber-bullying

Huston Academy also prohibits cyber-bullying, which is defined as any electronic communication device to engage in bullying or intimidation. Cyber-bullying is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Although most cyber-bullying is created on computers, cell phones, and other devices that are not owned by the district or not located on school property, cyber-bullying can still affect the school environment and the welfare of students.

Harassment through electronic communication includes but is not limited to E-Mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers, online games, and Web sites whether or not this conduct originated a school property or with school equipment so long as:

1. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act will have the effect of harming a student or damage to his or her property; and has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school; or
2. The act is directed specifically at students and intended for the purpose of disrupting school, and has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Hazing

Hazing means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

Students shall have prior approval from the administrator for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. No student shall engage in any form of hazing. No student shall encourage or assist any other person in hazing. The act of hazing and failure to report known hazing can result in criminal penalties as well as school disciplinary action.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or cyber-bullying, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, Principal, or another district employee. A report may be made orally or in

writing. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying or cyber-bullying shall immediately notify the school Principal or designee.

Investigation of Report

The administration shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment, and if so proceed under that policy instead. The Superintendent or designee shall conduct and appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report and will take prompt interim action calculated to prevent hazing and/or bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Superintendent or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether hazing and/or bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that hazing and/or bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Huston Academy may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of hazing and/or bullying under this policy.

Confidentiality

To the greatest extent possible, Huston Academy shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosure may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Huston Academy grievance procedure.

“Sexting”

"Sexting" is defined as using a cell phone or other personal communication device to send text or email messages or possessing text or email messages containing images reasonably interpreted as indecent or sexually suggestive while at school or at a school related function. In addition to any disciplinary action, phones will be confiscated and students should be aware that any images suspected to violate criminal laws will be referred to law enforcement authorities.

Reporting sexting: If you receive a text, image or video that is or could be considered “sexting”, do NOT forward it or show it to anyone. Contact the administration immediately.

Law Enforcement

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, The Principal or designee will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

In other circumstances:

1. The administration will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
2. The administration ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer rises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.
3. The administration ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer rises what the Principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires Huston Academy to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

1. To comply with an order of the juvenile court;
2. To comply with laws of arrest;

3. By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in conduct that violates a penal law, delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision, or conduct that violates a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court;
4. To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.
5. By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the condition set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the Principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

Notification of Law Violations

The school is required by state law to immediately notify and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the Superintendent or designee considers to be a valid objections to notifying the parents. Because the Superintendent or designee does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will mostly likely be after the fact.

Mental Health Promotion and Intervention

Huston Academy has developed protocols for providing a parent with a recommended intervention for a student with early warning signs and a possible need for early mental health or substance abuse intervention, or who has been identified as at risk or attempting suicide. Huston Academy's campus Principal will notify a parent within a reasonable amount of time after learning that a student has early warning signs and possible need for intervention, and will also provide additional information on available counseling options.

Huston Academy has also developed protocols for staff members to notify the campus Principal to identify a student who may need intervention.

The campus Principal can provide additional information about the school's intervention program, as well as materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment, and accommodations available at school.

Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

Huston Academy has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

Teachers and other school employees may discuss a student's behavior or academic progress with the student's parent or another employee; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in a diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication and that is intended to alter perception, emotion, or behavior. An employee who is a registered nurse, advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credential mental health professional can recommend that a student by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

Child Abuse Reporting and Programs

Huston Academy provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. Huston Academy also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions and counseling options are also available.

Huston Academy administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?

The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

What is Trafficking?

Child trafficking in any form is prohibited by the Texas Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers may be trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently make contact with victims online.

What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?

Under State law, "other maltreatment" of a child includes "abuse" or "neglect," as defined by Texas Family Code Sections 261.001 and 261.401.

Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and other Maltreatment of Children

All individuals are required to report suspected abuse or neglect. Professionals, including teachers and nurses, are required to report suspected abuse or neglect within 48 hours. If a student discloses being a victim of human trafficking or have information related to another student being involved in human trafficking, the following steps should be followed:

Faculty Member Suspecting or Hearing of Human Trafficking:

- The student/individual shall be taken to their campus Principal for emotional support. If emanate danger exists 911 shall be immediately called.
- Reporting faculty member shall provide written statement to the campus principal no later than the end of the reporting business day.
- Reporting faculty member shall make a CPS referral. The campus principal may assist reporting faculty member in the reporting process. Due to the sensitive nature, all CPS notifications should be called in rather than reported online (Phone Number: 1-800-252-5400).
- The campus principal shall brief the Superintendent by email within 24 hours of CPS notification

A child who has experienced sexual abuse, trafficking, or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse and trafficking

may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and it is important to be calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the Principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child that are available in your area. The DFPS also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#)

Resources:

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 888-373-7888;
- Central Texas Youth Services: 254-939-3466;
- Human Trafficking Hotline: 888-373-7888;
- The Key 2 Free: 844-312-3733;
- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400;
- In non-emergency situations, the [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#);
- Your local police department; or
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children

For Staff: Huston Academy annually trains staff in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration.

