Parent/Student Handbook

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Houston Christian School
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A school with
"trees planted by streams of water,
yielding fruit in season."
Psalm 1:3

Mission Statement:

Educate, Engage, Equip... to the Glory of God.

- We are committed, in faith, to a world and life view which is Reformed in emphasis and character, **solidly rooted** in God's infallible Word.
- We especially recognize the need for home, church, and school to work together in enabling students to apply Biblical values to all areas of life.
- We aim to provide a secure environment in which students are able to develop academically, spiritually, physically, socially, artistically and emotionally.
- We recognize the uniqueness of each student and encourage them to develop their varied gifts to the glory of God.
- We want our children to be equipped with discernment and confidence, to be committed to stewardship, and to increase their desire to imitate Christ, so that through the power of the Holy Spirit they will work towards transforming society rather than conforming to it.

Code of Conduct

	All Settings	Classroom	Playground
Gratitude I will…	Give thanks in all circumstances. Count my blessings Be open to wonder Delight in God's gifts	Make the most of my opportunity to learn and contribute my gifts	Share joy Build relationships Cherish the time to play and rest
Respect I will…	Consider others before self Contribute to a positive environment Be welcoming Respect authority Exercise good manners Respect others' space	Be on time and prepared Follow classroom rules Contribute to a great learning environment Keep my area tidy Maintain and improve my classroom	Take turns Share ideas Follow rules Use gentle contact Care for creation
Amazing Grace I will…	Confess my mistakes Forgive as Jesus calls Let go of resentment Be kind & compassionate Be an authentic person	Help & mentor others Offer encouragement Work hard to God's glory	Celebrate creation Include others Turn the other cheek Apologize & forgive Refrain from unnecessary tattling
Community-Building I will…	Be encouraging Support a unified spirit Use my gifts Be a peacemaker Display a servant heart Greet others Think before I speak	Support learning Value others' input Work with others Foster others' gifts	Be a positive presence Include others Play fair Be a peacemaker
Engagement I will…	Participate fully Bring my best Strive for goals	Attend faithfully Listen actively Do my best work Agree to try new things	Be a positive presence Seek out the lonely Share joy

Walking in Grace & Truth

Hallways	Assemblies	Online	Off Campus
Build relationships Be a positive presence during breaks	Acknowledge the Giver of all gifts Give thanks to God in song and prayer Listen respectfully	Use the gift of technology in a God-honouring way Celebrate the ways technology can expand my world in appropriate ways	Make the most of the opportunity and be a positive presence
Treat all property with care Use uplifting language Be quiet when classes are in session	Give honour to God Be a good role model Show appreciation for presenters	Use language I would feel comfortable saying in person Willingly put devices away when asked Preserve the dignity of others	Exercise good manners Respect authority Care for creation Follow rules
Get to know others Build others up	Thank God for His love Use my gifts to glorify God Build my relationship with God	Support good choices by others Discourage poor choices by others Be considerate of others when using technology	Practice the Fruit of the Spirit Be respectful of others Be a living testimony to God
Be a positive presence Acknowledge others Stretch my comfort zone to reach out Smile & use names	Contribute to the success of the event with attentiveness, participation, and respect for the occasion	Conduct myself in a Christ-like manner in all I view, 'like' and post	Contribute to the success of the outing in all I say and do
Be a positive presence Make eye contact Acknowledge others Share kind words	Join in worship Listen attentively	Use technology appropriately to improve my learning as allowed	Make the most of the opportunity to learn, explore, play, and/or work.

Good Schooling–Four Routines

1. Make School Attendance a top priority

Missing classes and coming late disrupts learning and classroom procedures. Only miss school as a last resort. Secondary students must be sitting at their desks before the bell sounds.

2. Bring the Right Things

Bring the correct materials, such as textbooks, notebooks, completed homework, and writing instruments for each subject area. Keep careful track of your belongings and the school's textbooks; many are worth as much as $100 or more.

3. Do the Right Activities

Do schoolwork and complete assignments on time. Do homework…without fail. Effective learning also needs class participation. Give class discussions a lot of energy. In the evenings, study, review and make additional notes on the topics covered. Use wise study skills.

Students must do the school activities assigned by each teacher. For example, students must participate in the lesson, do the quiz, and complete the assignment. There are no automatic releases from that obligation because of arriving late, being absent or any other reason. Only the teacher can release students from their academic obligations. An absent student should check with a classmate about the academic obligations for the next day.

In general, students need to keep good records of assignments and upcoming assessments. *School agendas* can help do that.

4. Develop the Right Attitude

The HCS Code of Conduct was written to encompass our values and our unique Christ-centered HCS culture. Displaying gratitude, exhibiting respect, and striving for engagement in all HCS settings builds our community and allows us to experience lives infused with God's Amazing Grace to the fullest. Following the points in the G.R.A.C.E acronym will stretch us to live the Kingdom story to the glory of our God.

Elementary School: Kindergarten – Grade Six

Welcome to Houston Christian School! It is our prayer that your years in Grades K-6 will be pleasant, that the days and weeks will be filled with the satisfaction of learning, with the growth of friendship, with the sounds of singing and that you will sense how much God loves you.

Students are required to attend school except for illness or other legitimate reasons as determined by parents. Parents are asked to call the school when students will be absent. The reason for the absence (i.e. illness, medical appointment, vacation, etc.) must be recorded on the ministry website.

Entering the School

The doors will be opened for students to come into school at 8:25 a.m. On cold winter days when the temperature is below -20°, students will be permitted to wait in the entrance for school to begin.

On the Playground

Recess and noon hours are enjoyable times for most students. It is essential for all to be familiar with the behavioral expectations laid out in the HCS Code of Conduct so that delight may be experienced by all during these times of play and interaction outdoors.
Once at school, students must not leave the school grounds until it is time to go home. Elementary students are not permitted to go to nearby stores at recess, noon-hour or while waiting for the bus or ride home.

