

Pin Oak Middle School

Student and Family Handbook

2024–2025



Principal: Lindsey Vela

Pin Oak Middle School

Premier Foreign Language Magnet

ESTABLISHED	August 2002
MASCOT	Chargers
SCHOOL COLORS	Royal Blue, White, & Gray
NAMED TO HONOR	The Pin Oak Tree (native to this region of Texas)
WEBSITE	www.houstonisd.org/pinoak
ADDRESS	4601 Glenmont, Bellaire, TX 77401
PHONE	(713) 295 - 6500
FAX	(713) 295 - 6511

Vision Statement

At Pin Oak Middle School, our vision is one of student agency, choice, and voice in not only what students want to study, but how they will relate their learning to the real world. We are committed to providing an environment in which every student can investigate who they are, their impact on the world, and their future as productive, thoughtful, and engaged citizens.

Collaboration

Pin Oak Middle School students become effective team players by building social skills with peers and adults for academic and social growth. The adults will set the example with positive collaboration in their curricular and school community groups, including ongoing professional development and continued growth and accountability for high standards of excellence in every area at Pin Oak. In addition, problem-solving opportunities will be provided in and out of the classroom through inquiry-based activities. This will be evident in our classrooms through activities requiring consensus, problem-solving, cooperative grouping, and communication.

Communication

Developing and promoting effective communication channels among teachers, parents, students, and administrators helps to reach and meet the needs of each stakeholder of the Pin Oak community. It is our goal to create a space where ALL information can be accessed in one location. Among our stakeholders, ongoing communication will occur in clusters, departments, and PLCs, enabling teachers to be learners and educators. In the classroom, a greater emphasis will be placed on collaboration and learning experiences that will enhance their interpersonal skills. Ultimately, we want to provide as many opportunities as possible for parents to interact with the teachers and students on campus.

Choice

The Pin Oak Middle School curriculum recognizes the importance of a well-rounded education consisting of core classes (English, history, math, science) as well as world languages, physical education, fine arts, technology, and elective courses which engage students in higher-order thinking across subjects. Giving students more opportunities to expand knowledge outside campus to the larger community helps them to realize their place in and of the world and become productive and proactive citizens and lifelong learners.

Critical Thinking

Pin Oak Middle School is one of the highest-ranking schools in Houston with a diverse group of students from all sections of the city, largely due to our language magnet and all-application structure. We will encourage teachers to acquire and maintain high levels of content-area knowledge personally and to use their knowledge creatively; modeling these skills helps to develop their students' inquiring minds. We will encourage teachers of the various disciplines to form and promote cross-curricular connections (where feasible within the requirements of their curriculum), thereby challenging students' thinking in more intense, interesting new directions.

Creativity

Creativity is the ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and apply knowledge in conjunction with imagination and ideas to create an original product or learning experience. As a community of learners, we

believe that creativity is essential to our success in the 21st century. Students will use creativity to promote a positive school environment that is inclusive and diverse. Educators will encourage a safe learning environment that promotes inquiry and models the importance of being an ongoing learner. By holding students and educators accountable to high expectations, we will create a positive 21st-century environment that is safe, inclusive, and flexible, allowing students to explore, learn from their mistakes, and accept new challenges.

POMS Leadership Welcome and Directory

As members of the POMS Leadership team, we strive to provide the best educational experience possible for each and every one of our students. Please know that we are here to assist with anything you may need. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please reach out to your student's assigned administrator. Our information can be found below. (* Denotes Spanish Speaker)

TITLE	NAME	EMAIL
Principal	Lindsey Vela	lindsey.vela@houstonisd.org
A House Assistant Principal	Jeremy Gates	jeremy.gates@houstonisd.org
A House Assistant Principal	Sara Hall	sara.hall@houstonisd.org
B House Assistant Principal	Amy Myers	amy.myers@houstonisd.org
B House Assistant Principal	Olga Catoni	ocatoni@houstonisd.org
C House Assistant Principal	Ashly Vining	ashly.vining@houstonisd.org
C House Assistant Principal	Alexander Amador	alexander.amador@houstonisd.org
Counselor M-Z	Alynn Lebiga	alynn.lebiga@houstonisd.org
Counselor A-L	Qiana Rankins	quiana.rankins@houstonisd.org
Instructional Technologist	Barrett Doke	bdoke@houstonisd.org
IT Customer Service Coordinator	Kaneika Bell-Brown	kaneika.bellbrown@houstonisd.org
Nurse	Thea Troetscher	thea.troetscher@houstonisd.org
Special Education Chairperson	Dayna Bates	dayna.bates@houstonisd.org
504 Coordinator	Jeremy Gates	jeremy.gates@houstonisd.org
Title I Coordinator	Alynn Lebiga	alynn.lebiga@houstonisd.org
Registrar	Kia Ward	kia.ward@houstonisd.org
Attendance Clerk	Edit Churchill*	edit.churchill@houstonisd.org
Main Office Secretary / F.A.C.E.	Alicia Escamilla*	alicia.escamilla@houstonisd.org
Business Office Clerk	Maricurz Chavez*	maricurz.chavez@houstonisd.org
Main Office Clerk	Jessica Ochoa*	jessica.ochoa@houstonisd.org
Principal's Secretary	Norma Ruiz*	nruiz@houstonisd.org
A House Clerk	Katherine Edwards	katherine.edwards@houstonisd.org
B House Clerk	<i>Pending</i>	***
C House Clerk	Dominique Menefee	dominique.menefee@houstonisd.org

Bell Schedule



Pin Oak Bell Schedule 2024-2025

Blue and Gray Days

8:25	First Bell	
8:30 – 10:00	1 st /2 nd Period (90)	
10:05 – 11:35	3 rd /4 th Period (90)	
6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
11:35 – 12:05 (30) LUNCH	11:40 – 12:25 (45) 5 th /6 th Period	11:40 – 1:10 (90) 5 th /6 th Period
12:10 – 1:40 (90) 5 th /6 th Period	12:25 – 12:55 (30) LUNCH	
	1:00 – 1:40 (40) 5 th /6 th Period	1:10 – 1:40 (30) LUNCH
1:45 – 2:25	Charger/Team Time (40)	
2:30 – 4:00	7 th /8 th Period (90)	

