

2025-2026

School Handbook



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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Parents/Guardians: The Houghton Academy School Handbook is an extension of the Enrollment Contract. Thus, by enrolling a child at the Academy, parents/guardians agree to abide by and acknowledge that their child's educational experience will be governed by the policies contained herein.

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2024 - 2025 School Handbook Acknowledgement

1. Introduction

This Handbook attempts to provide information that most accurately describes the Academy's policies, procedures, regulations, and requirements. However, **the Academy reserves the right to alter or change any statement contained herein without prior notice.** Thus, the Handbook must be viewed as a “living document” and frequently referenced to ensure understanding and compliance with current operational expectations.

NOTE: Throughout this document, the term “parent” refers to either the custodial parent or guardian for Day Students and the Dorm Parent or Boarding Program Director for Boarding Students.

1.1. ACCREDITATION

- 1.1.1. Houghton Academy is fully accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
- 1.1.2. The Academy is a registered New York State course and diploma-providing institution.

1.2. CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

- 1.2.1. We affirm that there is only one source of truth: God.
- 1.2.2. All things that can demonstrate veracity are sourced in Him.
- 1.2.3. All truth reflects God, whether in the arts, humanities, sciences, or any other part of God's created order.
- 1.2.4. As stewards of His creation, we are free to use truth from any source since all truth is God's truth.
- 1.2.5. We affirm that the purpose of all creation is to glorify God; faithfulness to Him is more important than accomplishing a perceived level of success.
- 1.2.6. We affirm that all of life is spiritual. There is no dichotomy or dualism, but God is Lord over all.
- 1.2.7. All of life is a spiritual discipline lived in the presence of Almighty God, to be enjoyed as His gift and dedicated to His glory.

- 1.2.8. We affirm the pursuit of wisdom and skill in life, seeking to understand how to apply the truth of God's Person and character to all of life. We are holistic and integral in our faith and practice.
- 1.2.9. We affirm the value of critical thinking, of challenging and being challenged in our faith, so we may more intentionally and carefully explore the vastness of God's Person and Character. We recognize that God has determined that the world contains mystery and unexplainable truths for His glory. This tension does not deny God's reality but affirms His "otherness" and independence from His Creation.
- 1.2.10. We affirm that all things are uniquely for the honor and glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1.3. CORE VALUES

- Academic Excellence
- Christian World-View
- Integrity
- Responsibility/Accountability
- Servant Hearts

1.4. ESSENTIAL AGREEMENTS...

...OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT & LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

1.4.1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the essential agreements of how "best practice" is defined at Houghton Academy regarding the methodology of teaching (i.e., instruction, assessment, curriculum, and learning environment). Although individual teachers will undoubtedly be at varying levels of competence in each method articulated, these practices serve as the guideposts to ensure students receive high educational experience regardless of the classroom.

1.4.2. ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- The teacher is more than a conduit of knowledge, more than a conveyor of facts. While it is true that information must be taught and learned in the classrooms, it is also true that because of the unique situation and calling upon each faculty member, teachers' responsibility towards their students goes far beyond

the transfer of information from one mind to another.

- Each Houghton Academy teacher remembers that their focus as a faculty member is upon the student's whole life and the development of that life to its full potential. Indeed, curriculum facts and figures will aid and are even essential to that process. Still, to fulfill their calling, each teacher seeks to become a counselor, adviser, Christian mentor, and confidant to the students under their care (i.e., a Living Curriculum Educator).
- As teachers constantly keep students and their needs as their primary focus, they can apply Christian principles to the unexpected problems and questions of life that occur throughout the day. This way, their teaching and mentoring are accompanied by modeling wisdom and ethics, and the students' lives are immeasurably enriched through this relationship.

1.4.3. ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Houghton Academy acknowledges that parents are primarily responsible for educating their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).
- God entrusts children to parents and requires that they are raised in the instruction and discipline of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
- One way parents discharge their covenant responsibility is by engaging the services of a Christian school, where Christian administrator(s), teachers, and staff assist in their children's educational development.
- Parents are not the teachers' employers, acting in a transactional relationship (e.g., paying tuition for a service), but rather partners in the ministry of discipleship of students.
- Parents support and encourage teachers and administrators so that there is continuity and cooperation between the home and school (I Timothy 5:17, 18).

1.4.4. ROLE OF THE STUDENTS

- Students are God's image bearers, possessing physical and spiritual capacities, needs, and desires (Genesis 1:27; 2:7).

- The Creator has given each student various gifts and abilities that can be developed through education (Ephesians 2:10; II Timothy 2:15).
- Students are responsible for their learning process and for discovering their giftedness so that they can be adequately prepared to impact their world for Christ (I Corinthians 4:2; Romans 12:6). The phrase, “Your education is your education,” provides a succinct expression of this policy.
- This preparation involves submitting and responding to the leadership and direction of their parents, teachers, and Academy leaders (Ephesians 6:1, 2; Hebrews 13:17).
- As members of a student body, they are responsible for fellow students and must be sensitive and helpful to one another (Philippians 2:3, 4).

1.4.5. ACADEMIC FREEDOM CLARIFICATION

- The teacher is encouraged to exercise his or her talents in developing a classroom learning environment conducive to the mutual growth and development of the student and the teacher.
- Thus, the classroom teacher is free to capitalize on their strengths to produce the highest level of learning possible for the students.
- Teachers are permitted latitude in designing lesson plans and utilizing varying teaching practices that embrace our stated Essential Agreements as long as they cover the desired learning outcomes of the course curriculum guide.

1.4.6. EVERY CLASS IS A LANGUAGE CLASS

- As a significant segment of our school student population consists of English Language Learners (ELLs), every teacher of every content area approaches the instruction as a language class.
- Thus, for example, an emphasis is placed on vocabulary specific to the subject area curriculum as foundational to supporting the success of all students.

1.4.7. CURRICULUM BEST PRACTICES

Houghton Academy Teachers:

- Consistently begin lesson planning by identifying the desired learning outcomes or standards.
- Design assessment tools before identifying learning activities (i.e., backward design).
- Tag learning standards and benchmarks to assessments.
- Build all unit plans around enduring understandings, key concepts, or competencies rather than content.
- Ensure the curriculum appropriately meets current students' identified needs (i.e., not just teaching through a textbook).
- Ensure the curriculum is broken down into simple, doable parts.
- Integrate cross-curricular skills standards into all unit plans (e.g., note-taking, library research).
- Regularly seek opportunities to integrate cross-curricular learning standards with other teachers (e.g., language arts and science teachers assigning a shared student project).
- Promote active student engagement and ownership in the learning process whereby the curriculum is "living" and regularly modified based on student input.
- Incorporate reading about the learning into every unit.
- Incorporate writing about the learning into every unit.
- Incorporate speaking about the learning free of notes and other prompts into every unit.
- Implement inquiry-driven elements to foster higher-order thinking (i.e., creating, evaluating, analyzing).
- Recognize that learning experiences and classroom activities may be of greater value than course content itself.
- Focus on teaching students how to learn so that they can

mature into authentic life-long learners.

- Ensure student reading, listening, and thinking connects directly to writing and speaking.
- Consistently maintain and update curriculum maps.
- Record suggested curriculum revisions and recommended needed resources upon completion of each unit.

1.4.8. INSTRUCTION BEST PRACTICES

Houghton Academy Teachers:

- Actively engage students throughout the entire class period (i.e., minimal time dedicated to lecture or direct instruction).
- Visually display the learning objective for each lesson in language students understand.
- Frequently reference the lesson objectives throughout the instructional time.
- Implement a pre-assessment of the learning before introducing a new unit of study.
- Include an introduction with an anticipatory set of exemplars in lesson plans.
- Utilize task analysis, chunking, or scaffolding.
- Plan and implement smooth transitions between learning activities.
- Differentiate instruction based on individual student interests, learning profiles, and readiness to meet all learners' needs.
- Make connections of content and skills with real-world applications to support enduring understandings, key concepts, or competencies (i.e., authenticity).
- Use explicit instruction, among other methods, to teach skills and strategies (e.g., summarizing, comparing, and contrasting) as part of every unit plan.

- Guide and engage students in the exploration and discovery of learning.
- Foster student conversations among themselves about the learning.
- Implement strategies and tasks to develop memory skills and automaticity (e.g., multiplication tables).
- Collaborate with other teachers, counselors, and learning specialists to ensure that students with emotional or cognitive difficulties receive support and guidance within the classroom.
- Integrate digital tools/technology into the classroom to gather, evaluate, or present learning.
- Ensure students can use digital tools/technology to solve problems, create original works, or work collaboratively.
- Model learning outcomes and processes and guide students through practice activities before requiring students to engage in independent practice.
- Refine teaching strategies through ongoing internal and external professional development and peer observations.

1.4.9. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK BEST PRACTICES

Houghton Academy Teachers:

- Use various assessment tools and types (e.g., formative, performance, oral, visual, common, and standardized).
- Provide students with assessment tasks, criteria, rubrics, or benchmarks to evaluate learning before conducting any summative assessment or judgment.
- Review exemplars of high-quality work with students.
- Use student self-assessments.
- Use student peer evaluations.
- Assess enduring understandings, key concepts, or competencies.

- Differentiate assessments based on the student's interest, learning profile, and readiness, implementing necessary classroom adaptations to meet all learners' needs.
- Use daily formative assessment results with little to no grade value to modify instruction to meet student needs better.
- Provide specific, timely, and individualized feedback on all tasks completed by students.
- Break long-term projects into separate tasks with multiple check-in dates.
- Guide students through each task.
- Provide time and opportunity for students to revise and improve their work in class.
- Create summative assessment and judgment tools similar in structure to formative assessments used throughout each unit of study.
- Submit summative assessment and judgment tools to their instructional team leader for timely review before implementation with students.
- Provide in-class review time of all summative assessment and judgment tools.
- Assign summative grades at the end of each unit to communicate the student's current level of learning with the learning objectives being assessed without averaging earlier assessments that would penalize the learning process (i.e., grading is for communication, not compensation).
- Provide opportunities for students to showcase their learning (e.g., class presentations, literacy celebration, science fair).
- Provide positive and specific reinforcement and celebrate the progress of every student.

1.4.10. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT BEST PRACTICES

Houghton Academy Teachers:

- Ensure all students know and understand classroom rules and routines.
- Provide students the opportunity to develop and define classroom behavioral expectations.
- Utilize a progressive discipline plan to reinforce the appropriate behavior of all students.
- Serve as a positive role model, maintaining high professional standards and upholding the school's values.
- Include community-building discussions and activities regularly.
- Remain positive at all times with students, providing an emotionally safe learning environment.
- Reinforce the school's core values with students inside and outside the classroom.
- Set high expectations for all learners that are challenging yet attainable.
- Contribute to the Academy's success by sharing their expertise, experience, and work with faculty colleagues.
- Create community spirit through collaboration and cooperation with all school personnel (i.e., faculty, staff, and administration).
- Demonstrate solidarity with the community through active participation in various school events.
- Dedicate time and effort to involve colleagues, students, and parents in community-building initiatives.
- Take care of the physical environment and resources of the school.
- Demonstrate respect and open-mindedness toward all cultures and differences.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn about their own and others' backgrounds, cultures, and differences.
- Accept challenges and changes with an open mind.

- Maintain timely, frequent, and open communication with parents throughout the school year.
- Maintain timely, frequent, and open communication with their supervisor.

1.5. GOVERNANCE

- 1.5.1. Houghton Academy is governed by an independent board of trustees, which by charter is composed of from 5 to 24 members elected for four-year terms.
- 1.5.2. The board meets four times annually, with additional meetings as needed.
- 1.5.3. The Head of School is the Board's sole employee and sole connection to the operations of the Academy.
- 1.5.4. The Head of School is also an ex-officio board member.
- 1.5.5. The governance model adopted by the Board provides that the Head of School is the Board's sole link to operational achievement and conduct so that all authority and accountability of employees, as far as the Board is concerned, is considered under the authority and accountability of the Head of School.
- 1.5.6. The Board policy prohibits any Board member from giving instruction or direction to any employee who reports directly or indirectly to the Head of School.
- 1.5.7. Each Administrator has authority and accountability over his or her respective school employees and is accountable to the Head of School for compliance with the policies and procedures of the Academy, including those contained in the Employee Manual and the School Handbook.
- 1.5.8. 2024-2025 BOARD OF TRUSTEES:
 - Bellamy, Leon "Pete" (HA '59)
 - Cho, Mun Hwan (HA '10)
 - Daugherty, Karen

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- Davidson, Kerrie (HA '90)
- Dover, Jordan(HA '98) - Secretary
- Getzin, Mark (HA '68)-Vice Chair
- Gurley, Allen
- Luckey, Peter (HA'70)
- Julie Palmer (HA '99)
- Pullen, Seth (HA '96) – Chair

1.6. HISTORY

Houghton Academy is an independent, Christian secondary school with a vibrant international student population in the rolling hills of western New York state.

Since 1883, Houghton Academy has nurtured students in the following vital areas: understanding the need for a personal commitment to Christ; comprehending the importance of a life of service; growing toward a mature understanding of our society, history, and the natural world; developing in physical ability and strength and exhibiting appropriate social courtesies.

Houghton Academy received its charter originally under the name “Houghton Wesleyan Methodist Seminary” in 1907 by the New York State Department of Education. It was also certified then by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. In 1955, the school’s name was amended to Houghton Academy. The school has been accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools since 1990.