For Students: School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation and materials no less than once per school year. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings.

For Parents: Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

The school leader or designee will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The DFPS also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services available in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp.

Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment

Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation.

- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits.
- Depression or irritability.
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb sucking.
- Developing fear of certain places or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons.
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity.
- Thinking of self or boy as repulsive, dirty, or bad.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about internet or telephone use.

Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment include:

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underwear.
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge.
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area.
- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude.
- Frequent runaway incidents.
- Isolation from friends, family, and community.
- Multiple phones or social media accounts.
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone.
- Refillable gift cards.
- Social interaction and schedule being strictly controlled by someone else.
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for instance, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology).
- Tattoos or branding.
- Unexplained injuries.

Possible warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students.
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit.
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss.
- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as student’s caregiver.
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours.

- Not being in control of his or her own money.
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused, trafficked, or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

Actions That a Child Who is a Victim of Sexual Abuse, Trafficking or Other Maltreatment Should Take

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse, trafficking and other maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse, sex trafficked or other maltreatment or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

Available Counseling Options

A list of counseling providers can be found at:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/.

Interrogations and Searches

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that Huston Academy is safe and drug free, school officials may from time to time, conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Administrators, teachers and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the circumstances justifying the search, such as the extent of the search, the objectives of the search, the age and sex of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

Desk and Locker Searches

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks or other school property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of Huston Academy. Huston Academy will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks, and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found therein. A student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, or on the student's person.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of the Huston Academy and may be searched any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to a search of the vehicle. If the student refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, Huston Academy may contact the student's parents

and/or law enforcement officials. A student may be held responsible for and in possession of prohibited items found in his or her vehicle parked on school property or at a school-related event. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others.

Random Drug Searches – Use of Trained Dogs

Huston Academy policy allows for the use of drug-detection dogs to deter drug usage/possession and to maintain a safe school environment conducive to education on secondary school campuses. Visits shall be unannounced. The dogs will be used to sniff the air in vacant classrooms, in vacant common areas, around student desks, and around vehicles parked on school property. The dogs will not be used with students. If a dog alerts on a vehicle, or an item in a classroom that area may be searched by school officials.

A student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, vehicle, or on the student's person.

Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs

School staff may, within the scope of their duties, use and apply physical restraint to a student that they reasonably believe is necessary in order to:

- Protect a person, including the person using physical restraint, from physical injury;
- Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object;
- Protect property from serious damage;
- Remove from a specific location a student refusing a lawful command of school staff, including a classroom or other school property, in order to restore order or impose disciplinary measures;
- Restrain an irrational student; or
- Prevent student from fleeing when fleeing would put other students or others in danger.

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

Visitor and Volunteer Policy

Parents/legal guardians and others are welcome to visit Huston Academy. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the front office. Students are not to bring friends and other visitors from outside the school district to school with them without special permission from the School administration.

No visitors will be allowed in any part of the building without first obtaining approval from the school office. The school will take the following actions when there is a visitor at the school:

1. The visitor must first report to the school office, and may be required to furnish a U.S. federal or state-issued photo ID.
2. The school will verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety or any other database accessible by the school. Visitors identified as sex offenders shall be escorted by school staff at all times during a school visit.
3. A visitor badge will be issued to the visitor and displayed conspicuously during the visit.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the Principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

On Career Day, Huston Academy invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

Social Events

School rules apply to all social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

Disruptions

In order to protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits Huston Academy to take action against any person – student or non-student – who:

- Disrupts classes while on school property that is within 500 feet of school property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending a required class or activity; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane language or any misconduct.
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or parts of a building.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit, an entrance, or hallway of a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

Emergency Closings

Generally, Huston Academy dismisses classes for weather-related events on the same days as surrounding local independent school districts. Any closures for weather will be broadcast on the local television and/or radio stations. Huston Academy may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather related school closings will be broadcast on local television and/or radio stations as early as possible. Any emergency closures will be posted on the Huston Academy website.

During inclement weather conditions, parents may call Huston Academy at 965-8883 to hear an updated message regarding school closing or delays.