Charger Time: MONDAYS

Team Time: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

Charger Days

8:25	First Bell	
8:30 – 9:15	1 st Period (45)	
9:20 – 10:05	2 nd Period (45)	
10:10 – 10:55	3 rd Period (45)	
11:00 – 11:45	4 th Period (45)	
6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
11:45 – 12:15 LUNCH	11:50 – 12:25 (35) 5 th Period	11:50 – 1:00 (70) 5 th Period
12:20 – 1:30 (70) 5 th Period	12:25 – 12:55 LUNCH	
	1:00 – 1:30 (30) 5 th Period	1:00 – 1:30 LUNCH
1:35 – 2:20	6 th Period (45)	
2:25 – 3:10	7 th Period (45)	
3:15 – 4:00	8 th Period (45)	

Charger Days: WEDNESDAYS

Imagine. Believe. Achieve

Planner Guidelines

Students are expected to bring their planner to every class period, every day.

Students can purchase a planner at the Student Success Table if they misplace their original planner.

Strategies for Effective Use of the Planner:

- Copy the agenda and homework assignment during each class period.
- Make note of long-range due dates for quizzes, tests, and major projects.
- Schedule before and after-school tutorial sessions with your teachers, when necessary.
- Add personal dates and commitments to manage available time.

For Your Information

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES:

ADA attendance is taken at 9:45 a.m. each day. The Texas Education Code 21.041 requires students to be in attendance for at least 90% of school calendar days a year to receive credit for a class. The principal will appoint staff to serve on the attendance committee to hear petitions for class credit from students with less than 90% attendance. The committee may give class credit to these students because of extenuating circumstances. While religious holy days, partial day absences for healthcare providers (with documentation), and mandated court appearances do not count toward compulsory attendance requirements, they must still be used for calculating whether a student has been in attendance 90% of the days a course was offered to receive credit.

ABSENCE:

A student is absent if he/she is not actually in school at the time attendance is taken. This includes students who complete assignments at home unless the student qualifies for one of the exemptions below.

Absences are excused for the following reasons:

- Student's personal illness
- Death of an immediate family member
- Physical healthcare appointments
- Participation in official school activities with the permission of the principal
- Emergency/extenuating circumstances as recognized by the principal or principal's designee
- Religious holidays
- Activities related to obtaining United States Citizenship
- Board-approved extracurricular activities

In case of absence, the student must bring a note to the attendance office before school on the day of returning to school. This note needs to be written and signed by the parent or guardian stating the:

- student's name
- exact day(s) absent
- reason for the absence.

If the note is sent via email, it must be sent from the parent or guardian's email account to edit.churchill@houstonisd.org and include the following information:

- parent/guardian's legal name
- student's legal name
- student HISD ID#
- date of absence
- reason for absence
- contact number.

All emails and notes are kept on file in the attendance office. Students who do not bring an email or note will be given an unexcused absence. Failure to turn in proper notification to the attendance office within three (3) school days of the absence may result in an unexcused absence. The three-day period begins on the day the student returns to school. Excessive unexcused absences may result in the student failing to be promoted to the next grade level.

TEC 25.087 and Board Policy FEB (LEGAL): Absences for vacations, competitions, family trips, babysitting, working, and other such reasons shall be considered unexcused. If a parent elects to take a student out of school for one of these reasons, the parent is encouraged to notify the school in advance of the absence.

According to HISD board policy, no student under 18 years of age may leave campus during school hours for any reason without prior approval in writing or by a documented phone call from the student's parent or guardian. This applies to lunch, extracurricular activities, field trips, and any other activity supervised by campus or district personnel. Such excuses must be approved by the principal or the principal's designee.

A parent/guardian of a school-aged child has the responsibility to require that their child attend school regularly. When sickness or another reason necessitates an absence, an email or note signed by the parent/guardian or phone call explaining the reason for the absence is required prior to or when the student returns to school. If a student fails to submit a note or email from the parent or the school does not receive a phone call from the parent, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Students checking out of school for the day during a given class period will be recorded as absent. Students must be present for at least 60 minutes of a 90-minute class period in order to be considered in attendance unless on a field trip or other activity approved by the principal.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/CHEATING/PLAGIARISM, ETC.:

Academic dishonesty or academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly AI tools like ChatGPT and Google Bard, offer wonderful opportunities to support and enrich our learning process. Whether brainstorming ideas, dissecting complex texts, or honing our grammar and writing style, these tools can provide assistance and spark creativity. However, it is important we use them in a way that upholds our principles of academic integrity, and that we remember the true purpose of our work here at Pin Oak.

At Pin Oak, our mission is to nurture critical thinking, refine our communication skills, expand our academic horizons, and stoke our creativity. Assignments are not merely tasks to complete; they are chances to explore and express our ideas, to learn from each other, and to grow personally and academically.

Below is a list of guidelines that students must adhere to:

1. **AI as a Tool, Not a Crutch:** AI is here to assist us, to inspire and clarify. But remember, the thoughts, analysis, and crafting of your assignments should be primarily your own.
2. **Cite Your Sources:** Just as we acknowledge human sources, any significant insights or phrases you borrow from AI should also be properly cited. As with any source, it should be limited to a quotation of no more than a couple of sentences, as AI can be used to support your work but not be your work.
3. **AI for Understanding, Not for Shortcuts:** Use AI to clarify your doubts, to seek further understanding. Do not use it as a way to avoid reading, thinking deeply, or authentically engaging with your assignments. Use AI to give you feedback on your writing with suggestions for improvement before the assignment is submitted. Do not ask AI to rewrite it for you beyond your capabilities and submit the rewrite.
4. **AI for Learning, Not Just Task Completion:** Aim to understand and develop skills, not just to finish an assignment.
5. **Tutor not Reader:** While reading a text, just as you might chat with a friend about what you are reading, AI can help you to understand parts of the reading that you need further clarification on. However, bypassing the reading and doing the hard work of comprehension yourself is not acceptable.