Houghton Academy began as Houghton Wesleyan Methodist Seminary in 1883. Mainly founded through the efforts of Willard J. Houghton, the school, in its first 75 years, moved from its single-building campus a mile south of its present location to what is now the Houghton College campus.

The seminary first offered college-level courses in 1889, and the secondary school dominated until President James S. Luckey won advanced standing for students transferring to degree-granting institutions in 1909. The two institutions were linked by location and shared administrations through 1917. However, the seminary had

been chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1907. Houghton College received its provisional charter in 1923, but during the next 35 years, the seminary and college continued to share administration, faculty, students, and campus facilities. In 1958, after separating in principle from the college three years earlier and taking the new name Houghton Academy, the school moved to its current 25-acre campus. The two institutions, separately chartered and governed, have continued to communicate, collaborate, and cooperate in multiple ways to the present day.

In 1958, the Academy completed capital projects that began with purchasing and renovating a girls' dorm, then constructing the Thayer Street classroom and administration building, Philinda Bowen Hall. Four years later, in January 1963, the J.W. Tysinger Gymnasium was completed. The boys' dormitory was built in 1967, followed by the Fancher Dormitory for girls in 1981.

In 1995, a significant construction effort was completed, connecting Bowen Hall and Tysinger Gymnasium while completely renovating the former. New offices, second-floor classrooms, and the 300-seat Rosemary Tysinger Auditorium were added. The entire educational facility is named the Tom and Joan Phillippi Complex, with the respective areas it encompasses retaining their original names.

LEADERSHIP

A principal or president administered both Houghton Wesleyan Seminary and Houghton College until 1917 when Mrs. Philinda Bowen became the first full-time principal of the secondary school. Governance continued through the Houghton College Board of Trustees until 1958 when the administrations were separated, and the seminary became Houghton Academy. During the principalship of Dr. James Walden Tysinger, the Academy moved into the initial building, Bowen Hall, on the present campus.

PHILINDA SPRAGUE BOWEN, 1917-1942

From Haskinsville, NY, Philinda Sprague first came to Houghton as a Latin, rhetoric, and physiology teacher in 1890, having completed her training at Geneseo Normal School. She left before the turn of the century to marry Wesleyan correctional agent James Bowen of Syracuse, NY, but returned to Houghton in 1908 after his death.

She then taught elementary courses, including seventh and eighth grade, shifting in 1915 to English and Latin. Coincidentally, her first period of service and her return to Houghton nearly coincided with the departure and return of President Luckey. They became close associates over three decades, and he frequently consulted her about plans for the college. She was the only woman on the seminary and college advisory

board for many years.

By 1917, she had been made principal of the high school. Separation of the college and what is now Houghton Academy had officially begun. The widowed Mrs. Bowen returned to Houghton with two sons, Ward and Ira. In the words of Willard G. Smith, her one-time student and a future Houghton College business manager, "This heroic woman could have settled down to a life of self-pity and leaned heavily on the generosity of neighbors and friends. Instead, she gave herself unselfishly to others."

Mrs. Bowen became the first woman awarded an honorary degree by Houghton College when Dr. Stephen W. Paine presented her with a LI.D. at Commencement 1942. In declining health then, she was named principal emeritus but still signed the high school diplomas the following year when successor F. Gordon Stockin brought them to her home.

Philinda Bowen died in 1944, but her frequent declaration of hope and confidence still rings in the ears of her many successful students: "Boy, you can do it." Today, Bowen Hall, the first facility constructed on Houghton Academy's separate campus, perpetuates her name at the institution to which she devoted her life.

F. GORDON STOCKIN 1943-1946

"My major objective was to maintain Mrs. Bowen's standards and emphasis on the relationship with students," says Dr. F. Gordon Stockin, Philinda Bowen's handpicked successor.

There were several notable changes during Dr. Stockin's tenure. The preparatory school moved from space in the old science building to the old college administration building, now known as Fancher Hall. This move further separated the college and preparatory students, though both groups continued to share dining facilities and science labs. Also, during these years, the preparatory school launched its yearbook, *The Pebble*. The title was a typically subtle Stockin suggestion, and the college publication, *The Boulder*, dropped references to the preparatory school by 1950.

WESLEY GEORGE MOON 1946-1950

LAWRENCE P. GREEN 1950-1955

JAMES WALDEN TYSINGER, 1955-1962

Eighth of 11 children, Rev. Tysinger was born in Davidson County, NC, and raised on the family farm. Offered a car when he came of driving age, he opted instead for more schooling. He graduated from Asbury College in 1931 and received a B.D. from Asbury

Seminary in 1931. [Later] he agreed to become president of the preparatory school that became Houghton Academy under his leadership.

His indefatigable energies immediately found an outlet; first, completing the legalities of separating the prep school from the college (the high school was chartered as Houghton Academy in December 1958) and raising money for a new campus. Former colleague Buddy Keith recalls Rev. Tysinger's innovative fund-raising methods – "dime-a-day cards given out to anyone who'd accept one," pledges taken in the chapel service for the first penny, the first nickel, the first dime, and so on up to the first \$100 for the building.

Constantly traveling for the school, he sought money and students. "He put in long hours," Keith remembers, "and began every project with 24-hour prayer vigils." He faithfully reported progress to students and faculty in the chapel service.

Construction began in Bowen Hall, the combination administration/classroom building, in 1958. At \$100,000, it was completed and occupied in February 1959. Since the Academy athletic program was required to fit into an increasingly crowded schedule in the college gym, Tysinger dreamed of a gym and launched a campaign to finance it. When completed for \$90,000 in 1963, it was among the finest gyms in the area. Its excellent hardwood basketball court stop-gapped college needs for almost two decades while providing revenue.

Wherever he was, Tysinger promoted Christian education and Houghton Academy. Of his and Mrs. Tysinger's seven children, two younger ones attended the Academy, and six went to Houghton College. Buddy Keith called him "a deeply spiritual man of prayer and a persistent fundraiser."

PHILIP J. BIRCHALL 1962-1969

Looking back on his academy days, Rev. Birchall considers among the significant achievements of his administration completion and dedication of the gym begun under Rev. Tysinger, the enlargement and remodeling of Maplecrest women's dormitory and construction and dedication of the men's dormitory in 1967 (\$95,000).

THOMAS BOGHOSIAN 1969-1972

BUDDY KEITH 1972-1982 (Employed from 1957 to 1996)

Buddy Keith taught English and Spanish in Wolf Lake, Indiana, when principal J. Walden Tysinger – traveling on behalf of the Academy – visited Mrs. Keith's parents in Michigan. A native of Louisville, KY, Keith had been teaching high school since graduating from Marion College in 1953. Rev. Tysinger sought students and staff; the Keiths "were ready

to move.” So in 1957, they came to Houghton, and Buddy became academy director of studies, in charge of academics and discipline, plus teaching and activities responsibilities.

He continued in that role through two more principals then was named to that post in 1972. All four Keith children have attended the Academy. During his administration, the academy began its “winterim” program. Students spent three January weeks in two intensive courses selected from perhaps a dozen choices ranging from health, computer, and photography to woodworking, drama, home economics, or basic English for foreign students.

Also begun under his administration was a remedial program in which students were graded for effort and performance. Those in the program received closer supervision, extra assignments, and curtailed privileges...” Most rewarding to me is the opportunity our small student body gives us to know the students in and out of class. I guess I’ve made a great deal of effort to be accessible. We know [our students] better than a guidance counselor ever could...their grades, family situations, personal strengths, and problems,” said Keith.

PHILIP G. STOCKIN, 1983-2011 (Employed from 1971-2011)

Philip Stockin took the helm of Houghton Academy in 1983 when enrollment was around 100. Stockin’s commitment to the accreditation process with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA-CESS) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) was foundational to the present stability of the school. During the first decade of the new century, enrollment eventually grew to 175, almost equally divided between boarding and day students.

Like the Academy’s first principal Philinda Bowen, Stockin dedicated his life to Houghton Academy. Stockin has been a campus presence for roughly 40 percent of the school’s existence, first enrolling as a student in 1959. Even in retirement, he continues to be involved in various support activities. His long service history undoubtedly contributed to the continuity of institutional purpose and mission, an increasingly rare commodity today. The Academy remains a Christian institution committed to educating young people and equipping them to live in a secular society while maintaining the positive characteristics of Kingdom citizens.

2011-2015

Following the retirement of Philip G. Stockin, the Academy experienced a period of leadership transition.

In 2011-12, Dale Shatto (Principal) and Scott Frazier (Chief Financial Officer) served as co-headmasters.

In 2012-13, George Weidmaier served as headmaster.

In 2013-15, Vincent Montoro (Chief Academic Officer) and Scott Frazier (Chief Financial Officer) served as co-headmasters.

JOHN NELSON 2015-2020

In August 2015, John Nelson was appointed head of school – a new job title at Houghton Academy – replacing the headmaster/co-heads of school arrangements in place.

JON KEITH 2020-PRESENT

In 2020, amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jon Keith assumed the dual roles of Chief Financial Officer and Director of the Boarding Program at Houghton Academy. His leadership was instrumental in steering the school through a critical period, playing a key role in preventing its closure. Under his guidance, the Academy launched a comprehensive revitalization effort that led to a remarkable 135% increase in overall enrollment. The 2023–2024 academic year marked a historic milestone, with the school experiencing the largest single-year increase in new student enrollment in its history—a testament to Jon Keith’s strategic vision, operational oversight, and unwavering commitment to the school’s mission and future.

JOHN RETZ 2021-2022

John Retz, a former teacher at the Academy, served for one year as the Interim Head of the School.

PHILIP G. STOCKIN, 2022-2023

Following the adverse effects of the pandemic, the school experienced a significant decline in enrollment and the departure of several faculty and staff. The Board of Trustees turned to Phil Stockin to serve as Interim Head of the School. At the same time, the Board searched for a new Head of School to oversee the revitalization of the Academy and set a solid course for future growth and development.

DR. TOBY A. TRAVIS, 2023-2025

Dr. Travis is a well-respected, highly credentialed, and experienced Christian school leader. He holds a Doctor of Education in Christian School Administration from Louisiana Baptist University. Dr. Travis has been active in the Christian School movement, having developed and taught worldview, leadership development, and school improvement

seminars for numerous Christian Education organizations worldwide, including the Association of Christian Schools International. In addition, he is a prolific writer, public speaker, sought-after school consultant, and executive coach. His recently published book, [TrustedED®: The Bridge to School Improvement](#), and numerous published articles on education and leadership development are widely recognized as significant contributions within the broad educational and business world (e.g., Forbes, eSchoolNews, The Knowledge Review). Additionally, his work is regularly featured on education, business, and leadership podcasts.

Early in his career, Dr. Travis served in youth ministries, including Youth For Christ/Campus Life. Before moving into Christian School leadership in recent decades, he served as Vice President of International Development with Faith Studies International and then as President of Ministry Arts for Global Impact. In addition, Dr. Travis has been an active consultant with two well-respected Christian Consulting ministries over the past decade: PAIDEIA, Inc. and the Global School Consulting Group dedicating much of his time to supporting Christian school leaders serving in developing or distressed communities around the world, (e.g., Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia).

Dr. Travis' school leadership experience includes Alliance Academy International in Quito, Ecuador, where he served as a teacher, principal, and Academic Director. Next, he was Head of School at Colegio Menor Samborondón, one of Ecuador's premier international bi-lingual private schools. Most recently, Dr. Travis served as Headmaster of Desert Christian Schools in Tucson, Arizona, and as Superintendent of the Village Christian Academy in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

The Board of Trustees believes the Academy is poised with a solid, Christian administrative leadership team. Its new leader, Dr. Travis, brings a strong understanding of and deep commitment to authentic Christian education with a global impact that has left a significant pattern of school improvement everywhere he has been throughout his ministry career. His record of academic excellence, developing teachers, team building, and creating trust are unique skill sets we believe will guide our future well.

1.7. MISSION

The mission of Houghton Academy is to offer young people a college preparatory education within the framework of a Christian worldview and prepare students to live authentically, learn deeply, lead globally, and love boldly for the glory of God.