Supervision

A minimum of one adult staff member will be present on the playground during all outdoor breaks. Additional supervision will be provided as needed. Behavioral expectations follow the HCS Code of Conduct. It should be noted that official playground supervision begins at 8:10 and there is no one on duty before that time.

Lunch Break

Lunch is to be eaten in the classroom during a 15-minute time frame. Any remaining food is to be eaten outside. Teachers will maintain a presence in the room during this eating period.

Homework

- Homework will be assigned as an extension of learning. For example, teachers may develop a reading program that involves students practicing what they have already learned in class.
- Homework will not be used to determine a grade but is intended to extend and solidify classroom learning.
- Incomplete homework cannot equate to failing a grade.
- A general guideline for time spent on homework in grades 1-3 is to take the grade level and multiply by 10 minutes, 2 or 3 times per week.
- A general guideline for time spent on homework in grades 4-6 is 30-40 maximum, 2 or 3 times per week.

Reporting to Parents

Student progress will be formally reported to parents three times during the year with report cards. Additional contact will be made via text, email or conversations as necessary. Students, teachers and parents strive to work together so that each student can make effective progress. In addition, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held in the fall and Student-Led Conferences in the new year.

Telephone

Students will not be permitted to make arrangements to visit friends with the office telephone. Teachers and office staff will grant permission for students to use the office telephone only when deemed appropriate. Elementary students are not to use the telephone in the foyer without the permission of a teacher.

Medications

No medications will be administered to students without permission from parents. For any long-term medications needing to be administered at school, written direction from a medical doctor needs to be provided for the school to be placed in the student file.

Electronic Devices

Elementary students are not permitted to bring electronic devices to school. (Any exception to this rule would need to be agreed upon by Admin. and parents.)

Field Trips

At the beginning of each year, families will be asked to sign a general permission slip. This covers most of the field trips in which your children will participate as part of their learning experience. Field trips deemed to be "higher risk," i.e. climbing a mountain or walking near fast-flowing water, will require an additional signed permission slip. Parents will be informed as to when and where classes are going as these events unfold.

Communication

HCS will communicate with students, parents and the broader community in a number of ways.

- ***HCS app***
  The HCS app is a custom app developed for Houston Christian School. This app is an important communication tool, particularly for emergency communications (lockdown, fire, school closures, busing bulletins, etc.). All parents are requested to install this free app on their mobile devices. Download it at houstonchristianschoolca.appazur.com.
  This is the primary way we will be communicating in an emergency.
- ***Email***
  The office publishes weekly newsletters that are emailed to parents. Please ensure that spam filters do not block emails from houstonchristianschool.ca
- ***Website***
  We regularly update www.houstonchristianschool.ca. School calendars, news bulletins and other resources are available on this website. It should be checked regularly by parents and students.
- ***Branches***
  Branches is the official newsletter of Houston Christian School. It is published on our website weekly on Fridays.

Shoes

Outside shoes must be removed when entering the school and placed on the shelves in the boot rooms. All students must keep a pair of non-marking indoor shoes, suitable for PE classes, at school for the year. They are to be hung on coat hooks at the end of each day.

Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures

Fire drills and other emergency drills will be practiced regularly. When signalled to do so, students are to exit the room and building in a calm, orderly manner and obey the teacher's instructions. If required to evacuate the premises, students will walk to the Christian Reformed Church.

Parking Lot Safety

We must all do our part to ensure everyone arrives and departs the school grounds in a safe manner. Vehicle speed must not exceed the school zone speed of 30km/hr.

Elementary students are to enter and exit the school grounds through the opening into the fenced area by the office entrance at the front of the school or by the basketball court in the back lane. Bus students and those walking towards the high school entrance must remain behind the logs, close to the school.

When parking to pick up students after school, parents are asked to **back in** their vehicles. Students must remain behind the fence or logs until their vehicle has come to a complete stop and it is safe to navigate a direct path to their vehicle.

Bus Safety

When a school bus is present with the STOP sign out and/or red lights flashing, anyone driving in either direction **must stop,** regardless of which direction the students are assumed to be heading. This is required by BC law.
An assigned staff member will be on bus duty each day. Students must be checked off on the list as they exit the school grounds and board their bus. As a general rule, students who are not on the bus route list will not be permitted to ride the bus, as per School District 54 rules.

High School: Grade Seven – Grade Twelve

Admission to Building

Except in inclement weather, students in grades 7-8 may only enter the building after 8:20 am and students in grades 9-12 may enter only after 8:00 am.

Attendance

Students are required to attend school regularly. Students are expected to catch up with missed work. It is polite to ask teachers for assignments before being absent—but note that teachers are not required to provide such work and the responsibility to catch up on missed work belongs to the students. Students who do not complete missed work may be sent to lunch Study Hall or receive a zero on the assignment at the end of the term. This will affect their overall scores.

Student Vehicles

Driving to school and parking at school is a privilege for students. Student driving practices must comply with the stipulations of the Government of BC, including "new driver" restrictions. Students bringing cars or trucks to school must park them on the north side of the secondary entrance. Vehicles should be **backed** into the parking area so that departures are safer at the end of the school day. Students must drive slowly when entering or exiting the parking area as young children are around.

Student Visitors

Non-school visitors must report to the office upon arrival on campus. Students with out-of-town guests may seek permission to have their guests attend classes for a day.

Lunch Break

Grade 7/8 students must remain on campus during lunch break. Gr. 9/10 students should generally remain on campus as well but may go to either store next to the school. Students must stay on the west side of Mountainview Road. Students in Gr. 11 & 12, however, may leave the school grounds at noon. Students are to sign out at the office if they are leaving campus during scheduled class times, including spares.

Courses and Course Selection

Students in grades 7-10 must take the classes presented in the course schedule. Students in Gr. 7 and 8 are required to take French and Fine Arts by provincial policy unless an Individual Education Plan is on file in the Admin. office.
Gr. 11 & 12 students will be asked to make course selections for the following school year from a list of choices presented in the spring. The course list will vary from year to year as student interests and teacher expertise change. Of the courses offered, only those with sufficient student enrolment for the following year will be taught.
It is possible for a student to enroll in a trades program while in school. A student accepted to that program is able to have his or her hours at work count for both credit towards high school graduation and credit towards the completion of apprenticeship requirements. To gain the benefit of the program, the student needs a job under the supervision of a journeyman apprentice. Ask the Admin. Team for further information.