The following table provides examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses of artificial intelligence tools such as Google Bard or ChatGPT. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Acceptable Uses of AI	Unacceptable Uses of AI
Using AI to make difficult readings easier or to help learn how to analyze a reading passage.	Using AI to find the main ideas of a text without trying to understand it yourself.
Getting AI to help clear up confusing parts of a reading.	Asking AI to answer specific questions or assignments without thinking about it yourself.
Using AI to suggest more books or references about the topic.	Having AI summarize or paraphrase a text so you don't have to read it.
Asking AI to help understand difficult words or complex sentences.	Asking AI to write a whole essay or report for you without doing the research or writing.

Acceptable Uses of AI	Unacceptable Uses of AI
Asking AI to show examples or explanations of things like metaphors or similes.	Using AI to find quotes from a text to use in your work without finding them yourself.
Using AI to assist you in understanding and interpreting a reading passage.	Having AI write a whole analysis of a reading passage without your own thinking or effort.
Asking AI to show examples of good writing techniques from the reading.	Asking AI to create fake examples or give content for copying.
Using AI for guidance on how to cite sources in an essay or project.	Asking AI for a ready-made list of sources without doing the research yourself.
Asking AI for suggestions on analyzing character development or themes in a book.	Asking AI for a detailed plot summary or book review without reading the book.
Using AI to get feedback on your writing with suggestions for improvement before the assignment is submitted.	Asking AI for direct answers to multiple-choice questions or quizzes without trying first.

Not following these guidelines will result in a violation of our academic integrity policy.

In order to verify that you have genuinely learned from the assignment and have not resorted to using AI or cheating you should be able to discuss the topic verbally and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of anything submitted. **An inability to support/extend your work through conversation or extension questions will demonstrate a need to relearn the material and provide new evidence of the learning.**

Remember, the ultimate goal of education is your growth and learning. AI can be a fantastic tool to aid us in this journey, but it can't replace your active engagement and effort. Ensure that anything you submit is an accurate representation of your learning and capability. Let's use AI responsibly, and let's make this a year of meaningful learning and creativity.

CHEATING

Cheating includes the following:

- Obtaining work or information from someone else.
- Using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information from another student or student's paper on an examination.
- Communicating answers with another person during an exam.
- Altering graded work after it has been returned, and then submitting the work for re-grading.
- Allowing another person to do one's work.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements, or other work as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. Examples of plagiarism include

- Copying word for word, using a specific phrase or terms from a source or reference, whether oral, printed, or on the internet (including artificial intelligence-generated responses).
- Paraphrasing (using another person's written words or ideas) as if they were one's own thoughts.

Academic dishonesty — cheating, plagiarism, or inappropriate use of artificial intelligence — is not acceptable. A student found to be participating in academic dishonesty will be subject to loss of credit for the work in question, as well as disciplinary and/or academic consequences according to the Student Code of Conduct.

ACADEMIC TEAMS AND CLUSTERS:

Pin Oak embraces the value of creating small learning communities to enable students to have streamlined support on campus. Students and teachers are arranged in grade-level teams by House called "clusters." Clusters consist of an English teacher, a Math teacher, a Social Studies teacher, and a Science teacher. Flexible scheduling provides common conference periods for teacher cluster teams, thus allowing a supportive environment in which to meet with parents and students and plan for instruction.

ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

The purpose of the activities and organizations of Pin Oak Middle School is to promote leadership, sportsmanship, and school spirit. Each student is encouraged to become a part of the extracurricular life of the campus. Some of the activities and organizations at Pin Oak are performing and visual arts, athletics, Academic UIL, National Junior Honor Society (NJHS), and Dungeons & Dragons, to name a few.

AFTER-SCHOOL EVENTS/ACTIVITIES:

Students are to be picked up **no later than 15 minutes** after a school event or activity ends (i.e. sports games, dances, rehearsal, concerts, game night, etc.). If students are not picked up within 15 minutes they will no longer be able to attend after school events/activities for the remaining semester or school year. .

ATHLETICS:

Pin Oak has a strong athletic program. Participation in UIL athletic activities is subject to the "No Pass, No Play" restriction. UIL athletic programs are open to all 7th and 8th-grade students: Basketball, Cross Country, Cheerleading, Dance, Football, Soccer, Swimming, Track, and Volleyball. Club sports include Softball, Baseball, Tennis, and Lacrosse. Club sports are open to students in all grade levels and there may be a fee associated with participation.

BACKPACKS:

Students will be permitted to use any school-appropriate backpack to transport their Chromebooks and materials to and from school. The general size of the backpack, however, must fit under the students' desk. Students will be expected to carry their backpacks with them throughout the academic day. As a safety and security consideration, backpacks will not be left in the hallways outside of the classroom. Backpacks should be free of any inappropriate language, graphics, or other imagery.

BUS RIDERS:

Houston ISD school buses and buses chartered by Houston ISD are extensions of the classroom, and as such, expectations for student behavior are the same as during the regular school day. Failure to abide by the rules and regulations set by your bus driver may result in suspension or removal from transportation privileges. HISD Transportation Services may utilize cameras to record video and audio of student activity on school buses.

CAFETERIA:

Lunch or purchase food from the cafeteria line. Students must have their school ID to purchase food in the cafeteria. Students are not permitted to use another student's ID to purchase items from the lunch line or snack bar. Parents may prepay for cafeteria purchases through the Houston ISD SchoolPay system. Students should bring their lunch/money with them at the beginning of the day. Eighth grade students have the privilege of eating in the courtyard, east of the cafeteria. All other areas are off-limits during lunch. Students are not allowed to order lunch for delivery to the main office. Parents are not permitted to bring food for other students.