1.8. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART [Updated]

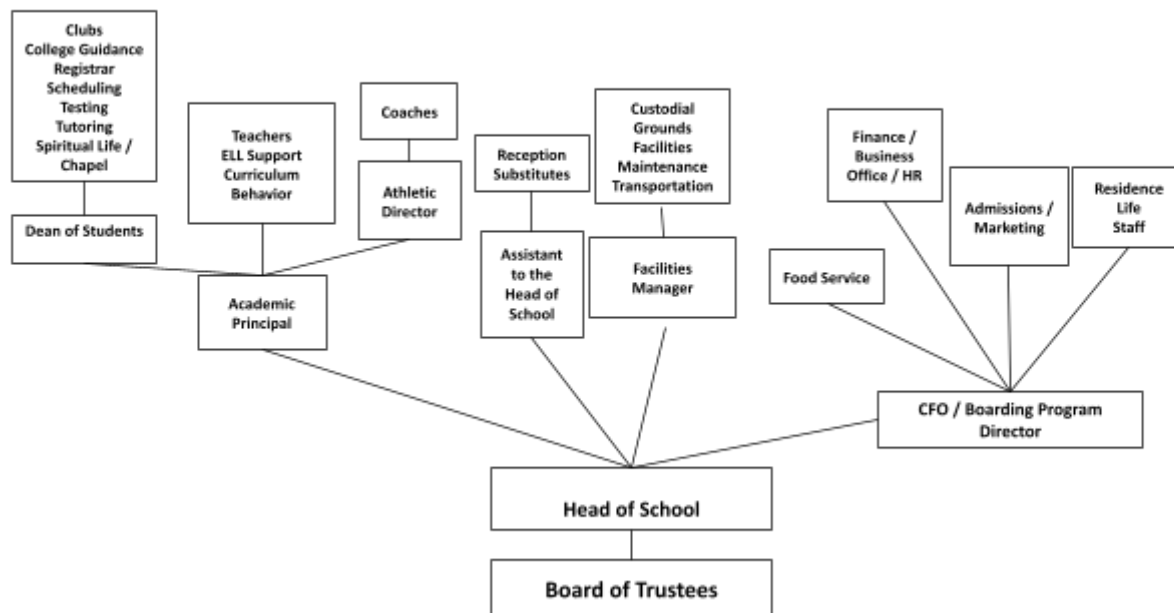
The Executive Leadership Team includes:

- The Chief Financial Officer
- The Boarding Program Director
- The Academic Principal
- The Head of School

The Administrative Team includes:

- CFO
- Academic Principal
- Dean of Students
- Head of School
- Athletic Director
- Facilities Manager

Houghton Academy Organizational Chart



1.9. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

- 1.9.1. Houghton Academy's educational philosophy is based on a God-centered view of truth and humanity as presented in the Bible.
- 1.9.2. Since God creates and sustains all things through His Son, Jesus Christ, the universe and all life are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. This relationship is pointedly true of

humankind, made in God's image, different from all other creations, with the unique capacity to know and respond to God personally and voluntarily.

- 1.9.3. Because we are sinners by nature and choice, we cannot, in this condition, know or honor God in our lives. We can do this only by the Spirit of God, who empowers us to acknowledge and follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and thus be enabled to do God's will (i.e., to glorify God and enjoy Him forever) is the ultimate purpose of life.
- 1.9.4. The Holy Spirit uses the entire process of Christian education to bring students into fellowship with God, develop Christian minds, and train them in godly living so that they can fulfill God's total purpose for their lives personally and vocationally.
- 1.9.5. Students in the Christian school are taught the Bible, Christian Worldview and thought so they may better understand God as well as their nature and role as persons created in God's image; they must be developed and related to God as whole persons, spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially; they must learn to see all truth as God's truth and to integrate it with and interpret it by God's word; they must be educated as individuals with unique abilities and personalities who must learn to live and work with others at home, in the church, and society. Finally, students must interact with and be taught by teacher models who are themselves Christian and reflect this perspective on life (i.e., Living Curriculum Educators).
- 1.9.6. The authority for such an education comes from God's command that children be taught to love God and place Him first and that parents are ultimately responsible for their children's total education and training. Therefore, at the parent's request, the Christian school becomes a partner in providing learning opportunities to students within this framework.

References

Holmes, A. F. (1985). *The Idea of a Christian College* (Rev. ed.). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

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Piper, J. (2003). *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. Multnomah Books.

Whitehead, J. W., & Conlan, J. (1978). *The Second American Revolution*. David C. Cook Publishing Co.

Education Commission of the States. (1997). *The Bible and Education*. Eagle Forum.

Scripture References:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Parents as primary educators)

Proverbs 22:6 (Training up a child)

Matthew 22:37-39 (Loving God and neighbor)

Colossians 2:3 (Christ as the source of all wisdom)

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (The inspiration and utility of Scripture in teaching).

1.10. POLICY WAIVERS

Waivers to current HA policies can be made based on extenuating circumstances at the discretion and approval of the Head of School. However, policy waivers related to students must first secure the endorsement of the Dean, the Principal, or the Boarding Program Director (if related to boarding students) before submission to the Head of School.

1.11. THEME VERSE

“...that they might be trees of righteousness...” ~ Isaiah 61:3

1.12. WHAT WE BELIEVE

Houghton Academy is a non-denominational evangelical Christian school with a historical tradition aligned with the Wesleyan Church. The Academy holds to the beliefs and position statements as articulated at www.wesleyan.org/about/our-beliefs.

2. Campus and Facilities

2.1. ACADEMY CAMPUS

The campus of Houghton Academy includes:

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- Boys dormitory
- Fancher Dormitory for Girls
- Montanye House / Dorm
- A main educational facility, which houses:
 - J.W. Tysinger Gymnasium
 - Rosemary Tysinger Auditorium
 - Bowen Hall (classrooms and dining hall)
 - Thomas and Joan Phillippe Center
 - Philip G. Stockin Field

2.2. BELL SCHEDULE

Monday / Wednesday / Friday

7:55-8:50	Period 1
9:00-9:50	Period 2
10:00-10:50	Period 3
11:00-11:50	Period 4
11:55-12:20	Period 5A
12:25-12:50	Period 5B
12:55-1:25	Period 5C
1:30-2:20	Period 6
2:25-3:15	Period 7

Tuesday / Thursday

7:55-9:15	Period 1
9:25-10:40	Period 2

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10:50-11:50

Period 3

NO PERIOD 4 ON TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

11:55-12:20

Period 5A

12:25-12:50

Period 5B

12:55-1:25

Period 5C

Tuesday Only (Early Release on Thursday)

1:30-1:55 Period 6A

2:00-2:15 Period 6B

2:20-3:15 Chapel

2.3. HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY

The facilities of Houghton University are, in fact, a tangible asset to the Houghton Academy program. They are to be used within the guidelines not to jeopardize future use. Please note the following:

Campus Center – available occasionally within the Academy’s schedule. While the Campus bookstore is available for shopping, the Campus Center is not to become a “hang out” spot for Academy students.


The University Library contains over 255,000 cataloged books and bound periodicals. Academy students are encouraged to use these facilities under the Academy’s direction. Students may view the Houghton University library’s online catalog and borrow items from the University with their Academy ID card. The library’s databases are also accessible. Library materials may be borrowed by making arrangements with the University librarian.

Library loan periods and fees for lost or overdue materials can be found here (<https://libguides.houghton.edu/policies>). If the borrowers leave unpaid fees, the University will bill the Academy, and the Academy will add the fines and fees to the student’s account, plus an additional fee of \$20 per instance for processing.

Nielsen Center/Kerr-Pegula Field House: A Houghton Academy ID card allows the use of college fitness facilities, subject to College schedules.

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Practice Room HU Center for the Arts—Houghton Academy students may use the unlocked practice rooms on the second and third floors of the Houghton University Center for the Arts between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

 Practice Room Use Policy.docx

3. Health and Safety

3.1. **CAMPUS SECURITY / STUDENT SUPERVISION**

- 3.1.1. All side doors to the school building (e.g., kitchen, gym) must remain locked.
- 3.1.2. Students and visitors must enter through the main entrance during school hours.
- 3.1.3. When on campus, students must remain within the visual supervision of a faculty/staff member (not including using rest/locker room facilities and hallway transition times).
- 3.1.4. Students must remain in assigned locations (e.g., classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, gym) unless a faculty/staff member permits them to leave.
- 3.1.5. All visitors must check in at the office upon arrival and check out upon departure.
- 3.1.6. Students on campus between the last period of the day and 4:00 p.m. who are not participating in a school-managed after-school activity (e.g., athletics practice) and who are awaiting pick-up are only permitted to be in the Commons area. Otherwise, students must exit the school building and campus grounds.
- 3.1.7. Students found in non-compliance with the above will face disciplinary action.
- 3.1.8. Also review the After-School Supervision policy below.

3.2. **CHAPERONES / VOLUNTEERS**

To ensure that school-sponsored field trips and activities are safe and rewarding

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experiences for all participants, we have prepared guidelines to provide information about volunteering as a field trip chaperone (C/V).

- 3.2.1. CVs must complete and submit the [Volunteer Application](#).
- 3.2.2. CVs must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- 3.2.3. CVs must complete a background check.
- 3.2.4. CVs must enforce all school rules during school-sponsored events.
- 3.2.5. CVs are expected to comply with school policies, follow directions from the lead teacher, work cooperatively with other school staff members, and model appropriate behavior.
- 3.2.6. CVs must follow the plans set by the coordinating teacher.
- 3.2.7. CVs must ensure that students are supervised at all times while at a school-sponsored event.
- 3.2.8. CVs must be readily available, be mindful of safety concerns, and respond to students' needs.
- 3.2.9. CVs must ensure that students do not get involved in extra activities not pre-approved by the teacher and are responsible for the health and safety of the students they are supervising.

3.3. HEALTH CARE

- 3.3.1. The Academy is a "Healthy Only" campus. Employees and students exhibiting multiple flu or cold-like symptoms are prohibited on campus (see Health & Safety Plan below).
- 3.3.2. The Academy provides first-response and follow-up medical treatment.
- 3.3.3. Faculty and staff are required to maintain CPR and AED certifications.
- 3.3.4. Local physicians and area hospitals are used as necessary.
- 3.3.5. Health insurance is provided for international boarding students as part of their tuition and fees.
- 3.3.6. All U.S. students, both boarding and daily commuters, must provide their

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insurance coverage.

- 3.3.7. The Academy health care fee covers only school health services (e.g., school nurse) and does not cover health insurance.
- 3.3.8. The student's family is responsible for all medical expenses (e.g., doctors, prescriptions, hospital, etc.).
- 3.3.9. Any person taken ill or exhibiting flu or cold-like symptoms must report immediately to the front office.
- 3.3.10. Boarding students who become ill outside class hours must report their illness to the Lead Resident (e.g., the Dorm Parent).
- 3.3.11. All medication brought to school must be kept in the Health office and provided to the student as needed or prescribed.
- 3.3.12. Medication for common ailments, such as colds, headaches, and upset stomachs, may be obtained from the nurse or main office daily, Monday-Friday, or a dormitory Lead Resident on weekends.
- 3.3.13. Day students may receive over-the-counter medication if the parents grant written permission on the emergency medical form.
- 3.3.14. For a student to carry his/her medication, a parent must contact the school for permission, which is kept on file in the office and must be renewed annually.
- 3.3.15. Note that an annual physical examination is necessary to participate in interscholastic athletics.
- 3.3.16. If a student submits a doctor's excuse authorizing "non-participation" for physical education or interscholastic athletics, a follow-up note from the same physician authorizing "participation to resume" is required. A parent's note is not sufficient.

3.4. HEALTHY-ONLY CAMPUS ACCESS

- 3.4.1. At Houghton Academy, the well-being of our students, staff, and community is paramount. Our policy reflects our commitment to creating a "Healthy Only" campus, where individuals with cold or flu-like symptoms

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are not permitted on campus. This approach is based on research demonstrating that limiting exposure to illness helps reduce transmission rates of contagious diseases and fosters a healthier, more productive learning environment.

3.4.2. Data-Driven Protocols

Local, state, and national health data, including guidance from the CDC and other public health organizations, continuously inform the Academy's Health Policy. However, the most crucial data point is the health of those on campus. Daily monitoring of campus health metrics directly impacts decisions regarding any policy modifications.

3.4.3. Healthy Only Access: Protecting Our School Community

The "Healthy Only Access" policy is at the core of our plan. This requires parents, employees, volunteers, and students to ensure only healthy individuals access the campus. Research shows that viruses like influenza and COVID-19 are most contagious before and during the early days of symptoms, underscoring the need for strict symptom monitoring. Therefore:

- **No Access for Symptomatic Individuals:** Any individual displaying cold or flu-like symptoms (such as coughing, sneezing, sore throat, fever, or fatigue) or who has taken fever-reducing medication in the past 24 hours is not allowed on campus.
- **Promoting a Healthy Learning Environment:** This policy supports a healthier campus, reducing the spread of illness, minimizing absences, and promoting consistent attendance and learning.

3.4.4. Supporting Research: According to studies published by the CDC and peer-reviewed medical journals, enforcing policies that keep symptomatic individuals out of school settings significantly reduces the transmission of contagious illnesses like the flu, RSV, and COVID-19. This, in turn, contributes to fewer disruptions in education, healthier students and staff, and a more robust academic performance overall.

3.4.5. Campus Access and Allergy Documentation

A doctor's note detailing the symptoms and necessary action plans (such as using an EpiPen) must be filed with the school nurse for individuals

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with allergies that mimic cold or flu-like symptoms.

3.4.6. Classrooms & Facilities

We maintain a clean and sanitized environment with:

- Hand sanitizers and wipes are available in every classroom and office.
- Common areas, such as the cafeteria, are sanitized daily.
- Classroom doors open to increase ventilation.
- Encouragement of outdoor instructional spaces.

3.4.7. Face Coverings

The use of face coverings remains optional. However, masks may not feature logos, symbols, or wording except for Houghton Academy/University branding.

3.4.8. Guests, Parents, and Visitors

All guests must adhere to the “Healthy Only” policy, ensuring they are free of cold or flu-like symptoms and have not taken fever-reducing medicine within 24 hours. Those with symptomatic household members should also refrain from visiting campus.

3.4.9. Health Screening & Testing

Students and employees tested for COVID-19 must remain off campus until receiving their results. Positive cases will follow a three-day isolation period and must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning.