Grade 11/12 Add/Drop Course Policy

Students in Grades 11 and 12 may request to add or drop a course according to the following guidelines:

- First Week Add/Drop Period: Students may drop a course without penalty during the first week of classes. The official add/drop deadline will be set by the Principal each school year.
- Full-Time Enrolment: Students must remain enrolled in enough courses to maintain full-time student status at HCS.
- Add/Drop Form Required: Students may not simply stop attending a class. A completed Add/Drop Course Form must be submitted to the HCS office before any schedule change is considered official. The form must include signed permission from:
    - the student's parent or guardian
    - the course teacher
    - the Principal
- Requests After the Deadline: Requests to drop a course after the add/drop deadline require a meeting involving the student, parent or guardian, teacher, and Principal. Late course drops are rarely approved simply because a course is difficult or because a student is unhappy with the teacher. Consideration may be given in cases of credit overload or documented hardship.
- Student Record: Courses dropped within the approved add/drop period will be removed from the student's record. Courses dropped after the deadline may result in a "W" (Withdrawal) being recorded on the student's official transcript.

Graduation Requirements

In order to meet graduation requirements and be awarded a British Columbia Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood), students must earn a minimum of 80 credits to graduate. These must include 48 credits for required courses, a minimum of 28 elective credits —16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level.

Required Courses:

Credits must be earned in the following subject areas:

- a Language Arts 10 (4 credits)
- a Language Arts 11 (4 credits)
- a Language Arts 12 (4 credits)
- a Social Studies 10 (4 credits)
- a Social Studies 11 or 12 (4 credits)
- a Mathematics 10 (4 credits)
- a Mathematics 11 or 12 (4 credits)
- a Science 10 (4 credits)
- a Science 11 or 12 (4 credits)
- Physical and Health Education 10 (4 credits)
- an Arts Education and/or an Applied Design, Skill and Technologies 10, 11, or 12 (4 credits)
- Career Life Education (4 credits)
- Career Life Connections (4 credits)
- Indigenous-Focused Course 10,11, or 12 (4 Credits)
- 28 elective credits

In addition, the board of Houston Christian School requires all students to earn credits in Bible 10, Bible 11 and Bible 12.

Distance Education Courses

Taking distance education courses requires the approval of the Admin. Team and parents. The student needs to make a "promise of performance" concerning course completion.

Instructional Services

The goal of the secondary teachers is to provide students with sufficient instruction, help and encouragement in an effort to enable them to pass the courses and successfully complete the school year. Students must take responsibility for using the resources and services available at Houston Christian School.

Preparedness

Students are expected to come to class prepared. This includes the correct materials, such as paper, laptop and/or writing instruments and proper clothes for Physical Education.

Supplies

Regular supplies (paper, pens, pencils, rulers, etc.) are not provided by the school for high school students. Certain courses have certain requirements. Check with the teacher as to specific supplies for that course.

Lateness

Missing classes and coming late disrupts learning and classroom procedures. Arrive ahead of the bell.

Lockers/Locks

Students will be assigned lockers at the beginning of the school year. Lockers need to be closed and the administration recommends that students lock their lockers with a combination lock, as the school is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. The combination must be submitted to the office. Lockers are the property of the school and the school administration reserves the right to inspect a locker without notice.

Textbooks

The school will lend students the required textbooks for each course but expects students to take good care of them since a textbook can cost up to $100. A textbook is normally expected to last at least five years. Damages to textbooks may incur charges.

Microwave

A microwave is available in the foyer for student use. It must be kept clean or students will lose the privilege of its use.

Gym Use

The HCS gym is frequently enjoyed before school, during breaks, and after school for a variety of physical activities by various users.

- Student activities in the gym require teacher permission and supervision.
- Clean indoor athletic footwear (with non-marking soles) is required at all times by all facility users.
- Indoor equipment must remain in the gym and be used with care and self-control for its intended purpose only (e.g., volleyballs are not to be kicked, hockey sticks are not to be banged with excessive force on the floor, and players must not hang from rims or backboards).
- The four exit doors in the gym are for emergency use only.
- The HCS gym is a place in high demand for a wide variety of classes and purposes. Students must not assume any rights to use the gym. Common courtesy, respectfulness, and generous spirits help maintain a good atmosphere for everyone enjoying this facility.

Cheating/Plagiarism

We are called to be honest and people of integrity. Producing work that is not your own and/or not giving appropriate credit (i.e. citing) is a serious offence. Cheating or plagiarism on tests and assignments will result in a zero and disciplinary action.

Failing a Course

If a student fails a course, s/he will be required to either (a) complete the course over the summer via correspondence or Distance Learning or (b) retake the course when it is offered again. (Note that some courses are only offered every other year.)

Language

Language that is used to demean or disrespect others is not permitted. This can take the form of course language, degrading language and even a demeaning tone. All members of the HCS community are to speak to one another with respect.

School Property

Students must show respect for all school property and the school grounds. Failure to do so will result in restorative consequences. Students will be required to pay for damages resulting from the destruction or defacing of school property.

Illegal Substances & Weapons

HCS opposes any involvement with illegal drugs, alcohol, marijuana, or weapons on school property or at school functions off school property. The school and property are smoke-free zones.

- These items will be confiscated immediately. Parents will be contacted, and disciplinary action will be taken. If repeat offences occur, the Principal and the Board will consider expulsion.
- Depending on the severity of the illegal substance or weapon, the RCMP may be contacted as well.

Technology & Social Media

- Students are permitted to bring and use personal technological devices during breaks.
- However, misuse or inappropriate use of such devices will result in confiscation for the duration of the day.
- Teachers have the authority to determine what technology access in their classroom looks like. Students are expected to respect and follow each teachers' expectations willingly.
- Devices are never to be used in change rooms. It is illegal to take photos while other students are changing. The RCMP will be notified should such activity occur.