If the District must cancel school for a day, the first (in calendar year order) “bad weather day” designated on the Huston Academy School Year Calendar will become an instructional day. If the District must subsequently cancel school for another day, the second “bad weather day” designated on the calendar will also become an instructional day. If school is canceled for more than two days, the District will either add days at the end of the school year or follow directions from the Texas Education Agency

School Closing While Class is in Session

If schools are closed during emergency situations while students are at school, the announcement of the closing will be made to the media as quickly as possible; instructions will be provided as to what arrangements parents should make to pick up their students. The information will also be placed on the district’s Web site, www.hustonacademy.com. An attempt will be made to send a recorded phone message to the emergency phone number provided by the parent/guardian to update emergency situation information and instructions.

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

Students, teachers, and other staff will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of school staff quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. Order rather than speed shall be stressed. Defined instructions for vacating each room will be posted in each room, and students should familiarize themselves with these instructions.

Pest Control Information

Huston Academy periodically applies pesticides inside the school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Principal or designee.

Videotaping of Students

For safety purposes, including the maintenance of order and discipline, surveillance cameras may be used to monitor student behavior in classrooms, on school vehicles, and in school common areas. Video recording may be reviewed routinely to document student misconduct and used by staff when investigating an incident. As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from Huston Academy to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission. An employee of a school district is not required to obtain the consent of a student's parent before the employee may make or authorize the making of a videotape/audio recording of a student or a recording of a student's voice if the videotape/audio recording is to be used only for:

1. Purposes of safety, including the maintenance of order and discipline in common areas of the school;
2. A purpose related to an extra-curricular activity.
3. A purpose related to regular classroom instruction; or
4. Media coverage of the school.

Students and parents shall be notified regarding the use of video cameras on campuses. Students may not be notified when the equipment is in use.

SECTION 3: ACADEMICS AND GRADING

Academic Awards

Academic awards will be given during Family Dinners and are based on several factors: grades, attendance, character and leadership skills.

Academic Programs

Huston Academy will provide students and parents with information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss options for ensuring that students complete all work required with a teacher or school leader.

Academic Integrity

Copying another person's work, such as homework, class work, or a test, is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is also a form of cheating. Plagiarism is defined as using another person's original ideas of writing, without giving credit to the true author, as use of one's own work. Students guilty of cheating, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be subject to academic and/or administrative disciplinary action that may include loss of credit for the work in question. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test

A student in grades 10-12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery ("ASVAB") test and consult with a military recruiter (at student's discretion). Huston Academy will provide each student in grades 10-12 and their parents with notice of the date, time, and location of the scheduled administration of the ASVAB.

Accelerated Instruction Plan

Huston Academy will establish an accelerated learning committee (“ALC”) for each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on:

1. The third grade mathematics or reading STAAR exam;
2. The fifth grade mathematics or reading STAAR exam; or
3. The eighth grade mathematics or reading STAAR exam.

The ALC will be composed of the Principal or designee, the students’ parent or guardian, and the teacher of the subject of the assessment on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily.

The ALC shall, not later than the start of the subsequent school year, develop an educational plan for the student that provides the necessary accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade level by the conclusion of the school year. The educational plan must be documented in writing, and a copy must be provided to the student’s parent or guardian.

The student’s parent or guardian may contest the content or implementation of an educational plan developed by the ALC by submitting a written complaint to the Principal within (1) seven calendar days of the parent or guardian’s receipt of the educational plan or (2) within seven calendar days of the parent or guardian’s concern that the educational plan is not being properly implemented. The Principal will conduct a conference with the parent or guardian within five school days of Huston Academy’s receipt of the written complaint and issue a written decision within five school days of the conference. A parent or guardian who is dissatisfied with the Principal’s decision may appeal through Huston Academy’s student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

Career and Technical Education Programs

Huston Academy offers career and technical education (“CTE”) programs in the following areas:

- Business Management and Administration
- Human Services
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources

It is the policy of Huston Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Clubs and Organizations

Approval and Scheduling of Student Activities

All student activities must be submitted by the appropriate sponsor to the Principal. All school-sponsored activities must have a school sponsor present. To avoid conflicts in scheduling activities, a school calendar of events should be consulted before a definite date for an activity has been approved and the date has been set. The administrator will post the activity around the school building. Normally, no student activities will be held the last week of school or during scheduled state standardized testing. Student activities will not be scheduled the week prior to semester exams. Board policy bans any student activity the day before or the day of any semester final examination.

College Days

High school students who meet the following criteria will be allowed to have two excused days of absence for a college visit during their junior year and two excused days of absence for a college visit during their senior year:

- The student must have passed the required parts of the STAAR/equivalent state assessment for the previous year
- The student must be on track to graduate on time.
- The student must be classified as a junior or senior based upon credits earned.