3.4.10. Conclusion

Houghton Academy’s Health & Safety Plan is designed to protect our entire community and ensure a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all. By prioritizing health, we can continue providing an exceptional college-preparatory education that reflects our commitment to excellence and our Christian worldview. For more information on health guidelines and best practices, please visit [CDC Guidelines](#).

3.5. “IN LOCO PARENTIS”

3.5.1. Purpose: Houghton Academy is committed to partnering with parents to

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ensure each student's well-being, safety, and holistic development. In alignment with the principle of in loco parentis ("in place of a parent"), the Academy assumes a supportive and sub-parental role in making decisions that prioritize students' mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health while under the school's care.

- 3.5.2. Scope: This policy applies to all enrolled students, including day students;. However, the scope for boarding students is greater and governs the Academy's approach to decision-making in emergencies and day-to-day student welfare matters.
- 3.5.3. Commitment to Partnership with Parents: Houghton Academy recognizes that parents are their children's primary caregivers and decision-makers. The Academy aims to foster a strong, transparent relationship with parents through ongoing communication, collaboration, and mutual respect. This partnership ensures that students receive the best support in routine matters or critical circumstances.
- 3.5.4. Responsibilities of Houghton Academy Under *In Loco Parentis*
 - Emergency Situations:
 - In a medical, mental health, or safety emergency, the Academy will act swiftly to secure appropriate care for the student, including contacting emergency services, administering first aid, or facilitating immediate intervention as needed.
 - Parents/guardians will be notified regarding the situation and any actions taken as soon as possible.
 - If medical treatment is required, the Academy will follow parental instructions when available and act in the student's best interest when immediate decisions are necessary.
 - Day-to-Day Well-Being:
 - Faculty, staff, and dorm parents will support and guide students daily to ensure their emotional and physical well-being.

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- The Academy reserves the right to set reasonable expectations for student behavior, conduct, and responsibilities per school policies and Christian values.
- The school health office will manage routine health concerns, minor injuries, and wellness needs and notify parents when necessary.
- HA Administrators may invoke “in loco parentis” to ensure smooth and orderly daily operations, to include, but not limited to: field trip participation approval, education software use permission.
- **Mental Health and Emotional Support:**
 - Houghton Academy recognizes the importance of mental health and is committed to providing resources, counseling services, and intervention strategies for students experiencing challenges.
 - Parents will be informed as soon as possible if concerns surface about a student’s mental health, and cooperative plans will be established to foster the student’s well-being.
 - In urgent cases where a student is at risk of harm, immediate steps will be taken to ensure safety, and parents will be notified as soon as possible.
- **Student Discipline and Guidance:**
 - The Academy upholds a progressive discipline system that balances accountability with grace, recognizing that discipline is a formative process designed to cultivate character and responsibility.
 - In behavioral matters, the Academy will act per established policies and in partnership with parents to guide students toward positive decision-making and growth.
- **Parental Communication and Consent:**

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- The Academy will maintain open lines of communication through email, phone, and in-person meetings regarding students' progress, health, and disciplinary matters.
- Parental consent will be sought whenever possible for significant decisions affecting a student's health or educational path.
- In cases where immediate action is required, the Academy reserves the right to act in the student's best interest and will inform parents as soon as feasible.

3.5.5. Supporting Research and Justification:

- The concept of **in loco parentis** has long been recognized in educational institutions, particularly in boarding schools, where schools assume a quasi-parental role in student care. Research supports this approach as essential for ensuring student well-being and academic success. Studies indicate that structured oversight and emotional support in boarding schools lead to higher student resilience and personal development (Ginsburg & Jablow, 2015). Additionally, **in loco parentis** principles have been upheld in various legal cases, affirming the responsibility of schools to act in the best interests of students under their care (Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools, 2011).
- Bass (2014) states that effective **in loco parentis** policies in boarding schools contribute to a safer environment and promote student responsibility. Furthermore, research by Devries (2020) highlights that strong school-parent communication, a cornerstone of this policy, correlates directly with improved student mental health outcomes.

3.5.6. Conclusion: Houghton Academy embraces its role as an extension of the family in providing care, guidance, and oversight for students. The Academy's **in loco parentis** commitment is rooted in its mission to nurture students in a safe, Christ-centered environment that promotes academic, spiritual, and personal growth. By fostering a strong partnership with parents, the Academy seeks to ensure that every student is

supported and empowered to thrive.

3.6. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

- 3.6.1. In New York State, immunization requirements apply to all public, private, and religious school students.
- 3.6.2. Required Vaccines: Students must have proof of immunization for the following diseases:
 - Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP/DTP/Tdap): 5 doses
 - Polio (IPV/OPV): 4 doses
 - Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR): 2 doses
 - Hepatitis B: 3 doses
 - Varicella (Chickenpox): 2 doses
 - Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MenACWY): 1 dose by 7th grade and a booster by 12th grade
- 3.6.3. Medical Exemptions:
 - A medical exemption is allowed if a licensed physician certifies that the immunization may be detrimental to a student's health.
 - The exemption must be renewed annually and include detailed medical information.
- 3.6.4. No Religious Exemptions:
 - As of June 2019, New York State eliminated religious exemptions for vaccinations.
 - This means that students attending religious schools are not exempt from the state's vaccination requirements based on their religious beliefs.
- 3.6.5. Proof of Immunization:
 - A certificate of immunization from a healthcare provider is

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required...

- ...for Day Students within 14 days of the first day of classes.
- ...for Boarding Students within 30 days of the first day of classes.
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that students are compliant with these immunization requirements.
- If a student does not have proof of the required immunizations, they will be excluded from school until they provide documentation or a valid medical exemption.

3.6.6. Review and Notification:

- Immunization records are reviewed monthly by the school nurse.
- Parents are notified immediately when there is non-compliance with NYS requirements.

3.7. LONG-TERM CRITICAL CARE

Purpose: Houghton Academy is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of all students by providing access to quality medical care, maintaining clear communication with families, and ensuring a supportive environment for those in need. In the event that a student is diagnosed with a serious medical illness requiring long-term critical care, this policy outlines the school's procedures and expectations regarding communication, decision-making, and financial responsibilities. This policy ensures that students facing severe medical conditions receive appropriate care while respecting the parents' authority and financial responsibility.

- 3.7.1. **Immediate Notification and Parental Involvement:** When a student receives a critical medical diagnosis, Houghton Academy will make every effort to notify the student's parent or legal guardian immediately. The school will make every effort to request that the parent make immediate travel arrangements to Houghton, NY, to be present for their child's care. Upon request, the school can provide guidance on local transportation, lodging options, and travel logistics to assist the family during this process.

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3.7.2. **Medical Decision-Making:**

- Until the parent arrives, Houghton Academy will make every effort to act per the parent's instructions regarding the student's care, provided those instructions do not compromise the student's immediate safety.
- The school will consult with the parent on all critical medical decisions, unless immediate action is necessary for the student's safety. In such cases, emergency medical decisions will be made in the best interest of the student.

3.7.3. **Financial Responsibility:** The parent or legal guardian is financially responsible for all costs associated with the student's medical care, including but not limited to:

- Airfare and travel expenses to Houghton, NY
- Lodging accommodations during their stay
- All medical expenses, including hospital bills, doctor visits, and prescriptions

3.7.4. **Parental Accommodations:** Recognizing the limited meal options in the area, Houghton Academy will provide parents with the opportunity to dine at the academy's dining facilities during their stay at no additional charge. Meals will be available during regular dining hours, and specific meal options may vary based on the school's menu offerings.

3.7.5. **Ongoing Support and Coordination:** Houghton Academy will make every effort to work closely with the family, medical providers, and other relevant parties to support the student's well-being, maintaining clear and compassionate communication through regular updates via phone calls, emails, and scheduled meetings as needed.

3.7.6. **Transition from Academy Care:** Houghton Academy is not equipped to provide ongoing support for students requiring frequent medical follow-ups or long-term critical care. Therefore, as soon as it is medically feasible, the student must transition out of the Academy's care to a setting that can meet their medical needs appropriately. The school will work with the

family to facilitate a smooth transition while prioritizing the student's health and well-being.

3.8. MEDICATION MANAGEMENT [Updated]

To ensure the safe, legal, and effective administration of medications to students during school hours and residential life, while acknowledging the part-time availability of the school nurse and the supervisory role of dorm parents in the boarding program.

Houghton Academy is committed to supporting the medical needs of both day and boarding students. This policy outlines procedures for medication storage, documentation, administration, and emergency response. It distinguishes between local day students and boarding students in light of differing supervision structures.

3.8.1. General Provisions

- All prescription medications must be accompanied by appropriate documentation from a licensed healthcare provider and a signed parent/guardian consent form.
- All medications must be in the original, pharmacy-labeled container.
- Students may not carry medications on their person, with the exception of approved emergency medications (inhalers, EpiPens, etc.) with proper authorization.
- The school nurse is available on a limited, part-time basis. When she is not present, designated school personnel or dormitory staff may oversee medication administration under approved protocols.

3.8.2. Medication Management for Day Students

- **Storage and Access:** All medications for day students must be stored in the Health Office during school hours.
- **Administration:** The school nurse will administer medications during her scheduled hours. When unavailable, school staff designated by the Head of School may administer medication as needed.

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- Self-Carry Authorization: With written permission from both the healthcare provider and parent/guardian, students may self-carry emergency medications (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens). A backup dose should be provided for the Health Office.
- Parent Responsibility:
 - Coordinate medication drop-off and pick-up.
 - Administer medications outside school hours when feasible.
 - Communicate any changes in prescriptions or schedules to the school nurse.

3.8.3. Medication Management for Boarding Students

- Storage and Oversight: Boarding students' medications will be stored securely in the dormitory office or another locked location under the supervision of the dorm parents.
- Daily or routine medications will be administered by dorm parents or delegated staff following written medical orders.
- The Health Office will maintain oversight and documentation in collaboration with dorm staff.
- Administration: Dorm parents are trained annually in medication safety, documentation, and emergency procedures.
- The school nurse will review procedures and assist with complex cases or chronic conditions.
- Self-Administration: Boarding students may be approved to self-administer medications (e.g., acne medication, inhalers) in their dorm room if authorized by a physician and evaluated as responsible by the dorm staff and nurse.
- Parent Responsibility:
 - Ensure a full supply of medication is provided at the beginning of each term.

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- Submit signed authorization forms and updates as needed.
- Communicate directly with the nurse and dorm staff regarding medication needs.

3.8.4. Emergency Medications (All Students)

- Emergency medications (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens) may be self-carried with completed authorization.
- Backup medication must be stored with the nurse (for day students) or with dorm staff (for boarding students).
- In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called immediately if warranted, and parents will be notified.

3.8.5. End-of-Year Medication Retrieval

3.8.6. All unused medications must be retrieved by a parent/guardian (day students) or returned to the family (boarding students) at the end of the academic year or upon student withdrawal.

3.8.7. Unclaimed medications will be disposed of in accordance with New York State Department of Health guidelines.

3.9. WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES

3.9.1. Houghton Academy strictly prohibits the possession, use, or threat of use of weapons, explosives, or any dangerous instruments on school property, at school events, or during any school-related activities. This applies to all persons, including students, staff, parents, and visitors. Statements or gestures that suggest possession or intent to use a weapon will be treated as a threat as defined below.

3.9.2. Any individual found in possession of, displaying, carrying, exhibiting, drawing, or threatening to use a weapon or any dangerous instrument in a manner that intimidates or raises concerns about safety will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students or permanent exclusion for non-students.

3.9.3. Definitions

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- POSSESSION: “Possession” includes, but is not limited to, having a weapon or dangerous instrument:
 - On school property or at a school-sponsored event
 - In a space assigned to a person, such as a locker or desk
 - On the individual’s person or personal belongings, including clothing, purse, backpack, gym bag, or vehicle
 - Under the control or accessibility of an individual, such as an item hidden by or within reach of the person
- THREAT: A “threat” includes, but is not limited to:
 - A statement or action suggesting intent to cause bodily harm with a weapon
 - A statement indicating knowledge of or access to weapons that could be used for harm
 - A statement suggesting possession of a weapon on school property or at a school event
- WEAPONS AND PROHIBITED ITEMS: A weapon is defined as any object designed or used to cause harm. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Firearms – Any device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive, including but not limited to handguns, rifles, and shotguns
 - Air Guns – Includes air pistols, air rifles, BB guns, or any device that expels a projectile by air, CO₂, or gas pressure
 - Replica or Toy Firearms – Any item that resembles a real firearm and could reasonably cause alarm
 - Slung Shots & Slingshots – Items designed to launch projectiles
 - Metal Knuckles, Sand Clubs, and Throwing Stars – Items

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designed to enhance physical harm

- Knives and Bladed Weapons – Any cutting or stabbing instrument, including daggers, dirks, and swords
- Nunchaku & Martial Arts Weapons – Any object consisting of connected rigid sections intended for combat
- Stun Guns and Tasers – Devices intended to incapacitate
- Explosives and Fireworks – Any material or device designed to explode or combust, including fireworks and homemade explosive devices
- Flammable Devices – Any item capable of igniting or causing a fire, including lighters and matches
- Laser Pointers – Devices capable of causing temporary or permanent eye damage

- 3.9.4. Exception for Training Items: Non-functional training items that are similar in size and weight to a firearm but have no mechanical function and are clearly recognizable as non-weapons from a distance are permitted only with prior approval from the Head of School or a designated administrator. These items must be used for educational, theatrical, or training purposes in a controlled environment.
- 3.9.5. Reporting & Enforcement: Any violation of this policy will be investigated immediately. Law enforcement may be notified if a weapon is discovered or if a credible threat is made. Students found in violation will be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion, while employees and visitors will face removal from school property and potential legal consequences.
- 3.9.6. Houghton Academy is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment and will strictly enforce this policy in compliance with New York State education laws for private schools.