Acts of Unkindness

An act of unkindness is any action of a student who behaves in a mean-spirited way. This does not necessarily equate with bullying but rather includes anything that causes distress to another person.

- Students will be expected to make amends for unkind acts and disciplinary actions will result from repeated offenses.
- Continued acts of unkindness towards the same person or other students will result in progressive consequences such as detentions, suspension and even expulsion.

Homework

- Homework will be assigned as an extension of learning. For example, teachers may develop a reading program that involves students practicing what they have already learned in class.
- Homework will not be used to determine a grade but is intended to extend and solidify classroom learning.
- Incomplete homework cannot equate to failing a grade.
- Homework will vary depending on course selection.

Medications

No medications will be administered to students without permission from parents. For any long-term medications needing to be administered at school, written direction from a medical doctor needs to be provided for the school to be placed in the student file.

School Functions

All of the school rules and punishments associated with those rules will apply to all school functions, including school-sponsored extracurricular activities and school activities held off school property.

Shoes

Outside shoes must be removed when entering the school and placed on the shelves in the boot room. All students must keep a pair of non-marking indoor shoes, suitable for PE classes, at school for the year.

Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures

Fire drills and other emergency drills will be practiced regularly. When signalled to do so, students are to exit the room and building in a calm and orderly manner and obey the instructions provided by the teacher. If required to evacuate the premises, students will walk to the Christian Reformed Church.

Weapons

Houston Christian School opposes any involvement with weapons on school property or at school functions. Students involved with weapons or any item that could be construed as a weapon may be suspended from school for twenty days, more or less, depending on the nature and seriousness of the circumstances. The Board may also consider expulsion. Depending on the severity of the weapon, the RCMP may be contacted and involved.

Lateness

Missing classes and coming late disrupts learning and classroom procedures. Arrive ahead of the bell. If you are late, students must check in at the office and receive a late slip that will be marked either excused or unexcused to be handed to the teacher.

Sexual Harassment

All students and all school employees are expected to conduct themselves with respect for the dignity of others.
Sexual harassment includes making unwelcome sexual advances, engaging in improper physical contact, making improper sexual comments or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.
Students should report inappropriate student conduct or contact a staff member, principal or parent.
If there are concerns about the conduct or physical contact of an adult employed by the school or by a member of the public, students should immediately report this concern to a trusted staff adult.

Discipline Policy:
A Relational, Restorative Approach

PREAMBLE

As a Christian school, we long to see the Spirit of the Lord prevail in our hallways, in the gym, in the staffroom, in our offices, on the playground, and in our classrooms. The purpose of the following relational and restorative discipline policy is to help us work together to build trust-based relationships in order to foster and protect the community. Rules and guidelines exist to help remind the various individuals and groupings that make up HCS (staff, students, administration and parents) that they each make up merely one part of the community and must always take others into consideration. Effective discipline guides people back into a restored relationship with God and builds community among His people. The fundamental hypothesis of this discipline approach is that students are more cooperative, productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things *with them*, rather than *to them* or *for them*. The aim of relational and restorative discipline practices at HCS is to develop and repair community; this is done by managing conflict and tensions and by repairing harm and restoring relationships. These rich rewards will be sought through the following procedures:

PROCEDURES

Step 1: Behavior that is deemed inappropriate will be addressed in a quick and simple way. This might be with a nod, a look, a verbal prompt, a redirecting encouragement, or a brief directive. The problematic behaviour may need to be addressed more than once. A brief follow-up discussion may be needed to clarify the need for changed behaviour. Students follow through (i.e., changed behaviour) will indicate that the student accepts responsibility for his or her problematic behaviour and has taken the necessary steps to restore community.

If further discussion is required and a meeting is arranged between the teacher and student, it is important to note that the student is responsible for being present at the agreed upon time and place. It must be a priority, before all other commitments.

Step 2: A more extensive personal conversation will follow incomplete restoration in Step 1. This dialogue will involve discussing the reasons why a specific behaviour must stop or change and guiding the student towards changed behaviour. The conversation might include explaining how the behaviour disrupts the learning environment and damages relationships. The need for changed behaviour, in order to indicate an acceptance of responsibility and to restore brokenness, will be re-emphasized. A verbal agreement will be reached together, and the consequences of not following through will be carefully

outlined. Communication with parents (via text, email, letter, or phone call) may accompany this second step.

Step 3: This third step includes further disciplinary measures, such as a detention or task-related consequence. Again, it is important to restate, that the student is responsible to be on time for an arranged meeting with the teacher to discuss the problematic behavior and the necessary restorative steps. Communication with parents and the Admin Team will occur at this step as well.

Step 4: Arriving at this step indicates an escalation of the situation. The student will now need to discuss the problematic behaviour with the Admin Team, to be reminded of the reasons why a change in behaviour is needed, and to be told of the consequences to expect should this not happen. Communication with parents regarding the first three steps will occur, and a meeting may be arranged in order to work together to shape a plan for success.

Step 5: This final step involves the Board of Directors. A meeting will be arranged in which the student and the family will meet with the Board and other members of the school staff (Admin Team and teachers/staff involved) to shape a plan for success.

Other Discipline Notes:

- Step 1 assumes a classroom environment with clearly stated and consistently enforced expectations for behaviour.
- Behaviors that are deemed more "extreme" and/or which involve outright defiance, will automatically go to a higher step. This may involve the student being sent home until a process can be agreed upon for proceeding.
- Suspension, probation, and expulsion are more extreme steps taken only after careful consideration of other options.
- Discipline steps may depend on prior incidents.
- Members of the Admin Team have the authority to check lockers.