Cafeteria expectations are as follows:

- Students are not permitted to move from table to table during lunch.
- All students must throw away their trash before leaving the cafeteria.
- Students are not permitted to take food or drink outside of the cafeteria.

CAMPUS SUPERVISION:

Assigned teachers and support staff supervise the arrival of students in the morning and the release of students at dismissal. Pin Oak offers an after-school program at a minimal cost. Information is available in the main office and [campus website](#). Parents are required to arrange for their students to arrive on campus after 7:50 a.m. and be picked up by 4:30 p.m. No student should be on school grounds any earlier than 7:50 a.m., as there is no supervision until 7:50 a.m. Students remaining on campus after 4:30 p.m. will be placed in the Afterschool Program at a cost to parents. **Students are not permitted to wait in the HCC parking lot. Car riders are required to be picked up from Pin Oak Circle Drive to ensure the safety and well-being of students.**

CARE OF BUILDING, GROUNDS, AND EQUIPMENT:

Students should have pride in our school and take responsibility for not littering, painting, marking, or otherwise defacing the building, grounds, or equipment. Deliberate and willful destruction of school property may result in the student and/or parents being held financially responsible and/or other disciplinary action to be taken. This includes social media trends.

BULLYING:

Students who believe that they have been bullied are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, or principal. Failure to promptly report alleged bullying may impair the ability to investigate and address the bullying. If an incident of bullying is confirmed, campus administration will notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engages in bullying. Appropriate disciplinary consequences may result, pending the results of the investigation. Refer to FFI (LEGAL and LOCAL) and to the HISD Student Code of Conduct for the state definition of bullying and other related information and policies.

CYBERBULLYING: Defined by section 37.0832 of the Education Code as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including through the use of cellular or other types of telephone, computer, camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, social media application, internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

CANVAS:

As a one-to-one campus, CANVAS is our Learning Management System where teachers will input digital assignments.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURES:

Students eat in the cafeteria and may bring a lu

CELL PHONES:

Though students are allowed to bring cell phones and other electronics with them to school, **the school accepts no responsibility for loss, theft, or damage of any personal items.** Phones may only be used before entering the building and after leaving the building.

- Students may **NOT** use cell phones, smart watches, Bluetooth earbuds (AirPods, Beats, etc.)/ headphones, etc. once they enter the building. This includes passing periods, lunch periods, emergency drills, practices for extracurricular events, and field trips.
- Using a cell phone to record or videotape is prohibited and against HISD school guidelines (II-19).
- Headphones may not be visible or worn during school hours unless required by an IEP.

If a student is found in violation of this policy, the following discipline will be administered:

- The cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and delivered to the POMS business office located in the main office.
- In accordance with Texas Education Code 37.082, a \$15 administrative fee will be collected.
- A parent must accompany the student to retrieve the confiscated item.
- Payment of administrative fees and return of cell phones/electronic devices will be conducted in the business office daily, from 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Arrangements may be made after 4:30 p.m.

CLUSTERS:

Clusters are small communities within each of our three houses. There is a cluster for each grade level and each house: 6A, 7A, 8A; 6B, 7B, 8B; and 6C, 7C, 8C. Each cluster has a cluster leader who is your go-to person for any questions or concerns you may have about POMS.

Cluster leaders are your first point of contact for any academic or behavioral expectations questions before reaching out to a House Assistant Principal.

HOUSE	Teacher	Email
6A	Ms. Ichara	cichara@houstonisd.org
6B	Mr. Meyer	emeyer1@houstonisd.org
6C	<i>Pending</i>	
7A	Ms. Cao	jcao@houstonisd.org
7B	<i>Pending</i>	
7C	Mrs. Payne	rebecca.payne@houstonisd.org
8A	Ms. Byro	sydney.byro@houstonisd.org
8B	Mr. Merz	nmerz@houstonisd.org
8C	Ms. Girard	pmcclen@houstonisd.org

CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR:

Students are expected to follow the directions of every employee (i.e., teacher, secretary, custodian, bus driver, and cafeteria worker). Campus rules, as well as classroom rules, are to be always observed. Students are expected to always behave in a respectful manner. For detailed information, please refer to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

CONFERENCES:

Arrangements may be made for parent conferences with teachers through academic teams and house administrators. These meetings must be pre-arranged. Contact your student's cluster leader by email to schedule a conference. Messages will be returned within 2 school days. A parent who wants to meet with a teacher may call 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. All teacher emails can be found in the [POMS staff directory](#).

Students and parents may expect teachers to request a conference (1) if the student is not maintaining passing grades or achieving the expected level of performance, (2) if the student exhibits conduct or behavioral problems, or (3) in any other case the teacher considers necessary.

COUNSELOR:

The purpose of the counseling program is to support and meet the needs of all our students in a proactive rather than reactive manner. Our program is a collaborative approach with input and support from

teachers, students, parents, and community representatives. Our comprehensive counseling program facilitates student development in four board areas: Guidance Curriculum, Responsive Services, Individual Planning, and System Support, which are aligned with the State Standards for School Counseling.

Counselor services are available to all students. Conflicts, grades, social issues, and personal issues are just a few areas your counselor can provide assistance/guidance for students and their families. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. If a student would like to visit with the counselor, he/she can send an email or request an appointment via the [HISD Student Assistance Form](#).

- Qiana Rankins (Alpha A-M) Qiana.Rankins@houstonisd.org
- Alynn Lebiga (Alpha N-Z) Alynn.Lebiga@houstonisd.org

DELIVERIES TO STUDENTS:

When homework, clothing, equipment, instruments, etc. have been left at home, those items may be brought to the school and left in the care of front office personnel for retrieval by your student during the next passing period or lunch. Academic instruction will not be interrupted for notification. Students will be responsible for retrieving their items during passing periods or lunch.