- The student must be passing all course work.
- The student must have no truancy or other attendance problems.

Students must submit a written request to the front office at least two days prior to the day requested for a college visit so that eligibility criteria for an excused day of absence can be verified and approval granted prior to the student participating in a college visit. Approval will not be granted for a college visit on a day when major exams are scheduled, and no partial days will be approved.

Computer Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Huston Academy has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use Policy found in this Handbook.

Chromebook Access – Acceptable Use and Code of Conduct

Students are expected to observe network etiquette. Students are prohibited from pretending to be someone else; accessing or transmitting obscene messages or pictures; revealing personal addresses or telephone numbers, either their own or another person's; or using the network in a way that would disrupt use by others.

Only students who have been authorized by the District and who are under direct supervision of designated district employees are permitted to use a district computer or to access any local network or outside telecommunications resources, such as the Internet. Students who use the computer for purposes other than those permitted by the teacher are subject to disciplinary action. Each year the District provides the opportunity for parents to restrict Internet access and/or electronic publication of students' photographs and schoolwork. Notice of this refusal should be given in writing to the campus registrar. A "Denial of Internet Access and Electronic Publication" form can be found in the Appendix of this handbook.

All copyright laws and federal and state laws regarding electronic data transfer or communication will be strictly enforced. This includes, but is not limited to, making copies of copyrighted software, invading networks or computer systems or files to alter information therein (viruses or changing data), and bringing pirated software into the labs or offices. No person will copy any of the software from Erath Excels! or any campus computer labs or offices in Erath Excels! Academy. Any student found violating these laws or rules will be referred for disciplinary action. Each student and parent will be held financially responsible for any damage to Erath Excels! equipment caused by that student.

Correspondence and Internet Courses

Huston Academy permits high school students to take correspondence courses – by mail or via the Internet – for credit toward high school graduation. All correspondence courses must be approved by the Principal before receiving credit.

Counseling

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents/legal guardians are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or Principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in 9th – 12th grade will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

The Principal or designee is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. Huston Academy has an extensive counseling department for all the student's needs. The director is a certified counselor. Foster's Home Family Care Center, Cross Timbers Family Crisis Center, Cross Timbers Pregnancy Care Center and the STAR Council will also offer our students, and their families, individual and family counseling services.

Psychological Exams, Test, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test or treatment without first obtaining the parent's/legal guardian's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

Credit by Exam

Huston Academy uses examination and guidelines established by the State Board of Education to offer credit and acceleration by exam.

If a Student has Prior Instruction

A student who has previously taken a course or subject (but did not receive credit for it) may, in circumstances determined by the Principal or Attendance Review Committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, home schooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher.

The Principal or Attendance Review Committee would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will not be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by Huston Academy are approved by the Board of Directors. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2022-2023 year will be published in an appropriate school publication and on the Huston Academy website.

Distance Learning

Huston Academy generally does not offer distance learning at this time. To be considered full-time students in order to receive full credit for courses, students must be enrolled and attend for the regular school day. However, in certain circumstances allowed by law, student may be able to earn credit toward graduation through the Texas Virtual School Network ("TxVSN"). Contact the Principal for additional information.

Dual Credit Opportunities

A dual credit course is a college course taken by a high school student for which the student earns both college and high school credit. Dual credit is also known as concurrent enrollment.

High school juniors and seniors may be eligible to earn college credit while they are still in high school if the student:

- Demonstrates college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standards under the Texas Success Initiative as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 4.85, on relevant section(s) of an assessment instrument approved by the State Board of Education; or
- Demonstrates that he or she is exempt under the provisions of the Texas Success Initiative as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 19.54.

An 11th grade student is also eligible to enroll dual credit courses in reading, writing, and/or mathematics if he or she satisfies standards set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. As these requirements may change from time to time, students and parents are encouraged to contact the Principal.

High school students may be exempt from the state-mandated TSI assessment if they meet the qualifying standards for college readiness. Students are considered “College Ready” if they meet one of the bulleted areas:

- ACT scores: a composite score of 23 or above AND a minimum of 19 on both the English and mathematics subtests (scores are valid for five years)
- SAT scores: a total score of 1070 or above AND a minimum of 500 on both the verbal and mathematics sections (scores are valid for five years)

The Dual Credit program is in cooperation with Ranger College. The institution contact information is 254-647-3234. Students and parents are responsible for any fees for dual credit courses.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student’s desired degree plan.

Early Graduation

A student may be eligible to graduate from high school in fewer than four years. Early graduation requirements include:

- Parent approval
- Meeting with counselor, parent and student
- Student must meet school eligibility requirements
- Approval by school administration

Required Curriculum

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (“TEKS”) require all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas. TEKS are the basis of curricular planning for each grade level and each content area. All students enrolled in grades 3-11 will participate in the appropriate Texas state assessments.