SUSPENSION:

a) Suspension is defined as the removal of a student from the campus.
b) The Admin team has the final authority regarding a decision to suspend.
c) Suspension is imposed when a student has committed an infraction as per school rules and regulations.
d) The school reserves the right to suspend a student pending an investigation or hearing with respect to an infraction where it is in the best interest of the school to do so. The school is responsible to provide a safe and secure learning environment.
e) While suspended, a student is prohibited from being on the school premises.

f) The school must contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible. If the parent cannot be reached, the student will be placed on an in-school suspension until the parent/guardian is contacted. For an in-school suspension, the student will work in the office, in a learning support room, or in an empty classroom. S/he will be given different scheduled breaks from the regular school schedule.
g) A suspension may be imposed for one or more school days for each separate infraction.
h) Prior to re-admission, the Admin Team will have a conversation with the student and/or the parent/guardian.
i) A student is responsible for completing all assignments, projects, quizzes, tests, etc., during their time away from campus, and will receive credit for completed work. A student must adhere to all due dates.
j) When appropriate, an in-school suspension may be given. An in-school suspension refers to the student doing work for the entire school day in a separate learning space. The student's work will be supervised, and appropriate breaks will be given.
k) Students returning to school from a suspension may be subject to being placed on probation.

PROBATION:

a) When a student has exhausted other disciplinary procedures and/or when the status of the student is in question, s/he may be placed on probation by the Admin Team, in consultation with the Board.
b) Probation may be connected to a lengthy suspension or repeated misbehaviour.
c) If a student repeats the same violation or commits another serious infraction while on probation, s/he will be subject to suspension or expulsion.
d) Depending on the seriousness of the infraction, a student may be placed on probation for the particular school year, and/or the remainder of the student's time at HCS.

EXPULSION

a) In certain circumstances, the Admin Team, in consultation with the Board, can expel a student.
b) Before an expulsion occurs, a student will have an opportunity to speak to the Admin Team and the Board about the incident.
c) Before a decision is made to expel a student, the student and the parents/guardians will be informed about the matter. They are entitled to know the case against the student and should be given an opportunity to respond to all information which might influence the decision prior to the decision being made.
d) While waiting for a decision to be made, the student will be suspended indefinitely.
e) A decision will be made as soon as is practical.

f) The Admin Team will communicate the decision verbally and in writing.
g) Students and/or parents/guardians may appeal a decision for expulsion. Please refer to the Appeal Policy for further details.
h) Re-admission of a student into a new school year after an expulsion will be at the discretion of the Admin Team.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

a) In the event that a student shows sincere remorse for his/her actions and has a desire to be restored to the community, the Admin Team may offer a formal "restorative conference."
b) A "restorative conference" involves victims, offenders, and their families and friends in a face-to-face process called conferencing. The individuals involved in the conference will decide the disciplinary action. Although the process is time-consuming and emotionally challenging, it has proven to bring about healthy restoration.

Additional Educational Support Services

Houston Christian School seeks to meet the needs of a wide variety of student learning challenges and other areas of potential difficulty through various additional programs. These programs may vary from year to year, depending on staff availability. When teachers notice that a student is struggling in a particular area, they reach out to the various staff members involved with these specialized supports. At this time, an assessment may be done with the student one-on-one and should additional support be deemed necessary, arrangements will be made to fit this student into the program as time and scheduling constraints allow. At this point, when a student has been deemed in need of additional support measures, the family will be made aware of the assessment results and the proposed plan moving forward to provide the necessary support. Some of the programs we are pleased to offer at Houston Christian School include the following:

1. Vantage Vision & Reading Support
2. Speech & Language Support
3. Learning Assistance (one one-on-one and small group)
4. Zones of Regulation Support

When needs beyond the scope of our skill set are observed, parents will be consulted regarding the possibility of making a referral to an outside agency. This might include things such as an occupational therapy assessment or a speech language pathology consult.

Dress Code

Background

The Admin. Team has been attempting to shape dress code guidelines that will give some direction for parents and students, while still respecting the differences within our community. It is a complex issue. The desire to live well as a Biblical, Christian community is the driving force behind these efforts. We are hoping that all sides can see the wisdom in this and take a balanced approach that will work.

Guidelines

A Biblically Based Approach

Houston Christian School is committed to presenting a Scriptural philosophy for the appearance, grooming, and dress of its faculty and students. We believe that this commitment helps create an atmosphere that promotes positive and appropriate behaviour and attitudes, maximizes learning, and fosters life learning in Christian character, spiritual wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

While God's Word does not specifically address our attire as Christians, there are Scriptural principles that guide our appearance. HCS's Dress Code guidelines are shaped by the following three Biblical principles:

1. Principle: Dignity

   My appearance, grooming and dress should reflect a relationship with God. This means that I should wisely avoid styles that are inappropriate or are identified with individuals or groups that oppose God and/or scriptural truth. This also means that I should wisely dress in a way that others are attracted to the Christ-like character in me.

   ***"So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."* Colossians 1:10**

2. Principle: Modesty

   My appearance, grooming, and dress should demonstrate an example of purity to those who see me. This means that I should wisely dress in a way that is modest (i.e. that does not call attention to my body). This also means that I should not dress in a way that is sensual or might lead others to entertain impure thoughts or actions.

   ***"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people."* Ephesians 5:3**

3. Principle: Humility

My appearance, grooming, and dress should demonstrate deference (i.e. setting aside my Christian liberty to dress in any way I want, and instead dress so as not to offend a brother or sister in Christ.) This means that I should dress in a way that is sensitive to the genuine concerns of other Christians in each of these areas.

"Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this, not to put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother's way."
Romans 14:13

A" ditty" to use as a tool at home: "*Raise your hands, touch your toes, if anything shows, go change your clothes.*" If in doubt, don't wear it.