DELIVERIES FROM LOCAL RESTAURANTS/DELIVERY SERVICES:

Students may not receive food delivery from restaurants or delivery services.

GIFTED AND TALENTED:

Pin Oak MS is an inclusive campus, meaning that all students are in heterogeneous classes. [Our Gifted and Talented](#) (GT) students are served in the classroom. Each GT student has a Gifted Education Plan that is created to address the child’s strengths and weaknesses. It might be a literature circle discussing higher-level books or an independent project done in lieu of other students’ extra math practice, just to name a few ideas.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Grades will be based solely on achievement of course/grade-level standards. Student grades will be determined by teacher evaluation of growth attained during significant learning activities conducted by the teacher in a grade reporting cycle.

Grading Scale

While all grades are reported as numeric scores, these scores will represent various levels of achievement that can be compared to letter grades. The following is HISD’s grading scale:

LETTER GRADE	
90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
75 – 79	C
69 or below	F

Grade averages with a remainder of .5 or above will be rounded off to the next highest number. In order to receive credit for a course, a student must earn an average of 70 or better.

Number of Assignments

- Teachers will post at least two grades every week for each student. Grades come from any number of assignments, including, but not limited to homework, classwork, quizzes, tests, and projects.
- Teachers will post at least one major grade (test/assessment/project) for each student prior to progress reports.
- Teachers will post MSG (missing) for assignments that have not been turned in, which will be converted to a 0 (zero) at the end of the week the assignment was posted. Teachers may excuse (EXC) an assignment for any reason as long as it does not violate campus or district policy.
- Category weights for assignments have been determined by the campus and are listed below.
- No one assignment may count for more than 20% of the overall cycle average.

Grading Categories

Pin Oak Middle School has standard categories for all core, foreign language, and elective courses. Each category is assigned a weight so that no one assignment counts more than 20% of a student's overall grade:

Definition of Categories:

- **Classwork/Quizzes** are activities or tasks that allow a teacher and a student to identify what students already know, or have learned, as well as areas for intervention and remediation. Classwork can include an activity or task that a student performs or works at repeatedly for the purpose of improving or achieving proficiency. All students must have an opportunity to prepare for quizzes, therefore no unannounced quizzes are allowed. Participation is not an adequate form of assessment, so grades will not be given for participation (except for Fine Arts and PE). Major projects are not considered classwork.
Weight = 50%
- **Homework/Do Now/Exit Tickets** are any type of independent practice or assignment that will likely be completed outside of the classroom or as an entry or exit activity. Students may correct homework as a learning opportunity but will not replace the original grade. Teachers should contact parents when a student does not consistently turn in homework. Teachers may assign academic detention for students who consistently fail to complete homework assignments. Major projects completed outside of the classroom are not considered homework grades.
Weight = 10%
- **Tests/Performance Assessments/Projects** (Minimum of 2 Grades) are assessments based on the District's standards-based curriculum that measure the skills and knowledge that a student has mastered. Specifically, performance assessments are assessments based on observation and judgment of the quality of a skill or product. Performance assessments are products, performances, and projects (i.e., essay artwork,

visual representations, models, multimedia, oral presentations/recitations, lab experiences, live/recorded performances).

Weight = 40%

Test Reassessment

It is District policy that teachers provide students an opportunity for reassessment for major tests/performance assessments/projects when the grade received on an assessment is below 70%. Teachers will reassess students on the same skill; however, a different variation of the assessment may be given. All reassessments must be completed within one week from the time the assessment is returned to the student. A student's grade in the grade book for any reassessment will be a 70 as long as the student passed the reassessment (e.g., Original grade = 60%; Retest grade = 75%; New grade = 70%).

Absences

Students who have absences will be given 2 days or until the next time the class meets (upon receipt of missing assignments) for every day of absence to turn in their missing assignments. It is the student's responsibility to request the missing assignment from the teacher. Students who are absent because of a field trip must turn in the assignment the following class period without penalty.

Late Work (Not Associated with an Absence)

Students are expected to turn assignments in by the due date; however, we understand that situations may arise that cause an assignment to be late from time to time. Students have until the beginning of the next scheduled class period from the class period it was assigned to turn in their work. **Work received after the start of the next scheduled class period will lose 20 percentage points. The highest grade you can earn on an assignment at that time is 80%.** Students with an extended time accommodation will be provided a due date that complies with that accommodation. **Assignments not turned in will be recorded as 0% (zero percent).**

MAKE-UP WORK:

Students who are absent will be given an opportunity to make up work missed upon return to school. **It is the student's responsibility to obtain any work missed immediately upon the student's return to campus.** During an extended absence (three days or more), work may be requested with 48-hour notice from the teachers.

- Students who have excused, unexcused, or prearranged unexcused absences will be permitted to make up regular coursework and receive the actual grade earned.
- Students who miss class due to truancy will be allowed to make up the work; however, a maximum grade of 70 will be recorded for the completed assignment.
- Students returning to class following an absence or a tardy are responsible for conferencing with the teacher to determine what work is to be completed and establish a date for such completion. Normally, two school days are allowed for each day absent; more time may be given in extenuating circumstances. However, assignments that are done in class (classwork, homework, quizzes, tests) on the day a student is absent for a field trip or extracurricular activity are due at the next class meeting. Work assigned prior to the absence(s) is due on the first return day, including tests. Teacher discretion may be used for cases involving more severe situations, such as illnesses, etc.

- All work is to be done as scheduled by the teacher. Zeroes may be given if the make-up work plan is not followed.
- Make-up work, especially tests, may be of an alternate version.
- Make-up work will be graded in a manner similar to the grading of the original assignment. The teacher has the option to alter assignments and grading, as long as the alterations are applied consistently to all students.
- Teachers will make notes available, when needed, and offer other assistance to students who have had excused absences for significant periods of time.