Huston Academy offers instruction in the TEKS of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

1. A foundation curriculum that includes:
 - a. English language arts and reading;
 - b. Mathematics;
 - c. Science;
 - d. Social Studies; and
2. An enrichment curriculum that includes:
 - a. Languages other than English, to the extent possible;
 - b. Health education;
 - c. Physical education (“PE”);
 - d. Fine arts;
 - e. Career and technical education; and
 - f. Technology applications.

Grading

In grades 9 thru 12 achievements are reported to parents based on 100% grading scale; a grade below 70% is failing. (A point system is used, and grades are not curved). Every grade returned to students shall be from 0-100. Grade reports are generated at the three-week period.

The grade book will be a teacher's record and/or file of evidence to support grades reported on the report card. Grades will be logical, justifiable, and sufficient in number to assure that the report card grade is an accurate measure of the student's progress and achievement.

In order to be awarded a grade of "70" in a course or subject, a student must demonstrate 70 percent mastery of the District's curriculum objectives in any recording period.

Teachers will provide a sufficient number of grades to allow multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery. The processes and criteria for grading, re-teaching, and redoing will be consistent on a campus for each subject or grade level. Teachers will be required to have at least three grades per week beginning the first full week of school.

When determining six-week averages, campus administration and departments/course levels will establish guidelines that govern assessment/grades.

A minimum grade will not be required of a teacher for an assignment. The assignment's grade will reflect the quality of the student's work. Consistent with grading guidelines, a classroom teacher shall provide a student a reasonable and fair opportunity through the re-teaching option to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student earned a failing grade.

Grade Classification

Freshman: A student must have been promoted from the 8th grade
Sophomore: A student must have satisfactorily completed 6 credits
Junior: A student must have satisfactorily completed 12 credits
Senior: A student must have satisfactorily completed 18 credits

These classifications are based on the number of credits actually completed prior to the first day of the school year.

Grade Corrections

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal.

The report card or unsatisfactory progress card will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Graduation Plan

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each student after enrollment. Students shall meet the state and local requirements for graduation.

Huston Academy shall ensure that each student enrolls in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education for the foundation high school program, or the recommended or advanced high school program.

Requirements for a Diploma

In order to receive a diploma from Huston Academy, a student must be enrolled and in attendance at Huston Academy one semester immediately prior to commencement. Rank in class will not be calculated for valedictorian and salutatorian for a student who enrolls at this time.

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

1. Complete the required number of credits established by the State and any additional credits required by Huston Academy;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the State;
3. Achieve passing scores on certain EOC assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law; and
4. Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by Huston Academy, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform approaches on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments should a student choose this option. Contact the Principal for more information on the State testing requirements for graduation.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, Huston Academy will provide remediation in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require student participation before or after normal school hours, or at times of the year outside of normal school operations.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may be eligible to graduate, if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate. Please see the Principal or designee for more information on the makeup of an individual graduation committee and all other requirements for graduation.

Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school who enters grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year and thereafter will graduate under the foundation graduation program. Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript and diploma. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the appropriate school administrator for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy; in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT exam, which are national exams; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the Principal or designee can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

Course Area	Number of Credits Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4*
Science	3	4
Social Studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical Education **	1	1
Language other than English***	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Electives	5	7
Miscellaneous		Available Endorsements**** Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Business and Industry Public Services Arts and Humanities Multidisciplinary
TOTAL	22 credits	26 credits

* In order to obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be denoted on a student's transcript and diploma and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission purposes to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the four mathematics credits.

**A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

***Students are required to earn two credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

****A student must specify upon entering grade 9 the endorsement he or she wishes to pursue.

All Students must meet the following credit and course requirements for graduation under the Program listed.

Personal Graduation Plans for Students under the Foundation Graduation Program

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student who is subject to the requirements of the foundation graduation program. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

A student may amend his or her personal graduation plan after this initial confirmation. The school will send written notice of any such amendment made by the student to the student's parent.

Progress Reports are issued the middle of each six-week grading period to all students unless a student is enrolled in a dual credit course.

Progress Reports are issued the middle of each six-week grading period to all students unless a student is enrolled in a dual credit course.

Available Course Options for all Graduation Programs

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

All incoming students' GPA will be converted to the system by Huston Academy to determine the RIC and GPA. Huston Academy calculates all courses, including summer school.

College and University Admissions and Financial Aid

For both semesters of the first regular session immediately following his or her graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian or in the top ten percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college to which the student submits an application.