Specific Guidelines

- no hats during worship and assembly
- clothing with the intent to show underclothing is not allowed (including spaghetti straps, large open arm holes, low-riding pants, etc.)
- use the ***ditty*** above to check clothing length and appropriate coverage (i.e., neckline) and covering leggings
- anything promoting illegal substances; groups/symbols that promote immoral lifestyle and worldview, negative slogans/symbols/emblems are not allowed
- clothing that is too tight conflicts with Biblical modesty and is therefore not allowed

Consequences

- borderline – students will be asked not to wear that item anymore
- over the line – students will be asked to change or wear another piece of clothing over top for the remainder of the day

Technology Use Policy

Philippians 4:8 - "...*whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.*"

Background

Houston Christian School is a faith-based learning community. Our community uses technology but recognizes that it changes the way we operate and interact. As a school community, we value "face-to-face" contact between members over virtual interactions within or outside our building. We want to prevent a screen from becoming an obstacle to a personal conversation or interaction. Our identities are defined by God and are not our virtual identities. There will be times that we need to disconnect from technology as we give our time in worship and praise of the One we value above all others. We value other ways of learning and want to include all new and old media in the way we experience learning.

Guidelines

- Student Wi-Fi has been established. Students should access only material which is of educational value and which is consistent with the Christian worldview which is the shared value at HCS.
- Content filtering is applied to all Internet access at Houston Christian School. In instances where inappropriate content (sexual or violent imagery, or coarse language) is inadvertently accessed, it is the student's obligation to report the incident to a staff member.
- Students borrowing school equipment should sign it out if necessary, handle it with care and return it promptly. Students should not alter the operating systems or change the settings on devices they borrow. "They come back the way they went out." Student work needs to be stored on a USB Drive.
- Students may use personal devices in class time only with the expressed, explicit permission of the classroom teacher and for the purposes outlined by that teacher.
- Students must avoid plagiarizing others' works by citing references and sources, and respecting copyright laws.

Online safety:

Realities and Responsibilities: Online Etiquette and Dangers

- You are polite and respectful in school...be polite and respectful online.
- If you join Facebook, read the rules: you are not allowed to say or show anything that is mean to others.
- Don't lie. For example: you are not allowed to join Facebook until you are 13.
- Report meanness online to your parent, trusted friend or an adult, or to Facebook (if that is where it is happening). Do not respond online to a mean comment or photo. Instead, get a paper copy of it to log the incident.
- Delete or do not use hurtful or mean comments.
- Delete or do not use inappropriate pictures.
- Delete unknown "friends." Limit the site to only your real friends.
- Delete personal information that unknown people might use.
- Remember, the internet has a long memory: do not use it to do anything that will come back to haunt you in one, two, five or ten years from now.
- Do not take or share inappropriate photos online.
- Do not share your passwords with friends.
- Teacher computers must not be used by students.
- Access to the computer room or wireless system (for students with laptops) is available only by direct permission from a teacher.
- Remember school computers (and yours) may not be used to create, transmit, or receive any offensive or disruptive messages. Offensive messages contain sexual implications or jokes; or, comment offensively on a person's race, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or religion; defame others; or intrude on another's privacy or social conditions.

Substance Use Policy for Students

Background

Houston Christian School is committed to the health and safety of its students and anyone attending at the school. The school recognizes that the use of drugs, tobacco, vapour products, alcohol, certain medications, and impairment generally can have serious effects on students and the learning environment. Accordingly, the school is committed to preventing substance use and impairment on school property, and at all times during school hours.

Policy

Houston Christian School strictly prohibits students from possessing, manufacturing, offering for sale, selling, distributing, consuming, or using drugs, tobacco, vapour products, or alcohol during school hours, whether on or off school property.

Students breaching this policy may be subject to discipline in accordance with the Discipline Policy.

Special Situations

Medication

Where a student is required to use medication (including but not limited to medical cannabis) pursuant to a valid prescription and in accordance with a physician's directions, at a time, whether on or off of school property, that could cause them to be impaired during school hours, the student or their parent/guardian is required to adhere to the following:

- the student or their parent/guardian must notify a school administrator, prior to the student using the medication and attending school impaired, or using the medication at school, to permit a determination of whether the use of that medication can be accommodated; and

- the student or their parent/guardian must provide medical confirmation authorizing the student's use of the medication in order for the school to consider a request for accommodation. Any medical license or prescription relied on for the use of medical cannabis must be issued in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.

If a student uses medication in breach of this policy, without the student or their parent/guardian first disclosing the student's need to use such medication to a school administrator, the student may be subject to discipline in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy.

Addiction or Substance Use Disorder

The School understands that certain individuals may develop an addiction or substance use disorder related to their use or consumption of drugs or alcohol, and that this may be defined as a disability.

Where a student has or suspects they may have an addiction or substance use disorder, and where that addiction or substance use disorder does not render them unable to do so, the student or their parent/guardian is required to notify a school administrator prior to the student using drugs or alcohol during school hours, whether on or off of school property, and prior to their attending school impaired.

Where a student discloses an addiction or substance use disorder prior to breaching this policy, the school will take reasonable steps to assist them in their recovery. No student who discloses an addiction or substance use disorder prior to breaching this policy will be disciplined because of the student's disclosure or their involvement in a rehabilitation effort.

If a student uses drugs or alcohol in breach of this policy without first disclosing their circumstances to a school administrator, they may be subject to discipline in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy.

Accommodation

Where a student discloses their use of medication that could cause them to be impaired during school hours or discloses an addiction or substance use disorder in accordance with this policy, the school will work with that individual to determine what, if any, accommodation could reasonably be provided to that individual.

The provision of reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities related to the use of medication that could cause them to be impaired, or to persons with an addiction or substance use disorder, requires cooperation and collaboration between the student requesting the accommodation and the school. Students requesting accommodation have a duty to facilitate a reasonable accommodation offered by the school.

Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy

Bullying is currently a volatile issue in our society. Bullying is in the headlines and many experts have given quick fix solutions to this issue. However, bullying is a very complex social interaction and occurs at every level of life and in every culture. We do not want to be blind to the fact that it can happen in our school and in our families and, often, even in our churches.

In our attempt to provide a safe, secure and caring school environment it is important to be able to clarify what we mean when we use the word bullying. Bullying is usually defined as
(1) verbal or physical aggression that is
(2) repeated over time,
(3) involves a power difference - where one individual has more power than another and
(4) discrimination against race, colour, disabilities, gender, gender identity and expression, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ancestry, or national origin

Bullying, as defined above, as well as retaliation against a student who has made a complaint against a bully, will not be tolerated at HCS and will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Power differential is the most important element in bullying incidents. A student who has more power than another often uses it to elevate their own social status. Bullying comes in all forms: verbal taunting, physical violence, excluding the "other" in a social relationship, online comments putting another down, talking negatively about another's behaviour, clothing, etc.