Incomplete Six-Week Averages

Pending the campus principal's approval, a teacher may give a grade of "Incomplete" for a grading cycle to any student who does not complete assignments or assessments due to excessive absences or other extenuating circumstances. The grade of "Incomplete" must be resolved by the end of the next grading cycle immediately following the grading cycle in which the incomplete was first given.

Midterms and Final Exams (High School Credit Courses Only)

In all high school credit courses, the final exam will count for 10% of the student's final grade. A student may not retake a final exam to improve their grade.

Grade Changes

Teachers must initiate all grade changes and obtain campus principal approval. The principal or assistant principals may not arbitrarily change grades issued by teachers. The only reasons for changing a student's grade after it has been recorded are

- If there was an error in the computation of the student's grade; or,
- If an error was made in entering the student's grade.

Reporting Periods

Pin Oak Middle School will use a [six-week grade reporting calendar](#). There will be three grading cycles each semester. In high school credit classes, the final average in a course will be determined by three cycle grades, each counting 30% of the total grade, and a final examination counting 10% of the total grade. All cycle grades will be reported on a range of 0-100. In middle school, most courses are on an annual promotion basis and the final average at the end of the school year will be determined by the average of the six-cycle grades.

Grade Reporting

A progress report will be sent home after the third week of each grading cycle. Current grades contained in the progress report should be based on the student's academic achievement (proficiency) for the first three weeks of the six-week period. If a student's average falls below 70, or the unexcused absences exceed 10% after the scheduled notice of progress reports has been sent home, the teacher should send a progress report home immediately. It is imperative that extra effort be made to give parents advance notice of a pending failing grade before the report card is sent home.

Grades and UIL Eligibility

A student must maintain an average in each course of no less than 70% to be eligible for UIL extracurricular activities. Students receiving an INC (Incomplete) grade for a cycle will NOT be eligible for UIL extracurricular activities. Under the State's "no pass, no play" law, eligibility for participation in UIL extracurricular activities during the first six weeks of school is based on whether or not they were promoted to the next grade level prior to the start of the new school year. After the first six weeks, a student who receives an INC or a grade lower than a 70 in any course, is ineligible to participate in UIL extra-curricular activities during the first three school weeks of the next grading period. During that time the student may continue to practice or rehearse with other students; however, they may not take part in any competition or public performance.

Conduct Grading

Conduct grades are given by each classroom teacher. Under no circumstances may conduct infractions be used to affect the student's academic grade. Conduct marks can affect a student's participation in activities and awards and/or can cause them to be exited from the school if they are attending the campus on a transfer, including magnet. Before a conduct grade of a "P" (poor) is given, the following process should have taken place:

- Personal conference with the student to determine the problem.
- Inform parents by phone, in writing, by email, or through personal conference, of the problem.
- Document teacher intervention.

A conduct grade of a "P" (poor) or "U" (unsatisfactory) cannot be given without approval from the Administration.

Promotion Standards

To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a middle school student (grades 6 through 8) must attain the following standards:

- Grades
 - Yearly average of 70% or above in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- Attendance
 - If a student exceeds the absence limit for a semester or for the year on an annual promotion course, an asterisk (*) will appear next to the grade on the report card for the appropriate cycle. The absence limit for all courses will be set at 10%. This is calculated and posted by the computer, based on the number of days the course is scheduled during the semester. When a student exceeds the unexcused absence limit during the first three grading cycles, an NG will appear in place of the Semester Average on the report card. This indicates the student has had credit denied due to the accumulation of an excessive number of unexcused absences. The asterisk (*)/NG will appear if the student's unexcused absences exceed 10% of the class meetings. Excused absences do not apply to any district policies regarding grading or promotion standards.

GUM POLICY:

Students are not permitted to chew gum on campus at any time.

HALLWAYS:

Students should always walk to the right in the hallways. Students should utilize the 6th-grade stairs to go up and the 8th-grade stairs to go down during passing periods. Students found in a hallway other than their assigned hallway will be considered “out of area” and may be assigned disciplinary action.

HONOR ROLL:

Honor Roll celebrations are held in each cluster for each grading cycle. Students who maintain honor roll status for all grading cycles are acknowledged at the end-of-year award ceremony with a certificate. Honor Roll is awarded to students who meet the numeric grade, conduct, and course requirements described below:

- **Conduct Grade Requirement:** A student must earn an E or an S in conduct to qualify for the Honor Roll and to be eligible for other recognition, awards, or offices.
- **Course Requirements:** All graded classes will be calculated to determine Honor Roll eligibility.

ID BADGES / LANYARDS:

For safety and security purposes, students must have their school-issued photo ID badge visible at all times.

ID badges may not be defaced or obscured. Any defaced/obscured badges will need to be replaced at the expense of the parent/guardian by the next school day. The barcode on the ID badge is utilized to check out books from the library, check out Chromebooks/textbooks for use during the school year, and to purchase food from the cafeteria. One ID badge will be provided to each student at the start of the year at no cost. Replacement badges may be obtained for \$5.00 from the Student Success Table from 7:50 a.m. – 8:20 a.m.

Occasionally students may forget their ID at home and will need a temporary ID for the day. Students will be allotted up to two temporary IDs from the Student Success Table or House Office. **On the third request for a temporary ID in a 3 week grading period, and all those after, the student will be assigned a disciplinary consequence.** Failure to follow these procedures may be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct

One color-coded lanyard is given to each student at the beginning of the year. Students are required to utilize their grade-level lanyard at all times. If a student has lost their lanyard, they are available for purchase for \$2 at the student success table daily. (White – 6, Gray – 7, Pin Oak Blue – 8).

IMMUNIZATIONS:

All students are required to have current and updated immunizations as required by law. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the school with an accurate immunization record. A student may not attend school without documentation of state-required immunizations. Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical and religious conflicts with the appropriate paperwork on file. Please see the school nurse for more information.