4. Academics

4.1. ADVANCE PLACEMENT TEST SCORE CREDIT

Students who have yet to take an AP prep course but complete an AP test with a score of 4.0 or higher may be awarded course credit with the approval of the Dean.

4.2. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (A.I.) USE [New Policy]

4.2.1. Biblical Foundation & Purpose

- **AI as a Tool, Not a Master:** Scripture teaches that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). Artificial Intelligence is to be used as a tool under God’s sovereignty, supporting but never replacing human learning, wisdom, or discernment.
- **Relationships Over Technology:** Because Christian education is rooted in authentic relationships, the use of AI must not disrupt the personal mentorship between teachers and students or the spiritual formation process.

4.2.2. Guiding Principles

- **Options, Not Answers:** AI may support the generation of ideas, but the responsibility for thinking, evaluating, and making choices remains with the student and teacher.
- **Wisdom & Discernment:** Students should be taught to critically evaluate AI outputs for accuracy, bias, and alignment with a biblical worldview.
- **Purposeful Personalization:** When used appropriately, AI can support personalized learning. However, its use must never diminish the role of the teacher or the value of face-to-face learning.
- **Transparency & Attribution:** All AI-generated content used by students or staff must be clearly identified and cited. This upholds the integrity and truthfulness central to our Christian commitment.

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- Academic Integrity: Representing AI-generated content as original work is dishonest and violates school policy and biblical values. All work must be a true reflection of the student's effort unless otherwise directed.
- Data Privacy & Security: Students and staff are prohibited from inputting private or sensitive data into AI platforms that are not approved by the Academy. Only vetted tools compliant with privacy standards may be used.
- Equity of Access: AI tools should be made accessible to all students fairly. The Academy will seek to minimize disparities that may arise due to differences in technology access.

4.2.3. Scope of Use

- Permitted Uses:
 - Brainstorming ideas
 - Practicing skills with teacher approval
 - Drafting outlines or engaging in formative exercises with citation
 - Supporting differentiated instruction and administrative tasks
- Restricted Uses:
 - Assessments, unless approved
 - Submitting AI-generated work as one's own
 - Using AI tools without teacher knowledge or consent

4.2.4. Roles & Responsibilities

- Students will:
 - Use AI ethically and transparently
 - Cite AI contributions appropriately

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- Exercise discernment when engaging with AI-generated content
- Teachers will:
 - Model responsible use of AI in instruction
 - Assess student AI use and guide proper attribution
 - Integrate AI in ways that enhance—not replace—relational learning
- Administration will:
 - Approve AI platforms for school use
 - Ensure policy enforcement and conduct regular reviews

4.2.5. Ethical and Theological Safeguards

- Respect for Human Dignity: AI use must not promote stereotypes, falsehoods, or dehumanizing content. All AI interactions should uphold the God-given dignity of every individual.
- Pursuit of Truth: AI tools should be used to pursue truth, creativity, and understanding—not shortcuts or deception. Teachers will guide students in evaluating content through a biblical lens.
- Balance and Wisdom: The Academy will maintain a thoughtful balance—embracing innovation while exercising biblical caution and accountability.

4.2.6. Enforcement

- Detection and Accountability: The school may use content-checking tools to verify authenticity. Students will be given the opportunity to explain flagged content.
- Consequences:
 - First Offense: Warning, discussion, and opportunity to revise
 - Repeated Offenses: Grade penalties or referral to Academic

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Integrity Committee

- Serious Violations: May lead to disciplinary action including suspension

4.2.7. Conclusion: Artificial Intelligence, when used wisely and ethically, can enhance learning and teaching. At Houghton Academy, AI will be engaged as a servant of education—never a substitute for human thought, faith, or relationship. All use must reflect our commitment to truth, integrity, and the Lordship of Christ over every area of life.

4.3. CLASS RANKING

As is common among many private schools, Houghton Academy does not publish class rankings for high school graduates. The following are several of the research-based factors for this policy:

- Holistic Admissions: As more colleges move toward holistic admissions, other factors are becoming increasingly important, including course rigor, GPA, extracurricular activities, essays, and in some cases, test scores.
- Class rank is just one of many factors, and not having it does not necessarily lower a student's odds of acceptance.
- Student Well-being: Class rankings can have a negative effect on students' social and emotional health. Class ranking can lead to increased stress and students putting unhealthy pressure on themselves.
- Encouraging a Broad Education: The pressure of class rank can drive students only to take classes that improve their GPA rather than improve their overall education and college or career readiness.
- Small School Factor: In small private schools, due to the high quality of instruction, low student-to-teacher ratio, and individualized instruction, often the statistical difference in ranking comes down to a small fraction of a percent. Thus, there is often no significant statistical difference between the top-performing students.

4.4. CLASS SECTION SIZE

4.4.1. The minimum class section size is 5 students for a course to be offered.

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- 4.4.2. In some instances, course levels may be combined and taught with differentiated instruction when enrollment levels do not justify separate sections (e.g., Foreign Language levels 1 and 2 may be offered concurrently).
- 4.4.3. The typical maximum class section size is 15 students, although this general guide may be exceeded with approval of the Head of School.
- 4.4.4. Exceptions include, but are not limited to the following examples:
 - Yearbook/Photography = 12 students
 - Physical Education = 30 students
 - Choir/Instrumental Courses = No maximum

4.5. COURSE FAILURE

- 4.5.1. If a student fails a required course in Quarter 1, Quarter 2, or Semester 1, the course will be dropped from the student's schedule for the remainder of the year. The student will be required to repeat the course the following school year or through an alternative means (e.g., online course recovery at their own expense).
- 4.5.2. If a Middle School student fails two or more courses in a given semester, they typically must repeat the grade level and all associated courses the following year.
- 4.5.3. The school administration may make exceptions to the above policy.

4.6. COURSELOAD

- 4.6.1. Full-time students must maintain a minimum of five (5) Houghton Academy credits per school year (not including dual college enrollment or online courses).
- 4.6.2. The above policy may require a student to enroll in an elective course, which may be taken onsite, at Houghton University, or online.
- 4.6.3. One Study Hall per day is encouraged.
- 4.6.4. Additional Study Halls are permitted with Administrative approval.

4.7. COURSE MODIFICATIONS / ACCOMODATIONS

- 4.7.1. Modifications alter course content, assignments, and assessments.
- 4.7.2. The Principal must approve modifications before implementation.
- 4.7.3. When modifications are used, which results in a modified grade, the modification will be indicated on the student's transcript.
- 4.7.4. Accommodations are provided to students with special needs without adjusting or reducing grades.
- 4.7.5. Accommodations for students with an ISP/IEP or 504 plan may change the requirements for the quantity of work, time allotted, presentation format, etc.

4.8. COURSE OFFERING LIMITATIONS

- 4.8.1. Not all courses are offered every academic year.
- 4.8.2. Course offerings are subject to change based on the number students enrolled and faculty availability.

4.9. CULINARY ARTS PARTICIPATION

- 4.9.1. **Purpose:**
 - To enrich the educational experience of all students, promote essential life skills, and foster a well-rounded education, Houghton Academy requires all students to enroll in at least one section of Culinary Arts (kitchen support) per semester unless their academic schedule prohibits it.
 - All students at Houghton Academy must participate in at least one Culinary Arts period per semester. This policy is intended to ensure that students gain practical skills in serving others, food preparation, nutrition, and kitchen safety, which are essential for personal well-being and success in various aspects of life.
 - The mandatory participation in Culinary Arts at Houghton Academy is designed to equip students with essential life skills, enhance their academic performance, and promote a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and service to others. By integrating this program into the weekly schedule, Houghton Academy aims to develop

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well-rounded, capable individuals who are prepared for success in their personal and professional lives.

4.9.2. **Rationale:**

- **Life Skills Development:** Culinary Arts education provides students practical life skills such as meal planning, budgeting, and basic cooking techniques. These skills are critical for independent living and contribute to a student's self-sufficiency and confidence.
- **Health and Nutrition Education:** Understanding nutrition and the importance of a balanced diet is essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Culinary Arts classes offer students the knowledge to make informed food choices, which is increasingly important in a world with rising obesity and diet-related illnesses.
- **Enhancing Academic Performance:** Research indicates that students who engage in hands-on, practical learning activities, such as those found in Culinary Arts, often experience improved academic performance in other subjects. This is due to the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and time management skills that are transferable to other areas of study.
- **Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** Culinary Arts education introduces students to various cuisines and food traditions worldwide. This exposure fosters cultural awareness, appreciation, and respect for diversity, essential values in a globalized society.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Many culinary activities require students to work in teams, promoting collaboration, communication, and leadership skills. These soft skills are valuable in both academic and professional settings.

4.9.3. **Benefits:**

- **Improved Personal Well-Being:** Students will learn to prepare healthy meals, leading to better dietary habits and overall well-being.
- **Enhanced Academic Engagement:** Culinary arts' hands-on nature can increase student engagement and motivation throughout their academic experience.
- **Preparation for Independent Living:** By acquiring cooking skills, students will be better prepared to live independently, manage their nutrition, and handle personal finances effectively.

- Promoting Inclusivity: The curriculum will include a variety of cultural cuisines, promoting inclusivity and respect for different cultural backgrounds.

4.10. DISHONEST WORK / CHEATING / PLAGIARISM

4.10.1. What is cheating? Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- The unpermitted use of any aid during a testing situation.
- Observing another student's paper during a testing situation.
- Allowing one student to directly copy from another student's test, quiz, assignment, or homework.
- Attempting to seek or give help during a graded individual assignment or test.
- Possessing or distributing test or quiz material before or during the test or quiz.
- Inappropriately using any unauthorized device during a graded assignment or test/quiz.
- Submitting work that is not the student's own for assignments / exams or completing another student's work.
- Submitting or using falsified data.

4.10.2. What is plagiarism? Does it look different in different cultures?

- Plagiarism means using someone else's information, work, graphics, ideas, or phrases without indicating the source of information through quotation marks and proper citations.
- As an international school, we recognize that plagiarism is viewed differently in different cultures. Some cultures may not attribute a moral failing to the practice of plagiarism.
- However, as an international school committed to preparing students for success, especially in USA-based universities, our policy reflects the standard approach in all such institutes of higher education.

4.10.3. Consequences:

- Students found guilty of dishonesty in daily work, notebook work, term papers, or tests will automatically receive a failing grade for the assignment.
- Dishonest work may also be grounds for suspension or dismissal from the Academy.

4.10.4. Why academic integrity matters

- Honest academic work is essential for developing critical thinking,

creativity, and intellectual growth.

- Research shows that students who avoid dishonest practices improve their understanding of the subject matter and develop essential life skills such as problem-solving, perseverance, and self-reliance.
- Academic integrity fosters a growth mindset, which has been shown to enhance student motivation and resilience (Dweck, 2006).
- Studies also suggest that students who engage in dishonest practices miss out on the full benefits of their education, which can negatively impact their long-term academic and career success (McCabe & Treviño, 1997).
- By adhering to principles of honesty and integrity, students can cultivate habits that contribute to future professional success and personal fulfillment.

4.11. DROP EVERYTHING AND READ (D.E.A.R.) [Updated]

- 4.11.1. The entire student body will be called upon to participate in “Drop Everything And Read” (D.E.A.R.) on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30 to 1:50 in the school auditorium.
- 4.11.2. All students must bring a physical book of their choice to the auditorium to read at this time.
- 4.11.3. There will be designated times during Monday study halls at the Houghton University Library to secure books for reading during D.E.A.R.. Copies of the Bible will be available for students who do not bring their own books to D.E.A.R.
- 4.11.4. Students must leave all electronics devices and backpacks in their lockers or on designated hooks during D.E.A.R. time, as neither devices or backpacks will be allowed in the auditorium.
- 4.11.5. For D.E.A.R. time, students are expected to enter the auditorium quietly and immediately begin silently reading a physical book of their choice. Students must continue silently reading the physical book of their choice until 1:50.

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- 4.11.6. Following the 20 minutes of D.E.A.R. time, there will be a brief period of announcements, after which students will be released from school for the day at around 2:00.

4.12. DROPPING / ADDING COURSES

- 4.12.1. During the first two weeks of each semester, students can request the cancellation of or addition of courses to their schedule.
- 4.12.2. Dropping or adding a course requires the approval of the Dean and may require the approval of the teacher and the student's parents.
- 4.12.3. Requests to drop or add a course must be submitted to the Dean in writing (preferred email). Drop-Add Forms are also available outside the Dean's office.
- 4.12.4. No classes may be missed before receiving confirmation of a change in course enrollment in anticipation of dropping a course. Students must follow their schedule until an updated schedule is provided and confirmed by the Dean.