The University of Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University during the summer or fall 2023 terms or spring 2024 term, the University will be admitting the top six percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admission policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Upon a student's registration for his or her first course that is required for high school graduation, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid, and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid. Parents and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that they received this information.

Students and parents should contact the University of their choice or their counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

Class Rank Calculation

Class rank is the academic position a student has in relation to other students in the grade level. The student with the highest rank average is number one in the grade level and the student with the lowest rank average is the last student in the grade level. All other students are ranked in between highest (number one) and lowest (last). Class rank shall be calculated using semester grades. All classes shall be used in the calculation of class rank.

Course Weighting

Courses are weighted for rank based on the level of difficulty. Weighted class ranking encourages student to take more challenging academic courses in preparation for further learning after high school. Institutions of higher education require a student's class rank for admission purposes. Class ranking shall be determined by averaging all semester grades earned in grades 9-12. Grades transferred from other schools shall be credited in conformity with the course descriptions approved for the established grading system. Grade point averages (GPAs) shall be determined in accordance with a three-tier weighted grade point system.

Additional grade points shall be added to courses that are designated as Level Two or Level Three according to administrative regulations. Courses designated as Level One shall not receive additional grade points.

Course Classification

Courses are classified as **Level I, Level II, or Level III** courses for weighted GPA purposes, calculation of honor graduates, and class ranking.

Level I courses will include all of the High School curriculum included in the normal requirements for the Foundation Program with Endorsement and not specifically designated as Level II or Level III courses by the district. These courses will not receive additional weighting in the calculations of GPA.

Level II courses will include the courses listed and will receive **5 additional points** on the semester GPA calculation, and class rank purposes: all core honors courses.

Level III courses will include the courses listed and will receive **10 additional points** in the semester GPA calculation and class rank purposes: all applicable dual credit and AP courses.

Grade point averages for class ranking will be calculated using a **weighted 100-point average**.

For graduating students, the last spring semester shall be the average of the fourth and fifth six weeks grades of the eighth semester for graduation ceremony purposes only. The final semester average, including the sixth six weeks, will be calculated in the final GPA after grades are finalized.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian Eligibility

In order to be eligible for class rank calculation that includes valedictorian or salutatorian honorees, students shall be required to have been enrolled in the District for one calendar year or have enough credits equal to the length of one school year prior to graduation; and have completed the foundation plan with endorsements or the distinguished plan. Early graduates shall not be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian honors. The valedictorian is the highest ranking individual who meets these requirements. The salutatorian is the second highest ranking individual who meets these requirements. The valedictorian shall be awarded the Highest Ranking Graduate Tuition Waiver by the school.

Breaking Ties

In the case of a tie in weighted numerical grade averages, after ranking to the thousandths place, the student with the highest 7th semester grade point average will be awarded the title of valedictorian.

Graduation Requirements for Students Receiving Special Education Services

The secondary program of a student receiving special education services shall terminate either with graduation, a student who is dismissed for special education or when the student no longer meets the age requirement for eligibility in the Texas Education Code. A student receiving special education services who has not reached his or her 22nd birthday on September 1 of a scholastic year shall be eligible for services through the end of that scholastic year or until graduation.

1. Graduation with a regular high school diploma terminates a student's eligibility for special education services. In addition, as provided in Texas Education Code, graduation with a regular high school diploma under subsection (b) or (d) of the section terminates a student's entitlement to the benefits of the Foundation School Program.
2. A student receiving special education services may graduate and be awarded a regular high school diploma if:
 - a. The student has satisfactorily completed the state's or district's (whichever is greater) minimum curriculum and credit requirements for graduation applicable to students in general education, including satisfactory performance on the exit level assessment instrument; or
 - b. The student has satisfactorily completed the state's or district's (whichever is greater) minimum curriculum and credit requirements for graduation applicable to students in general education, including participation in required state assessments. The student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee shall determine whether satisfactory performance on a required state assessment shall also be required for graduation.
3. A student receiving special education services may also graduate and receive a regular high school diploma when the student's ARD committee has determined that the student has successfully completed:
 - a. The student's individualized education program (IEP);
 - b. One of the following conditions, consistent with the student's IEP;
 - i. Full-time employment, based on the student's abilities and local employment opportunities, in addition to sufficient self-help skills to enable the student to maintain the employment without direct and ongoing educational support of the local school district;
 - ii. Demonstrated mastery of specific employability skills and self-help skills which do not require direct ongoing educational support of the local school district; or
 - iii. Access to services which are not within the legal responsibility of public education, or employment or educational options for which the student has been prepared by the academic program.
 - c. The state's or district's (whichever is greater) minimum credit requirements for students without disabilities; and
 - d. The state's and district's minimum curriculum requirements to the extent possible with modifications/substitutions only when it is determined necessary by the ARD committee for the student to receive an appropriate education.
4. A student receiving special education services may also graduate and receive a regular high school diploma upon the ARD committee determining that the student no longer meets age eligibility requirements and has completed the requirements specified in the IEP.
5. All students graduating under this section shall be provided with a summary of academic achievement and functional performance. This summary shall consider, as appropriate, the views of the parent and student and written recommendations from adult service agencies on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals. An evaluation as required as part of the summary for a student graduating under section 3 above.
6. Students who participate in graduation ceremonies but who are not graduating under section 3 and who will remain in school to complete their education do not have to be evaluated.
7. Employability and self-help skills referenced under section 3 are those skills directly related to the preparation of students for employment, including general skills necessary to obtain or retain employment.
8. For students who receive a diploma according to section 3, the ARD committee shall determine needed educational services upon the request of the student or parent to resume services, as long as the student meets the age eligibility requirements.