The Bible speaks much about the misuse of power. In the Old Testament, God continually shows his concern for the alien and stranger (bullies often pick on those who are "strange," different from us...), the widow, the outcast, the downtrodden, and the poor. Justice for the victim is a huge theme in God's story.

Jesus recognized the bullies in his culture: those who had physical and social and spiritual power and how they used it to put down and keep others down. Jesus resisted the temptations of Satan and even of his disciples to use his power to accomplish his purposes. Jesus is God and yet laid aside power to bring redemption: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!" Phil. 2.5-8

We need to recognize that not every altercation between students is bullying. A fight or a one-time aggressive verbal or physical altercation or some "drama" between students is not considered bullying. Children can do mean things to each other that may not be bullying. AT HCS, if we see a child being mean, we will intervene. ("If it's mean, we will intervene.") But let us be slow to label every negative incident as bullying or every mean incident as perpetrated by a bully.

Bullies can be categorized into five categories:

(1) the physical brute acting out of malice (we often see characterized in cartoons or movies);

(2) a student who tries to act tough but is a bit clueless and may not do it out of malice;

(3) bully-victims- those who bully others but are also victims of other bullies;

(4) the socially popular student who uses their power to put and keep others down (kids often bully when they can gain social status- they will bully for social gain...);

(5) the Facebook bully - a person who is mean online but not in person.

There are some who demand zero tolerance for bullying and want automatic banishment for bullies. Yet we recognize that power is present in all of our relationships and that brokenness in our relationships means that we can expect brokenness in the use of power. Mean words and conflicts will happen in our school. But we will not bully or use our power to exclude bullies from our community. There will be consequences to negative behaviour, but we will offer opportunities for healing and restitution and restoration.

In summary, bullying can be present in Christian schools, communities, and relationships. We are broken people in need of grace, but often we do not offer grace to those weaker than us. However, let us be cautious in labelling others and in immediately seeking vengeance and punishment. Ultimately, we want the grace of Jesus to allow for restitution and healing in our brokenness.

What can students do?

- Respect others: "Treat others as you want to be treated."
- Recognize that you have power. Don't use your social or physical power to put others down.
- Realize that most meanness is not bullying.
- If you see someone being mean or being bullied, safely intervene. Try to safely stop it. Or find someone you trust who can stop it. Remember that most bullying is done in front of other kids, not adults. You don't have to be a bystander.
- Don't label anyone as a bully. They may not be.
- If you think you are being bullied, talk to a trusted adult.
- If you are being bullied online, you can ask the website to take down the offensive material. Get a copy of the offensive material. Talk to a trusted adult.
- If you think you are being bullied, get witnesses and/or copies of the offensive material and give it to a trusted adult.

What can parents do?

- Recognize that many times kids will not report things to their parents out of fear that the parents will overreact which will create even more problems.
- Recognize that it is our responsibility to raise our children but that kids need freedom to figure out their own troubles. Not every altercation your child has is bullying.
- Recognize that bullying is complex and not clear-cut, so gather information if you suspect your child is being bullied or may be bullying.
- Recognize that your child may be a bully or perhaps a bully-victim or perhaps even a "Facebook bully". Our children are sinful.
- Don't label any other child as a bully.
- Don't jump to conclusions. Childhood and teenage conflict may be just that - a conflict, a drama, and not bullying.
- Listen. Ask lots of questions. Document behaviour and incidents that show this may not be a one-time event but a bullying behaviour.
- Don't jump to conclusions: it is imperative that you and the school takes its time in gathering all the information of what is usually a complex issue in which denial and accusations are common.
- Monitor online behaviour...you need to talk with your child about online security and know what is going on online.
- Recognize that most students would rather be suspended from school than have their Facebook account suspended.

What can staff do?

- See the parent section above. Apply the same. We are working with parents in educating their child.
- Listen.
- Encourage positive behaviours.
- Make school a safe and happy place for students.
- Don't label any child as a bully.

What can administration do?

- Listen to students and parents and staff.
- Encourage school routine that reduces drama and power abuse.
- Take any complaint about mean conflict or drama seriously.
- Seek restitution and restoration of relationships.
- Involve students, staff and parents in the process as appropriate.
- Create awareness of the issue of bullying and keeping the school a safe place to learn and grow.

Sources: NIV Bible; Sticks and Stones by Emily Bazlon; The Bully, The Bullied, and The Bystander by Barbara Colorossa

Physical Education Classes and Athletic Opportunities

Physical Education Classes

The overarching goal of HCS's Physical Education (PE) program is to equip students to develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation to pursue and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. God, the Master Designer, is given all the glory, as together staff and students strive to build Christ-like attitudes and a Community-Building environment, while engaging in physical education classes.

The Elementary PE program is specifically driven by the goal of developing fundamental movement skills and building an understanding of personal health and fitness.

The Upper Elementary PE program progresses beyond fundamental movement skills to incorporate skills and strategies used in sports. The focus on personal health extends from general fitness topics into the realm of acquiring lifelong habits.

The High School PE program continues to use the fundamental movement skills acquired in younger years, in conjunction with skills and strategies used in sports, to build a solid skill set that will equip our students for a lifetime of enjoyable physical activity. It is our desire that our students would value opportunities to engage in physical activity and recognize its vast benefits for their overall well-being for years to come.

All HCS PE students are assessed on their ability to follow directions, their attempts to execute physical tasks correctly, their willingness to explore various ways to move, their attitude and effort, and their growing ability to perform specific movements and skills. As students progress through the grades, skill execution and overall physical ability also contribute to the evidence of learning gathered in PE classes.