4.13. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)

("Every Class is a Language Class")

- 4.13.1. Houghton Academy is committed to supporting our population of English Language Learners (ELL). As an English immersion institution, we offer an ELL program that supports and equips students toward success in all core subject areas.
- 4.13.2. We endeavor to use the sheltered instruction approach, which integrates language with content instruction.
- 4.13.3. We recognize that all students learn at different levels and paces. Therefore, our commitment is to assist them in an educational process that acknowledges the unique needs of learners.
- 4.13.4. As a significant segment of our school student population consists of English Language Learners (ELLs), every teacher of every content area approaches the instruction as a language class. Thus, for example, an

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emphasis is placed on vocabulary specific to the subject area curriculum as foundational to supporting the success of all students.

- 4.13.5. Classroom accommodations/modifications such as less homework, extra time on tests, different test location, extra tutoring, copying peer notes, translations from native Buddy speakers, modified tests with ELL Specialist's or Coordinator's approval, etc. are encouraged.
- 4.13.6. Access to learning devices such as electronic translators, translation software programs, etc. are permitted with the approval of the ELL Coordinator.

4.14. EXPLORATORY STUDENTS

- 4.14.1. Exploratory students (i.e., typically homeschooled students) may take up to three (3) courses per semester on a per-course fee.
- 4.14.2. Exploratory students are not eligible for leadership positions (e.g., student officers) or participation in athletics.
- 4.14.3. Exploratory students may participate in performing arts and spiritual life activities.
- 4.14.4. Exploratory students are limited to grad2es 7-10.
- 4.14.5. Exploratory students are not eligible for payment plans. Fees must be paid in advance.

4.15. FIELD TRIPS

- 4.15.1. Purpose and Educational Rationale:
 - Field trips are an integral component of the educational experience at Houghton Academy. They provide students with opportunities to explore real-world applications of classroom learning, engage in hands-on activities, and develop a deeper understanding of various subjects.
 - Field trips extend learning beyond the classroom and foster critical thinking, cultural awareness, and personal growth. Research shows experiential learning through field trips enhances student

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knowledge retention, boosts engagement, and supports socio-emotional development.

4.15.2. Benefits to Students Field trips are designed to:

- Enhance learning by connecting academic content to real-world experiences.
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through observation and inquiry.
- Cultivate social and interpersonal skills as students interact with peers, educators, and community members.
- Foster appreciation for cultural, historical, and environmental contexts.
- Provide exposure to new ideas, career opportunities, and personal interests.
- Studies, such as those conducted by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), demonstrate that students who participate in field trips exhibit higher levels of critical thinking, tolerance, and historical empathy. These outcomes align with Houghton Academy's mission to prepare students for success through a holistic educational approach grounded in Christian values.

4.15.3. Policy Guidelines:

- Pre-Approval of Participation: Parents/guardians pre-approve their child's participation in all field trips officially approved by the school administration by enrolling their children at Houghton Academy. This blanket approval streamlines the process while maintaining transparency and communication with families.
- Advance Notification: Teachers organizing field trips must give parents/guardians at least seven (7) calendar days advance notice before the scheduled activity. Notifications must include essential details such as the purpose, location, date, time, transportation arrangements, and any associated costs.

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- Opt-Out Provision: While field trips are a valuable part of the Houghton Academy experience, parents/guardians retain the right to excuse their child from participation. To do so, they must submit written notice to the child's teacher at least 48 hours before the scheduled trip.

4.15.4. Safety and Supervision:

- Houghton Academy prioritizes student safety during all field trips. Appropriate adult-to-student supervision ratios will be maintained (i.e., 10:1), and all field trips will adhere to the Academy's established safety protocols.
- Additionally, teachers will conduct pre-trip briefings to ensure students understand behavioral expectations and emergency procedures.

4.15.5. Transportation:

- Transportation for field trips will be arranged through Academy-approved methods, including school buses, vans, or other authorized vehicles.
- Private transportation may only be used if explicitly approved by the administration and in compliance with Academy policies.

4.15.6. Behavior Expectations;

- Students must adhere to the Academy's code of conduct during all field trips.
- Any violations of behavioral expectations will result in appropriate disciplinary action upon return to the Academy.

4.15.7. Teacher Responsibilities and Pre-approval:

- Teachers are encouraged to organize field trips regularly throughout the year.
- The teacher is responsible for organizing field trip experiences that are interesting and fun but also contain a spiritual or academic

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value connected to the current Unit Plan learning objectives.

- All field trips must be pre-approved by the Principal.
- Before the Trip:
 - Teachers select their destination and determine the date and time.
 - Check the calendar for any scheduling conflicts.
 - Submit a Field Trip Request to the Principal.
 - Know the total cost and transportation plan: cost includes admission, meals, transportation, and substitute pay.
 - Confirm transportation arrangements: dates, times, cost, driver(s), and the number of passengers per vehicle.
 - Confirm with the school nurse any students with food allergies or other medical limitations.
 - Ensure there is an alternative activity and supervision for students who may not participate in the field trip.
 - Send out an email to parents to include the following:
 - Date, time, and place of the trip.
 - If HA does not cover it, the total cost of the trip, including meals, transportation, and admission, will be the cost of the trip itself.
 - Departure and return times.
 - State chaperone needs (background check required for all chaperones).
 - Meal arrangements.
 - Dress code requirements.
 - Any specific needs for this trip, such as sunblock,

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water bottles, and spending money.

- Reminding parents that they must notify the teacher if they do NOT want their child to participate.
- If applicable, the finance office will charge student accounts for the field trip cost.
- Submit a check request for the trip at least two weeks in advance.
- A [Teacher Checklist is available online](#) or in the HA office.
- Day of the Trip:
 - Teachers are to actively participate in chaperoning students during the trip.
 - Carry the check for admissions.
 - Notify the school office when you arrive and depart your destination.
 - Carry first aid kits and other necessary devices for emergencies.
 - School vehicles must be cleaned and the fuel tank filled immediately after each trip.
 - Teachers are to provide chaperones with phone numbers for teachers and the school.
 - Teachers are to provide chaperones with medical emergency procedures if a student should get hurt or injured, as well as allergy information.

4.15.8. Additional Field Trip Information:

- Siblings not otherwise eligible are not allowed on field trips.
- Students may not leave a field trip without the teacher's and the parent's permission in writing, e-mail, or text.

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- Students must only be transported in vehicles by their parents or an approved chaperone (with a completed background check) to and from school-sponsored events. The only exception to the above is with permission and a release of liability form signed before the event (in case of an emergency, email or text is acceptable).
- Teachers must remain with students and not segregate themselves from the chaperones.

4.15.9. Acknowledgment of Policy: Parents/guardians acknowledge their understanding of this policy upon their child's enrollment in Houghton Academy.

4.16. GRADING SYSTEM

Standardized grading practices provide specific, clear learning goals for students, parents, teachers, and administrators of what a student must know and be able to do to demonstrate competency in the course content or grade level. In addition, they allow teachers to be consistent with common best practices from grading based on current educational research. Most importantly, standardized grading practices provide clarity for students and families regarding the grading criteria and expectations between teachers and courses.

4.16.1. Grading Philosophy

The philosophical basis for the grading system at Houghton Academy is founded on current research-based best practices that support student achievement. Those best practices include:

- Communication Instead of Compensation: The value of assigning academic grades to student work is based on communication rather than compensation. The purpose of the academic grade is to communicate to the student their level of achievement regarding the learning objectives.
- Reflection of Academic Achievement: Academic grades are to reflect the level of academic achievement of the learning objectives and not the student's behavior. Behavior assessments should be provided separately from the academic grades. "Participation Grades" are based on a clear assessment rubric (e.g., timely

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submission of assignments).

- Reflection of Current Level of Competency: Academic grades reflect the current competency level of the learning objectives and do not penalize students who may have a slower learning process. The posted grades represent the current level of competency based on assessment rather than the average grades earned throughout the learning process.
- Instruction is based on Learning Standards/Targets: All instruction is based upon learning standards, targets, dispositions, and objectives, which are identified. Students are provided clear measures of what is needed to demonstrate the competency of those learning objectives.

4.16.2. Coursework Types

Coursework may be expected to be completed during class or outside school. The coursework falls into the following categories:

- Independent practice assignments. They are brief and given to learn a new skill or gain initial content knowledge. Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not a part of the grade.
- Formative assessments/assignments. Formative assessments guide the teacher's instruction for the student's learning. They are minor assignments and are graded for accuracy. In addition, the teacher provides individual, timely, and descriptive feedback.
- Summative assessments/assignments. Summative assessments are the major end-of-unit assessments (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a PowerPoint, test, or project). Summative assignments assess the student's progress on grade-level standards. These are always scored with a rubric.

4.16.3. Grading Scale

Depending on the course subject and the teacher's assessment practices, HA teachers may grade using either a 100-point scale, a Letter-grade scale (i.e.,

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A-B-C-D-F), or a simple Pass/Fail.

The 100-point grading system is as follows:

- 98.00 A+
 - 94.00 A
 - 92.00 A-
 - 90.00 B+
 - 85.00 B
 - 83.00 B-
 - 81.00 C+
 - 76.00 C
 - 74.00 C-
 - 72.00 D+
 - 67.00 D
 - 65.00 D-
 - 0.00 F
- Teachers who elect to use a letter grading rather than a numeric academic grading system utilize the five indicators below, which communicate the level of competency a student is currently demonstrating in a particular subject.
 - A:
 - A body of evidence demonstrates that the student consistently meets the majority of learning objectives and expectations on standards.
 - Shows depth of understanding and flexible application of grade-level concepts, requiring minimal guidance.

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- B
 - The student consistently meets learning objectives, as demonstrated by evidence of independent understanding and application of grade-level concepts, requiring occasional guidance.
- C
 - The student meets the essential learning objectives but is inconsistent in meeting all learning objectives, as demonstrated by a body of evidence showing understanding and application of grade-level concepts, requiring frequent guidance.
 - The student can continue to the next course.
- D
 - The student meets at least one-half of the learning objectives but has limited understanding and application of grade-level concepts.
 - The student is at significant risk of failing the next course in the sequence, requiring continuous guidance.
 - The student should repeat the course if it is a prerequisite for another course.
- F
 - The student does not meet at least half of the learning objectives and shows minimal understanding and application of grade-level concepts as demonstrated by the evidence.
 - The student cannot complete the next course in the sequence.

4.16.4. Weighting: Teachers weight the various types of assessments typically with the following maximum percentages per assessment category, although exceptions may occur:

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- In-class Work 50%
 - Formative Assessments 20%
 - Summative Assessments 60%
 - Home/Independent Work 5%
 - Engagement/Participation 20%
- 4.16.5. A teacher may elect to drop the lowest grade in any category, but there must be at least 4 assessment grades in the category before electing to do so. Thus, at minimum, there are 3 assessments in the category to ensure data triangulation (with the exception of a “Participation” category, which may have a single assessment and grade).
- 4.16.6. All assignments must be completed. If students have an incomplete assignment, they must attend the weekly Homework Additional Time (HAT) until the work is completed.
- 4.16.7. The semester grade is the average of the two quarters.
- 4.16.8. Teachers may also implement a semester final exam/project grade to average with the two-quarter grades.
- 4.16.9. Each teacher is responsible for entering grades into Veracross weekly.
- 4.16.10. Weekly grading is completed and current by 7:30 a.m. each Tuesday.
- 4.16.11. Group grades are not utilized, although group projects are not discouraged as a learning strategy and experience.
- 4.16.12. The use of “bell curves” is not permitted.
- The use of “extra credit” is not permitted without the approval of the Principal.
- 4.16.13. For core subject courses (e.g., Language, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Bible), to ensure data triangulation, course grades must be determined using at least three (3) assessment categories (e.g., formative, vocabulary, and summative).

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- 4.16.14. All formative assessment categories (e.g., quizzes, classroom, or homework) must include at least three (3) assessments per quarter.

Other Indicators:

- Pending: The assignment has not yet been issued to students.
- Not Turned In: The student has not yet turned in the assignment.
- Incomplete: The student has not yet fully completed the assignment.
- Complete: The assignment is complete.
- Not Required to Complete: The student is not required to submit the assignment.
- Turned In/Not Graded: The teacher must still complete the assignment's grading.
- Late: The student turned in the assignment past the due date but before the end of the unit.

4.16.15. Grading Procedure at End of the Quarter

- Teachers may not enter a quarter failing grade for a course if they have not previously provided communication to the student and their parent/guardian about the risk of potential failure, as well as an intervention plan to correct the trajectory of the failing grade within a reasonable time frame.
- At the end of the quarter, the following adjustments are made to the gradebook:
 - Any remaining “Pending” assignments are assigned to the next quarter or removed.
 - Any “Turned In/Not Graded” assignments must be graded and marked “Complete.”
 - “Not Turned In” assignments are scored as a zero.
 - Teachers may not use the “Complete/No Credit” status available in Veracross, except for students who are Auditing

their course.

- The lowest score in non-summative categories can be dropped so long as there is more than four assessments in that category (e.g., quizzes).
- Suppose an assessment category includes less than 3 assessment grades. In that case, the grades may not be used in calculating the course grade (i.e., marked as not required) or must be assigned to another assessment category (e.g., if only 2 “summative” category assessments were given in the quarter, they need to be re-labeled as “formative”).
- The Principal will review grades before parents and students receive a report card at the end of each Quarter.