LIBRARY:

The Pin Oak Library is open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and is open during each lunch. Library books are checked out starting the second week of school. If you have any questions regarding the library rules, please contact the [Pin Oak Librarian](#).

LOCKERS (FOR GYM):

The physical education staff will assign a gym locker to students. Never bring valuables to school, and always make certain that your locker is locked. Female students will not need a lock and male students will need one combination lock (no key locks). Do NOT share your gym locker or locker combination with any other student. Lockers remain HISD property and are subject to search.

LOST AND FOUND:

Lost library books are turned into the library. Articles of clothing, valuables, and other lost and found items are held in the cafeteria. Lost glasses are held in the school clinic. Lost Chromebooks will be returned to the PowerUp room (B-109) and lost textbooks will be returned to the clerk in the student's house office. Students may look for lost items during lunch, before or after school. Students may not leave the classroom to look for lost items. Articles not claimed will be donated to a charitable organization the last Friday of each month.

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL:

Students bringing medication to school are to take it directly to the school nurse in the clinic immediately upon arrival at school. The medication must accompany an [HISD-issued medication consent form](#) completed by the student's doctor. This form is available online at www.houstonisd.org and in the nurse's office. Such medication must be in a prescription bottle, with a prescription label in the student's name. Medications administered at school may only be maintained by the school nurse and ONLY for the treatment of long-term or chronic medical conditions. Short-term or over-the-counter medications are not dispensed by the school nurse and should be managed outside of school hours. Students may never be in possession of prescription or over-the-counter medications.

MESSAGES AND DELIVERY OF ITEMS TO STUDENTS:

To avoid unnecessary classroom disruptions, messages, materials, and acknowledgements (such as balloons, food, and flowers) will not be delivered to students while they are at school. Messages will be delivered to students in class only in cases of emergency and with the approval of the house assistant principal.

PASSING PERIOD:

Students may use the passing period (between classes) for personal business such as using the restroom or retrieving/turning in assignments. Once in class, students must remain in class to maximize instructional time. Permits to leave class will be reserved for emergencies only. Students are to walk on the right side of the hallways and use the 6th-grade stairs for going up, and the 8th-grade stairs for going down.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION:

As required by law, the school district is providing this notification that the district periodically applies pesticides at school sites. Information concerning these applications may be obtained from the District's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator - 1417 Houston Ave, Houston, Texas 77007, (713) 220-5018.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE, RECITATIONS, AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Texas law requires students to recite and stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags each day. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. A moment of silence will follow the recitation of the pledges. State law does not allow students to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. The student may

choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or disturb others.

POWER UP:

Pin Oak Middle School is a one-to-one campus and provides every student with a Chromebook and charger. Students and parents will be asked to sign a technology contract and a computer-acceptable use agreement regarding the use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in the withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Students and parents should be aware that **electronic communications (email) using District computers are not private and may be monitored by District staff.** The student's parent or guardian is responsible for supervising and monitoring all computer usage that occurs outside the HISD network.

(Refer to [Pin Oak's Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Service for Students.](#)) A violation of any of the guidelines will result in the assignment of an appropriate disciplinary consequence including possible loss of computer access. Students must abide by all laws, regulations, the Student Code of Conduct, the Acceptable Use Policy, and other related HISD security policies. Examples of violations include but are not limited to, using inappropriate language, copyright violations, saving/accessing games, saving/accessing pornography, deleting or modifying files, changing computer settings without permission, photographing other students, or using another person's account. Any attempt to bypass the District's firewall will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Students and their parents/guardians should be aware that electronic files including email communications that are sent, received, or stored anywhere in the HISD computer system are not private and may be monitored by District staff. Students and their parents/guardians should be aware that all issued technology and resources must be returned in working order prior to the end of the year.

PROMOTION CEREMONY:

Students who are participating in the promotion ceremony will adhere to a school-appropriate dress code. If a student does not comply with the school-appropriate dress code policy the student will not be allowed to participate in any capacity.

NOT PERMITTED

No backless dresses, no slits, nothing low cut or revealing, shoulders must be covered, skirts must be unrolled and at an appropriate length, no baggy pants, and no heels. No Exceptions.

PREFERRED ATTIRE

Gentlemen: Slacks, button-up collared shirt, and dress shoes.

Ladies: Dresses, skirts, blouses, slacks, flats.

REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS:

Report cards are distributed after the close of each grading period. At mid-grading period, a progress report with input from all teachers will be prepared and sent home with each student. Please consult the included monthly calendar or the Houston ISD website for the exact dates of report cards. It is the student's responsibility to provide their parent(s) with the progress reports and report cards distributed at school. If you do not receive a progress report or report card during the week indicated in your planner, please

contact their house office. Parents may also access student grades online at www.houstonisd.org under [PS Connect](#).

SCHEDULE CHANGES:

Schedule changes will only take place during the first 10 days of the school year (August 23, 2024) Before a schedule change request can be made, all required [campus and district forms](#) must be completed and submitted. Schedule change requests are not guaranteed.

SHARPIES/PERMANENT MARKERS:

The personal possession of Sharpies or any other permanent markers by students is strictly prohibited.

SIGN-OUT PROCEDURES:

An authorized adult may sign out students who need to leave campus during the school day. Authorized adults are those listed in PowerSchool. If you wish to include more contact names, you will need to enter them into PowerSchool. **To best maximize our students' instructional time, we will not call for a student until the adult has arrived and will not call for students after 3:30 p.m.**

TARDY POLICY:

A student is considered tardy when they are not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. If a student is in the room gathering materials or otherwise preparing for class, they are NOT considered tardy. Students arriving late to school should report to their house office. After the fifth tardy, a student will be assigned a disciplinary consequence, including but not limited to, loss of privileges.