Standardized Testing

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

In addition to routine testing and other ongoing assessment of student progress, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

1. *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* – Reading and mathematics tests are administered to all students in grades six, seven, and eight. Writing is administered in grade seven and science and social studies are administered in grade eight.
2. STAAR Accommodated assessments are designed for qualified special education and 504 students for whom the STAAR is not appropriate. These tests are administered at the same grade levels and subjects as the STAAR test.
3. *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* for reading which is an assessment for grades two through twelve for students who are designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP).
4. *STAAR L (Linguistically Accommodated test)* is an assessment for certain English language learners for whom the STAAR tests are not appropriate assessments. STAAR L tests in reading and mathematics are administered to appropriate LEP students in grades six, seven and eight. Science is administered in grade eight.
5. *STAAR EOC (End-of-Course) exams will be administered to students enrolled in high school courses for English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, and US History.*

End-of-Course Assessment for Students in Grades 9-12

STAAR or EOC assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I;
- English I and II;
- Biology; and
- United States History.

There are three testing windows during the school year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, except in circumstances where a student may be eligible to graduate in accordance with a plan approved by the Principal.

Test results will be reported to parents. Certain students, such as students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, are eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or a deferment. For more information, see the administrator, counselor, or special education director.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test call the Texas Success Initiative (“TSI”) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through Huston Academy.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”)

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”) is a system of statewide assessments administered to all Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) students in grades K-12. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stages of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

Promotion and Retention

A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet Huston Academy’s requirements for attendance. A student in grades 9-12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

Credit Approval

Each semester, students will be appraised of their credit status. Parents/legal guardians will be notified if their child is deficient in fulfilling graduation requirements.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards will be issued at the end of each six-week period. Progress Reports are issued the middle of each six-week grading period to all students unless a student is enrolled in a dual credit course.

Progress reports and report cards are mailed to all students’ residence that is listed on the enrollment form. The lack of receipt of a progress report and report card is not justification for an automatic passing grade. Parents may obtain student grades at any time by assessing the Parent Portal link through the Huston Academy’s Web site. For more information regarding the Parent Portal, contact the office at 965-8883. Students and parents are responsible for being aware of a student’s progress in class at all other times. Please contact Huston Academy if you have not received your child’s progress report or report card.

Permanent Records

Permanent records compiled in high school include the student’s grades, test scores, courses taken, rank in class, and overall average. These records are important in decisions made by colleges, employers, and military officials. A student and his/her parents may review the student’s record by appointment. Information not considered part of the permanent record includes discipline referrals, tardies, and notes from home.

Special Programs

Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing regular class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (“LPAC”) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

Special Education Services

Huston Academy has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5 to 21 years of age and who fall within the school’s jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your student has a disability, please contact the Principal, for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), which is developed by the student’s ARD Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student’s disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination of both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*, can be obtained from the Superintendent or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website:

http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Education/.

Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Special Education Referrals

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person: Huston Academy - Sadie Mayes or Carol Taylor Coastal Horizons – DeAnn Phillips
Phone Number: 254-965-8883 361-528-3959

Section 504 Services

Huston Academy provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student’s disability. A “student with a disability” is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student’s major life activities, has a record of having such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. A student with a disability is “qualified” if he or she is between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are (1) designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless Huston Academy demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, Huston Academy will comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, Huston Academy will ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a “physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the School Leader for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services.

Section 504 Referrals

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district’s or charter school’s Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person: Carol Taylor
Phone Number: 254-965-8883

Additional Information

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
- Partners Resource Network
- Special Education Information Center
- Texas Project First

SECTION 4: Especially for Parents

Parent Contact Information

Parents are responsible for notifying Huston Academy of any changes in their home address, telephone number, or email address so that we can update our records accordingly. Parents must inform the front office in writing within three school days of the change. Parents are encouraged to check the Huston Academy website on a regular basis as it is our primary means of communication. It is important for parent communication that Huston Academy has a valid, working parent email address.