4.17. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS / DIPLOMA TRACKS

- 4.17.1. Diplomas are bestowed only to students who have met the graduation requirements and completed their senior (i.e., grade 12) year at Houghton Academy.
- 4.17.2. To graduate, students must attend Baccalaureate Services and Commencement Exercises.
- 4.17.3. Dual Credit: Completing a 3-credit university course also earns 1 high school credit.
- 4.17.4. The following diploma tracks are available to Houghton Academy students (note that credit minimums increased by 4 credits with the 2025-2026 school year and for returning grade 11 and grade 12 students the previous credit minimums still apply):
 - **International Diploma (26 Credit Minimum):** transfer credits from international school(s) plus credits earned at Houghton Academy.
 - **College Preparatory Diploma (26 Credit Minimum):** meets the NYSED graduation requirements with credits in the following required categories:
 - Christian Studies (0.5 credit for each semester enrolled at HA)
 - Science (3 credits)

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- Math (3 credits)
 - Social Science (4 credits)
 - English Language Arts (4 credits)
 - Fine Arts (3 credits)
 - Physical Education (.25 credits per semester enrolled at HA)
 - Health (.5 credit and substitutes one semester of P.E.)
 - Electives (4.5 credits)
 - World Language* (1 credit)
 - *Students with a diagnosed disability with an I.E.P and ELL students are exempt from the World Language requirement. However, they must complete the minimum number of credits per diploma level.
- ***Advanced College Preparatory Diploma (29 Credit Minimum):*** requires 3 additional credits in upper-level courses (e.g., honors, AP, university dual credit) and 2 credits in a World Language.
 - ***Diploma of Excellence (32 Credit Minimum):*** requires 3 additional university dual credit courses, 3 credits in a World Language, and a GPA of 3.0+
 - ***Diploma of Excellence & Emphasis (34 Credit Minimum):*** requires 2 additional university dual credit courses in an area of declared emphasis (e.g., Music, Science) and a GPA of 3.0+
 - ***Houghton University Associate of Arts Degree (62 Credit Minimum):*** The Dual Completion Track enables eligible Houghton Academy students to earn both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree from Houghton University. This extended program may span up to five academic years, enabling students to earn a college-level degree in addition to their high school diploma. (See below for full details).

- 4.17.5. Houghton Academy & Houghton University Dual Completion Track
- Program Overview

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- The Dual Completion Track enables eligible Houghton Academy students to earn both a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts degree from Houghton University. This extended program may span up to five academic years, enabling students to earn a college-level degree in addition to their high school diploma.
- Eligibility & Application Process
 - **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
 - Completion of all high school graduation requirements by the end of the fourth year.
 - Demonstrated readiness for college-level work through standardized assessments or faculty recommendations.
 - **Application Timeline:**
 - Students must submit a formal application by March 1 of their sophomore year.
 - Applications must include:
 - Personal statement outlining academic and career goals.
 - Two letters of recommendation from faculty members.
 - Parents and students must sign a Dual Completion Track Commitment Form upon acceptance into the program. This agreement affirms understanding of academic expectations, time commitments, behavioral standards, and program limitations.
- Academic Structure
 - **Standard Program Duration:**
 - The Dual Completion Track is designed to be completed over five academic years. This timeline

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allows students to fulfill all requirements for both a Houghton Academy high school diploma and a Houghton University Associate of Arts (AA) degree in a manageable and developmentally appropriate way.

- Students are responsible for adhering to the Houghton University academic calendar for all college-level coursework, which may differ from the Houghton Academy calendar. Students are expected to coordinate class attendance, assignments, and exams accordingly.
- **Accelerated Completion Option:**
 - Some highly motivated and academically prepared students may be able to complete both the high school diploma and the AA degree within four years.
 - This path will **require careful academic planning** and will almost certainly include **taking one or more college-level courses during the summer** through Houghton University or an approved equivalent institution.
 - Students pursuing the 4-year completion option must receive prior approval from the Academy's Dean to ensure credit transferability and academic load feasibility.
- **Default Expectation:**
 - Unless a student has explicitly committed to and received approval for the accelerated track, all students accepted into the program should anticipate a **five-year timeline** for completing the program successfully.
 - This approach enables thoughtful academic pacing, promotes greater co-curricular involvement, and allows

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for adequate time for spiritual and personal development.

- The fifth year typically comprises full-time university coursework while the student remains affiliated with Houghton Academy under Dual Completion Scholar status (see below).

- **Credit Transfer & Advising:**

- A maximum of 31 of the 62 college credits required for the AA degree may be transferred from other institutions or earned through AP exam test scores.
- Dual-credit courses will be carefully selected to meet both high school graduation requirements and college general education benchmarks.
- Regular meetings with a designated academic advisor will ensure students stay on track academically and holistically.

- **Academic Standing and Continuation Criteria**

- To remain in good standing within the program, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in their college coursework and a satisfactory conduct record. Failure to meet academic or behavioral expectations may result in probationary status, additional support interventions, or removal from the program.

- **Participation in Senior Activities**

- Students in the 5-Year Track will retain access to senior privileges during their **fourth** year, including:
 - Participation in prom and other senior events.
 - Inclusion in the yearbook as part of the graduating class.
 - Eligibility for senior awards and recognitions.
 - Access to all areas of student involvement, including sports and student leadership.

- **Grade-Level Status and Senior Year Designation**

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- **Senior Year Designation:**
 - Students enrolled in the 5-Year Dual Completion Track will be officially designated as **seniors during their fourth year** at Houghton Academy, provided they are on track to complete all New York State graduation requirements and Academy-specific diploma criteria.
 - During this fourth year, students are:
 - Included in the senior class photo and yearbook section
 - Eligible for senior-specific awards and recognitions
 - Invited to attend senior events such as Senior Trip, Prom (Junior/Senior Banquet), Baccalaureate, and Commencement
 - Recognized as graduates of Houghton Academy and will receive their high school diploma at the end of the fourth year
- **Dual Completion Scholar Status (Post-Diploma, Academy-Affiliated):**
 - In the fifth year, students transition to a **Dual Completion Scholar** status. Although they have technically graduated with a high school diploma, they remain enrolled at Houghton Academy to complete their Associate of Arts degree from Houghton University.
 - As Dual Completion Scholar Academy Students:
 - They are still considered full members of the Houghton Academy community and subject to all school policies, expectations, and standards of conduct as outlined in the School Handbook.

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- They may continue to participate in non-athletic and non-leadership extracurricular activities such as: Drama and stage productions, Chapel and Spiritual Formation programs, Music groups and Worship Team, Clubs (excluding elected leadership positions), Special events and community service initiatives.
- **Activity Limitations in Year 5:**
 - Students in Year 5 are **not eligible** to:
 - Represent Houghton Academy in interscholastic athletics.
 - Hold official leadership positions (e.g., Student Council, Club President)
 - Participate in the Senior-specific events (e.g., Senior Trip, Prom) reserved for current-year graduates.
 - Eligibility for senior awards and recognitions.
 - These boundaries are in place to preserve each graduating class's distinct identity and experience while affirming the student's valued presence in the school community.
- **Recognition of AA Completion:**
 - Completion of the Associate of Arts degree will be celebrated during the Academy Commencement service. Students may be acknowledged at other year-end events and are encouraged to participate in Houghton University's graduation ceremonies.
- **Withdrawal or Exit from the Program**
 - Students who decide to exit the Dual Completion Track before completing the AA degree may still graduate with a Houghton Academy diploma, provided they have met all high school

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graduation requirements. In consultation with the Dean, an academic transition plan will be developed.

4.18. HOMESCHOOL CREDITS

- 4.18.1. Houghton Academy recognizes high school-level work completed by homeschooled students.
- 4.18.2. Parents must maintain grade records and submit them upon application to the Academy.
- 4.18.3. Students may be requested to take a placement test to determine grade level completion.

4.19. HOMEWORK

The guidelines provided in this policy are all research-based best practices in utilizing homework as an instructional strategy. We acknowledge that homework can be an effective learning tool; however, according to a review of more than 180 studies of homework and its effects, we also recognize that there is very little correlation between the amount of homework and achievement. In high school, “too much homework diminishes its effectiveness or may even become counterproductive.” [Harris Cooper, *The Battle Over Homework*, second edition, page 26, and *Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of the Research 1987–2003*, the Review of Educational Research (Spring 2006)].

4.19.1. Homework Goals:

- To develop and refine the intellectual skills of our students.
- To develop independent learners.

4.19.2. Homework Learning Principles:

- Genuine learning requires some independent, unguided learning opportunities.
- All learners learn differently and at different paces.
- The more we correctly practice something the better we are likely to understand or do it.
- Timely and individualized feedback is an essential ingredient for learning. (Note: assigning a grade does not constitute “feedback for learning.”)

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- 4.19.3. **Homework Purposes:** homework is defined as those assignments that seek the above goals and principles and are reached when the assignments are utilized for the following:
- Practicing and reinforcing what is presented in the classroom.
 - Checking for understanding.
 - Providing formative information to guide further instruction.
 - Processing new knowledge and pre-learning.
- 4.19.4. **Homework Practices:** In light of the above foundational goals, principles, and purposes, Academy teachers utilize the following practices:
- Homework may be weighted at most 5% of an academic grade.
 - Homework may not require parent or adult assistance but rather be work the student can confidently complete independently. (Parents, however, should help facilitate homework completion, but they should in no way assist or participate with completing the work.)
 - Homework may never be issued as a punishment.
 - Homework must be assigned according to the individualized student's learning needs to the greatest extent possible. Thus, blanket assignments to an entire class are discouraged.
 - Homework must receive feedback from the teacher in a timely and individualized manner. (Note: assigning a grade does not constitute "feedback." The grading of homework can be helpful, but homework in which a teacher has either embedded instructive comments or gives those comments directly to the learner, has the most significant effect on learning.)
 - Homework may not be assigned to be completed during Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Spring Break.
 - No newly assigned homework may be assigned to be completed over weekends for students in grades 6-10 without the approval of the Principal.

4.20. HOMEWORK ADDITIONAL TIME (H.A.T.)

Houghton Academy provides a supervised assignment completion program for High School students through the Homework Additional Time (H.A.T.) initiative. The program is designed to help students who struggle to keep up with assignments and ensure they stay on track academically. Research suggests structured academic interventions like H.A.T. can improve students' academic performance, increase self-regulation, and reduce academic anxiety (Walker, R. J., &

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Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., 2006).

4.20.1. Program Overview:

- Students with incomplete assignments must attend H.A.T.
- Teachers will email students a H.A.T. assignment and register their name along with the assignment to be completed with the H.A.T. Monitor.
- Students must complete all assigned and missing coursework before exiting H.A.T.
- Students who fail to attend an assigned H.A.T. session will be subject to Houghton Academy's Progressive Discipline Policy.
- H.A.T. takes place immediately after school on Thursdays from 1:30-2:15 pm, taking precedence over any club or after-school activity.
- Students may leave H.A.T. once they complete their assignments. They are not required to stay for the entire 45 minutes so long as assignments are done.

4.20.2. Program Benefits:

- Improved Academic Performance: Structured time for assignment completion, like H.A.T., provides students with the opportunity to focus solely on their coursework, reducing distractions. Studies indicate that providing additional, supervised time to complete homework helps students develop better study habits and improves overall academic performance (Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A., 2006).
- Increased Self-Regulation: The program fosters student responsibility and time management by ensuring accountability for missing or incomplete work. According to research, students who are supported in managing their workload develop more vital self-regulation skills, which are critical for long-term academic success (Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P. R., & Zeidner, M., 2000).
- Decreased Stress: By providing structured time during school hours, H.A.T. reduces the burden on students to complete assignments outside of school, decreasing homework-related stress and allowing them to participate in other extracurricular activities (Kohn, A., 2006).

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4.21. HONOR ROLL

- 4.21.1. Students receiving an average of 3.7 or 90 percent or higher each quarter are designated as Honor Roll Students.
- 4.21.2. An average of 4.0 or 95 percent or above earns the student High Honors designation.
- 4.21.3. Honorable mention is given to students with an average of 3.3 or 87 percent.

4.22. HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY (HU) COURSES

- 4.22.1. Students must complete at least one (1) semester at Houghton Academy to qualify for enrolling in HU courses; although a waiver may be granted by the Head of School.
- 4.22.2. Eligible students may take up to two (2) courses per semester on the HU campus; although a waiver may be granted by the Head of School.
- 4.22.3. Students must attend an HA Study Hall whenever a college course is finished or does not meet.
- 4.22.4. To enroll in an HU course, a student must have the approval of the parent/guardian, the approval of the subject-area HA teacher, and the approval of the HA administration.
- 4.22.5. Admission to HU courses is also subject to available space in the particular university class.
- 4.22.6. Students with a first-period HU class must check in with their HA Homeroom teachers at the beginning of every day.
- 4.22.7. Students must attend all HU classes on the days when they are present at HA.
- 4.22.8. The HA and HU schedules do not always align. Thus, even if HA is not holding classes, but an HU class is scheduled on that day, students must attend their HU class.
- 4.22.9. Skipping a HU class is considered a level 2 infraction of the Academy's

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discipline policy.

- 4.22.10. Students must sign out when leaving for an HU class and sign in when returning to HA within the school day.
- 4.22.11. Students represent the Academy when they study at the University, and all are expected to carry themselves with maturity, responsibility, and integrity.
- 4.22.12. A student earns high school and university credits upon completing a university course. Three (3) university semester credits equal one (1) year-long high school credit.
- 4.22.13. Students should anticipate investing up to 2 hours for every 1 hour of live instruction for university courses.
- 4.22.14. Grades received for university credits will be weighted accordingly and included in computing a student's high school grade average.
- 4.22.15. After completing a university course, students are responsible for immediately sharing their final letter and numeric course grade from HU with the Dean so that the credit can be recorded at the Academy.
- 4.22.16. FERPA is a law that protects student educational data. Per FERPA, HA students are encouraged to authorize Houghton University to share their information with the Academy, streamlining the application of university credit to their HA transcript.