10/10 RULE:

The first ten minutes and the last ten minutes of each period are the most important. These are critical times as students are receiving important information regarding their lesson for the day and important notices for the next day. Students are also given time during their passing period to use the restroom or refill their water bottles which means they should not need to do either of these things for at least 10 minutes after having time to accomplish them. To maximize learning, no one can leave the classroom during those times, except in cases of emergency or in the accommodations of a student's 504 or IEP.

TEXTBOOKS:

Most textbooks are now online via Clever. For each textbook issued, students should write the student's first and last name, the teacher's last name, and the semester/year issued inside the front cover (in ink). Textbooks are the property of the State of Texas, and if lost, damaged, vandalized, or stolen, must be paid for by the student to whom the book was issued.

TESTING:

In addition to routine testing and other measures of achievement, students will take national/state assessment tests such as NWEA, PSAT, NAEP, STAAR, and TELPAS.]

VISITORS:

Visitors to campus must first report to the main office (in possession of an acceptable photo ID) in order to sign in and receive a visitor's pass.

DRESS CODE POLICY

All students attending Pin Oak Middle School will be required to follow the Pin Oak Dress Code. All articles of the uniform are to be maintained and worn in a way that represents the individual students and the school in a positive way. Students are required to wear the uniform to school and throughout the entire day until leaving for the day. The provisions of the dress and grooming code shall be enforced equally with regard to all students to whom the provisions apply.

All clothing must be:

- Solid-colored, without variations, patterns, words, or ornamentation
- Clean, neat, with no rips, holes, cuts, etc. that extend through the fabric
- Properly fitted – clothing should be neither skin-tight nor excessively baggy

“Tops” [clothing above the waist]:

- Colors: **royal blue, white, or gray**. Please check with office personnel for a color sample if needed.
- Students must wear a collared shirt; collared shirts with the Pin Oak logo are available at the School Store.
- The Pin Oak logo is the only acceptable logo to be worn. Non-Pin Oak logos are not acceptable on any clothing.
- Undershirts/turtlenecks/long-sleeve shirts may be worn in school colors only.
- Camisoles/tank tops may not be worn under sweaters or jackets in place of a uniform shirt.
- A **solid color** sweater or sweatshirt in royal blue, white, or gray, without variations in color or patterns may be worn over students’ regular uniform apparel. Sweatshirts must be an appropriate size and cannot cover a skirt or shorts. Sweatshirts must end at the waist. Sweatshirts may have a hood or zipper. At no time is a student permitted to have a hood over their head.
- Any POMS official team or club sweatshirt or jacket (within the last 3 years) may be worn as appropriate outerwear so long as a dress code top is worn underneath.
- Charger Spirit Shirts may only be worn on Charger Days.
 - Charger Spirit Shirts must be in school colors: royal blue, white, or gray.
 - Any previous year’s spirit shirts not in school colors may not be worn.
 - Charger Spirit Shirts can be purchased in the School Store.

“Bottoms” [clothing below the waist]:

- Colors: **black, navy blue, khaki, blue denim, or official school-color tartan (only)**
- Bottoms may be pants, skirts, shorts, skorts, capris, or jumpers—khaki material (only).
 - Clothing with holes or tears is not permitted.
 - Sweatpants, fleece pants, pajama pants, spandex pants, athletic shorts, athletic leisure (Lululemon, tennis skirts), etc. are not allowed.
- Must be fitted at the waistline and appropriate in length.
 - **Skirts and shorts are to be no more than 4” from the center of the kneecap.**
 - **Skirts are not permitted to be rolled at the waste.**
- If there is a question of the inappropriateness of the length (skirt, dress, skort, or shorts), even given this guideline, the decision of the staff will prevail. No Exceptions.
- Leggings or tights (not sweatpants) may be worn only under bottoms. Acceptable colors include solid white, gray, black, or navy.

Accessories and Grooming Standards:

- Shoes must be closed-toe with a back strap around the heel and have a rubber sole. The thickness of the heel and/or sole may not be more than one inch.
- For safety reasons, platform shoes, spiked heels, combat boots, steel-toed boots, or any backless shoes (including flip flops, slides [including "Croc" style]), and house shoes are prohibited.
- Knee-high socks/stockings may not be worn.
- Tights/stockings should be plain, neutral in color, and not have any words or patterns.
- School-issued student ID badge must always be attached to a school lanyard and visible when on school property and school-sponsored trips, including the school bus. Students are not allowed to deface identification cards. Information on the ID must be clearly visible.
- Jewelry and makeup are permissible unless they are distracting, disruptive in the classroom, or specifically addressed in the planner.
- Bracelets with metal spikes are not permitted.
- No writing with markers or pens is allowed on any article of clothing.
- Exposed tattoos and/or the use of pens, pencils, or markers to make marks on the skin are also inappropriate for school and expressly prohibited.
- No hats, hoods, animal ear headbands, or head-coverings are permitted other than those required by religious practice or in IEP/504.
- Smartwatches are not permitted.
- Blankets are not permitted at school.

Special Circumstances and Events:

- On Charger Days, students may choose to wear approved Pin Oak spirit, club, or organizational shirts (following the dress code policy).
- Team uniforms are permitted to be worn only on game days, with administrative and coach approval.
- School Functions – Students must wear regular dress code attire when attending a school function on campus.
- Field Trips – Students must wear regular dress code attire when attending a field trip, even if the trip is on a Friday or Theme Day.
- On Theme Days, students are expected to maintain dress code standards with the following exceptions:
 - A collared shirt is not required, but a shirt with sleeves must be worn.
 - Pajama apparel, sweatpants, yoga pants, and Spandex-type pants are never appropriate for theme days.
 - Additional criteria may be announced for special days.

Failure to comply with the Pin Oak Dress Code will result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to off-campus suspension. Teachers may notify their house assistant principal that students are out of the dress code at any time during the school day. If the assistant principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem. If a POMS administrator determines that a student's dress violates the school's dress code, disciplinary action may be taken.

Pin Oak administration reserves the right to determine if a student's dress/grooming is a disruption to the educational process. All such decisions are final.