Your Involvement as a Parent

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school, a partnership that thrives on communication. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or Principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or Principal, please call the school office at 254-965-8883 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before/after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations.

Surveys and Activities

Students will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationship privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law.

Notice of Teacher Qualifications

At the beginning of each school year, Huston Academy will notify the parent of each student attending with information regarding the professional qualifications of their student’s classroom teachers. Huston Academy will also provide this information upon request from a parent. The notification will include, at a minimum:

1. Whether your child’s teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
2. Whether you child’s teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.
3. The bachelor’s degree major of your child’s teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
4. Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Please contact the Principal to request this information.

Accommodations for Children of Military Families

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.

- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his/her parent related to leave or deployment activities may be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than three excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns

Huston Academy values the opinions of its students and parents, and the public it serves. Parents and students have the right to express their views through appropriate informal and formal processes. The purpose of this grievance policy is to resolve conflicts in an efficient, expeditious, and just manner.

The Board of Directors encourages parents and the public to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal meetings with the School leader. Concerns and complaints should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Neither the Board of Directors nor any School employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a parent or student voicing a concern or complaint.

The Superintendent may develop more detailed grievance procedures. The Superintendent shall ensure that the school's grievance procedures are provided to all parents and students. The formal grievance procedure shall provide for any grievance to ultimately be considered or heard by the Board of Directors in accordance with Commissioner of Education rules.

For purposes of this policy, "days" mean school calendar days, and announcement of a decision in the student's or parent's presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

Informal Conferences

A parent or student may request an informal conference with the Principal, teacher, or other campus administrator within seven school days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. If the person is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, he or she may submit a written grievance form to the Superintendent. Grievance forms may be obtained upon request from the front office.

Formal Grievance Process

The formal grievance process provides all persons with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, a person can bring concerns or complaints to the Board, as outlined below.

A grievance must specify the harm alleged by the parent and/or student, and the remedy sought. A parent or student should not submit separate or serial grievances regarding the same event or action. Multiple grievances may be consolidated at the school's discretion. All time limits shall be strictly complied with; however, if an administrator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the parent or student in writing of the need to extend the response time and provide a specific date by which the response will be issued. Costs of any grievance shall be paid by the grievant.

Level One Complaint – School Leader Review

A parent or student shall submit a written Level One Grievance form to the Principal or designee within the later of:

1. 5 school days from the time the event(s) causing the complaint were or should have been known, or
2. within 2 school days following an informal conference with the Principal.

The school reserves the right to require the grievant to begin the grievance process at Level Two.

The Principal or designee must meet the complaining parent or student. Following this conference, the Principal shall issue a written Level One Decision. The Level One Decision must be issued within ten school days of the Principal's receipt of the complaint.

Note: *A complaint against the Superintendent shall begin at Level Three.*

Level Two Complaint -

If the parent or student is not satisfied with the Level One Decision, or if no Decision is provided the parent or student may file a written appeal to the Superintendent. The appeal must include a signed statement of the complaint, any evidence supporting the complaint, and a copy of the Level One Decision, if issued. The appeal shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated to the original complaint. The appeal must be filed within ten school days of the Level One Decision or the response deadline if no Decision is made.

The Superintendent or designee will meet with the complaining parent or student. Following this conference, the Superintendent shall issue a Level Two Decision. The Level Two Decision must be issued within 10 school days of the written appeal.

Level Three Complaint

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two Decision, or if no decision is provided, the parent or student may submit to the Superintendent or designee a written appeal to the Board of Directors. The request must be filed within ten school days of the Level Two Decision or the response deadline if no Decision is made. The student or parent shall be informed of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

The Board of Directors shall hear the student or parent complaint, and may set a reasonable time limit for presenting the complaint. Only written documentation and issues previously submitted and presented by the student or parent and Huston Academy will be considered. An audiotape recording of the hearing may be made.

The Board of Directors shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the decision being appealed shall be upheld. The Board may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed.

If the complaint involves concerns or charges regarding a student or Huston Academy employee, it shall be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the student or employee to whom the complaint pertains requests that it be heard in public.

Parents/legal guardians who are dissatisfied with the response of the Superintendent may present their complaint to the board of directors during the time of Citizen's Presentations at the next regular meeting of the board of directors. The board shall "stop, look, and listen" to the complaint, but may not deliberate or act on the complaint except in compliance with the Open Meeting Act.