Students are expected to bring and change into athletic clothing that allows for active participation and ease of movement (e.g. athletic style shorts and a T-shirt). These clothing items must align with the principles of dignity, modesty, and humility, as outlined in the HCS Dress Code Guidelines.

If students are unable to participate in PE class due to injury or illness, parents or guardians need to reach out to the teacher to notify him or her of the situation. Participation in PE classes is mandatory until the end of Grade 10. Physical & Health Education 10 is a graduation requirement.

Intramurals

Participation in intramurals and recreational sports is voluntary. Recreational sports provide a friendly, but competitive atmosphere. Playing time on the court or field is generally determined by taking turns. Thus, playing time is based on interest, not generally on skill. On the HCS campus, recreational and intramural sports are provided most noon hours in the gym for high school students and on the playground for elementary students.

HCS Athletic Program

The HCS Athletic Program is available to students in Grades 8-12. The governance of the Northwest Zone Athletic Association (NWZAA) and British Columbia School Sports (BCSS) applies to our teams. Our school is a member of each organization, and we abide by their rules for competition, eligibility, and other matters. These associations are highly competitive. The goals of the programs are to provide opportunities for advanced skill development and to develop and practice athletic skills in competitive situations.

HCS Athletic Program Participation Policy
Houston Christian School divides athletics into three levels:

- Level 1: Physical Education classes
- Level 2: Intramurals and recreational sports
- Level 3: HCS Athletic Program

As previously mentioned, participation in PE classes is mandatory through to the end of Grade 10, and participation in intramurals and recreational sports is optional.

To participate in HCS's Level 3 Athletic Program, a student must:

- Be registered at and attend Houston Christian School (or homeschoolers registered through HCS)
- Maintain an adequate academic standing
- Commit to attending and participating fully in all practices
- Join the team at the beginning of the season and commit to the entire season
- Commit to attending all games
- Be willing to abide by the HCS Playing Time Policy described below

Playing Time Policy

Students who meet the above requirements and decide to participate in HCS's Level 3 Athletic Program (which mainly consists of volleyball, basketball and track) are entering the world of tightly structured and competitive settings where high-level athletic success is the goal. Such participation involves large time commitments and extra fees. The Athletic Program is designed to be an opportunity in which those who excel in the sport have the opportunity to give their best performance. This is akin to a musical performance or a dramatic presentation in which the best singers and actors are selected to perform, so that the strongest possible presentation is achieved.

Accepting and believing in the concept of team, before individual, is key to participation in HCS's Level 3 Athletic Program. The determination of individual playing time can become quite complicated. Coaches aim to produce a strong team performance. They use players according to their skill levels and according to the way the team is most likely to function as a unified, successful team, for the game at hand. Playing time is not necessarily provided to all players and there is no disposition to distribute playing time equitably. Some factors beyond an individual's athletic skill set that may be involved in determining playing time include: practice habits, attitude, academic performance, and disciplinary situations. It can easily happen that younger or less experienced players with greater athletic ability spend more time on the playing court than older players. No one should presume they understand all the complex factors and the coach's intentions regarding playing time.

Coaches will attempt to communicate a certain amount of their strategy to the team so that no one is surprised by developments in the game – that is, by any individual's playing time. Coaching and game strategy may change due to specific game and tournament factors (a play day versus the Zone championship tournament) or the nature of the opponent (inexperienced team versus strong competitor).

Good team spirit and camaraderie are built when team members attend every practice and bring their best attitude and work ethic. It grows when players develop a healthy, respectful attitude, one that says, "I'm here for the team and willing to do what the coach requires." Such players find their joy in obedience. The league in which the HCS teams play is highly competitive – it is intended to be just that. While winning the game is the intent, it is not the ultimate goal. Our highest calling is to represent our school and our Lord – to show our sportsmanship, our discipleship, and our athletic excellence, to the honour and glory of His name.

Team Rules/Expectations

- Christ-like team sportsmanship is above all
- Lose all **selfish attitudes:** self-talk, self-glorification, bad moods, gossip, back talk, negative talk etc. – these things may cost you your place on the team
- Respect the coach and his or her decisions
- Be at practice on time, ready to give your best
- Practice the way you would perform in a game – with enthusiasm, earnestness, and intensity
- Accept all workloads assigned to you
- Accept your role on the team, whatever it may be
- Be in attendance at school at least for the afternoon on game and practice days, unless prior arrangements have been made
- Be at facility ready to play 30 minutes before game time
- Wear a complete school uniform (jersey & black shorts) to each game (Note: Lost or damaged HCS jerseys will be replaced at the participant's expense)
- During huddles and team meetings, listen with a purpose to learn
- Bench behaviour – be ready and know what is going on; it is not a place to fool around
- Always display positive body language
- Never question a referee with words or gestures – be respectful, stay composed, and continue to work hard
- Games and tournaments are school functions – abide by the HCS Code of Conduct at all times; we are ambassadors for Christ both on and off the court, during our travels, at our overnight accommodations, and at all other venues
- Remember this is competitive athletics; the goal is to be the best team we can be

If a student and/or parent(s) is not able to accept these rules and the allocation of playing time, it means that participation in HCS's Level 3 Athletics Program is not a good fit for this individual.

Expectation of Parents

- Help ensure your child attends practices faithfully and on time
- Attend your child's games frequently
- Encourage your children to develop their skills to the best of their abilities
- Familiarize yourself with the philosophy behind HCS's Athletic Program
- Respect the coach's decisions (regarding playing time, strategy, skill-building focus, etc.)
- Model proper sportsmanship when cheering, discussing games, officials, or coaches

- Cheer for the sport as a whole; applaud good plays by other teams
- Ensure that you and your younger children maintain the proper decorum for spectators in a gymnasium
- Help out by driving players to games out of town when necessary
- Always present yourself as an enthusiastic, Christ-like supporter of Level 3 HCS Athletics

Disciplinary Measures

Coaches aim to help players develop principles of good sportsmanship and Christian behaviour in athletic activity. Positive instruction and encouragement will be provided and, when necessary, admonition and consequences will unfold according to the HCS Discipline Policy.