4.23. HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE

Upon the successful completion of Houghton Academy's graduation requirements, students who meet the following conditions are guaranteed acceptance at Houghton University:

- 4.23.1. graduate with a grade point average of B (83/100) or better
- 4.23.2. be in good standing based upon an administrative recommendation

Houghton University is a nationally ranked Christian college of the liberal arts and sciences and the best-priced Christian college in the nation. *(Based on the most recent tuition survey by the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities).*

Students who take Houghton University Early College courses and later enroll at

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Houghton University for their undergraduate degree will be offered a \$1,000 Hal and Sheila Heiner Early College Scholarship each year they attend.

4.24. HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY / ONLINE COURSES / AP TESTS FEES

As part of our curriculum catalog, the [Academy partners](#) with Houghton University and several other online course providers.

These courses are offered as electives and enhancements to the student's Individualized Learning Plan.

Students and parents/guardians need to be aware of the following:

- 4.24.1. Courses must be pre-approved by the Dean before enrolling.
- 4.24.2. Registration of online courses is the responsibility of the student.
- 4.24.3. HA Tuition covers the fees for Houghton University, online courses, and AP testing, except for students receiving financial assistance or discounted tuition.
- 4.24.4. Students who receive HA tuition discounts, financial assistance, or scholarships are responsible for AP testing and course fees, which are subject to change. Students should confirm fees before enrolling.
 - Oaks Christian Online High School Courses:
 - \$750.00 per semester (most of these courses are 2-semester courses)
 - CampusEDU Online University Courses:
 - \$166.00 per credit (all of these are 1-semester courses).
 - Houghton University Courses:
 - \$60.00 per credit (all of these are 1-semester courses).
- 4.24.5. Even if the fee for the course is included for a full-pay student, If a student fails or does not complete an online course, they must reimburse the Academy for any fees incurred by the Academy for the course.
- 4.24.6. HA will cover the dual enrollment course fee if the Academy requires an

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online or university course, even for students receiving financial aid.

- 4.24.7. Online and university courses are billed to Houghton Academy, which, in turn, bills the individual student's HA account.
- 4.24.8. Students enrolled in approved online courses are assigned a Study Hall period and location on the HA campus to complete their course.
- 4.24.9. Students are responsible for informing the Dean of course registration, progress, and completion.
- 4.24.10. Upon completing the dual enrollment course, students are responsible for providing course transcripts to the Dean so that course grades and credits can be entered into the student's HA transcript.

4.25. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS (ILPs)

This policy establishes the importance of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) at Houghton Academy. ILPs are designed to tailor educational experiences to meet each student's unique needs, interests, and goals, ensuring a personalized approach to learning that fosters academic achievement, personal growth, and future success.

Houghton Academy values the individualization of students' course selections by implementing ILPs. This approach recognizes and respects our students' diverse talents, aspirations, and learning styles and is grounded in research that highlights the benefits of personalized education.

- 4.25.1. Definition of ILP: An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a customized educational roadmap for each student, outlining their academic and personal development goals, course selections, extracurricular activities, and [diploma-track](#) aspirations.
- 4.25.2. Purpose of ILP:
 - Promote student engagement and motivation by aligning coursework with individual interests and career aspirations.
 - Enhance academic performance through targeted support and resources.
 - Foster a sense of ownership and responsibility in students regarding their educational journey.

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- Provide a structured framework for continuous reflection and adjustment of goals and strategies.
- 4.25.3. Development and Implementation:
- At the beginning of their high school experience or entry into the Academy, each student will develop an ILP in collaboration with their parents/guardians and the Dean.
 - The ILP will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the student's evolving interests, achievements, and [diploma track](#) aspirations.
 - The Dean will facilitate regular check-ins to monitor progress, provide guidance, and adjust the plan as needed.
- 4.25.4. Course Selection:
- Students are encouraged to select courses that align with their ILP, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive education that prepares them for future success.
 - Course offerings will include core academic subjects, elective courses, and university-level dual enrollment options to cater to diverse interests and career paths.
- 4.25.5. Benefits of Individualized Learning:
- Research indicates that personalized learning approaches, such as ILPs, can improve student outcomes, including higher academic achievement, increased motivation, and better preparation for post-secondary education and careers (Redding, 2014; Pane et al., 2017).
 - ILPs help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills by providing opportunities for self-directed learning and goal-setting (Conley, 2012).
- 4.25.6. Support and Resources:
- Houghton Academy will provide resources, including trained academic advisors, career counseling, and access to diverse learning materials, to support the effective implementation of ILPs.
 - Professional development opportunities will be offered to staff to ensure they are equipped to guide students in developing and maintaining their ILPs.
- 4.25.7. Evaluation and Feedback:

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- The effectiveness of ILPs will be assessed through regular feedback from students, parents, and staff and through analysis of academic performance and post-secondary outcomes.
- The ILP process will be continuously improved based on evaluation results and emerging best practices in personalized education.

References:

- - Conley, D. T. (2012). *A Complete Definition of College and Career Readiness*. Educational Policy Improvement Center.
- - Pane, J. F., Steiner, E. D., Baird, M. D., Hamilton, L. S., & Pane, J. D. (2017). *Informing Progress: Insights on Personalized Learning Implementation and Effects*. RAND Corporation.
- - Redding, S. (2014). *Personal Competencies in Personalized Learning*. Center on Innovations in Learning, Temple University.

This policy underscores Houghton Academy's commitment to fostering an educational environment that values and supports each student's unique learning journey, thereby preparing them for success in an ever-changing world.

4.26. JUNIOR MARSHALS

The Junior Marshal program is an academic honor and service opportunity designed to recognize and engage high-achieving members of the Junior Class in the Academy's year-end ceremonies. Junior Marshals serve as formal escorts and ushers for the Senior Class during both the Baccalaureate and Commencement ceremonies, symbolizing academic excellence, leadership, and respect for the Academy's traditions.

- 4.26.1. Selection Criteria: Each year, two students from the Junior Class will be appointed as Junior Marshals. Selection is based on the following criteria:
- Academic Standing: The two students with the highest cumulative Grade Point Averages (GPAs) at the conclusion of the third academic quarter will be selected.
 - Eligibility: Only students who have been enrolled at Houghton Academy for the entire academic year and are in good disciplinary standing will be considered.

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- 4.26.2. Duties and Responsibilities - Junior Marshals are expected to:
- Serve as official escorts for the graduating Senior Class during the Baccalaureate and Commencement ceremonies.
 - Assist with ushering, seating, and program distribution during the events.
 - Represent the Junior Class and the Academy with poise, humility, and professionalism.
 - Attend all necessary rehearsals and meetings in preparation for their ceremonial duties.
- 4.26.3. Expectations: Being selected as a Junior Marshal is both an honor and a responsibility. Marshals are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior, consistent with the Academy's mission and values, including respect, integrity, and servant leadership.
- 4.26.4. Notification and Recognition: Junior Marshals will be notified following the end of the third quarter.

4.27. LATE COURSEWORK

- 4.27.1. Students must complete any coursework that needs to be completed.
- 4.27.2. Late coursework is accepted until answers are posted or work is reviewed.
- 4.27.3. Late coursework is accepted no later than one week after the due date.
- 4.27.4. Teachers will enter "Not Turned In" in their grade books, scoring the assignment at zero until the work is turned in.
- 4.27.5. Once late coursework is turned in, the "NTI" or zero will be replaced with the student's score.
- 4.27.6. Teachers will change the completion status from "Not Turned In" to "Late."
- 4.27.7. Teachers will reduce one letter grade lower than the grade earned as a late penalty. (e.g., if the student turned in "A" level work late, the teacher will score the work as a "B.").

- 4.27.8. The teacher may make exceptions depending on student circumstances (such as prolonged absences due to illness).

4.28. MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADE-LEVEL ACCELERATION [Under Review]

- 4.28.1. Purpose: Houghton Academy recognizes that some middle school students may demonstrate exceptional academic ability and maturity warranting consideration for grade acceleration. This policy establishes the criteria and process for middle school students seeking to skip a grade level, ensuring their readiness for academic and social success in an advanced placement.
- 4.28.2. Rationale and Research Support: Research supports the benefits of grade acceleration for high-achieving students when implemented with appropriate academic and social-emotional considerations. Studies indicate that well-planned acceleration does not harm students socially or emotionally (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, **A Nation Deceived**, 2004). The **National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)** also recognizes acceleration as an effective intervention for academically advanced students, provided proper assessments and supports are in place.
- 4.28.3. Eligibility Criteria: Students seeking grade acceleration must meet the following requirements:
- Academic Assessments: The student must demonstrate proficiency at or above the 90th percentile in the following subjects, as assessed by Houghton Academy:
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - English
 - Bible
 - Social-Emotional Evaluation: The student must undergo a social-emotional assessment conducted by a licensed counselor or other qualified professional. This evaluation will assess maturity, resilience, peer relationships, and emotional readiness to interact

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with older students.

- **Teacher and Administrator Recommendations:** The student must receive written recommendations from at least two current teachers and a school administrator attesting to their academic ability, work ethic, and social readiness.
- **Parental Consent:** Parents or guardians must submit a written request for grade acceleration, demonstrating their support and understanding of the academic and social implications.

4.28.4. Evaluation and Decision-Making Process:

- **Initial Application:** Parents submit a written request to the Dean and the Principal outlining the rationale for grade acceleration.
- **Academic Testing:** The student completes school-administered assessments in math, science, English, and Bible, achieving required proficiency levels.
- **Social-Emotional Screening:** A licensed counselor or qualified professional evaluates the student's readiness based on standardized measures and interviews.
- **Faculty and Administrative Review:** A panel consisting of teachers, a school administrator, and a counselor reviews all data and makes a final recommendation.
- **Trial Period:** If approved, the student undergoes a six-week trial period in the accelerated grade. A mid-point and final review determine whether the transition is successful.
- **Final Determination:** The Principal, in consultation with the Dean, faculty and parents, makes the final decision on permanent grade acceleration.

4.28.5. Monitoring and Support: To ensure a smooth transition, students who skip a grade will receive the following:

- Regular academic check-ins with a designated faculty mentor.

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- Social-emotional support as needed through counseling or peer mentorship.
 - A review meeting after the first semester to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the acceleration decision.
- 4.28.6. Conclusion: Houghton Academy is committed to fostering an academically rigorous and developmentally supportive environment. Grade acceleration will be implemented with careful consideration of academic proficiency and social-emotional readiness, ensuring students thrive in their advanced placement while maintaining personal and academic well-being.

4.29. MOVIE / VIDEO USE

- 4.29.1. Under the "Face-to-Face Teaching Exemption," copyrighted movies may be shown in a school setting without copyright permission only if all criteria are met:
- A teacher or instructor is present and engaged in face-to-face teaching activities.
 - The institution must be an accredited, nonprofit educational institution.
 - The school may not charge admission or use it for fundraising purposes.
- 4.29.2. Teachers must secure advance approval by the Principal before utilizing a movie or video for more than a few minutes as illustrative teaching material. Short clips to support the curriculum do not require advance approval as long as the material contains no sensitive images or language.
- 4.29.3. Teachers must connect the movie to course content and prepare students for specific themes or plot points.
- 4.29.4. Only "G" rated videos/films may be shown in the classroom without prior written parent notification.
- 4.29.5. Parents shall receive written notification of a proposed "PG" or "PG-13" showing at least one (1) week before the movie or video's showing.

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- 4.29.6. Notification to parents can be published in course syllabi, reviewed, and signed by parents at the beginning of each school year.
- 4.29.7. Syllabus/Disclosure statements used to provide notice should include a list of films the teacher plans to show during the semester or school year, with approximate dates of the video showing.
- 4.29.8. Teachers shall send a separate notification to parents/guardians for each “PG” or “PG13” movie and video to be shown.
- 4.29.9. If a parent objects to a student’s viewing of an approved movie or video and communicates such objection in writing to the teacher, the teacher shall not allow the student to view the movie.
- 4.29.10. The teacher shall provide the student an excuse from class and will find an alternate place for the student to have a study hall or provide an appropriate opt-out activity.
- 4.29.11. Teachers must secure approval from the Principal at least one (1) week before a planned notification to parents.
- 4.29.12. A movie rated R, NC-17, Mature, or X will not be approved or used in any school classroom.
- 4.29.13. A teacher must be present when the film or video is shown.

4.30. PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

At Houghton Academy, we are dedicated to fostering a collaborative environment that supports student success through consistent communication with parents. Parent/Teacher Conferences offer an invaluable opportunity to strengthen this partnership and guide our students toward academic and personal achievement. We value the partnership between parents, teachers, and students as essential for fostering academic success and personal growth. To support this partnership, we offer Parent/Teacher Conferences as an opportunity for parents to meet with teachers after publishing Quarter 1, 2, and 3 Report Cards.

- 4.30.1. Purpose:

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- Parent-teacher conferences are a valuable service that enhances student learning, provides individualized feedback, and fosters open communication between teacher and parent.
- Although these conferences are not required, they serve as an additional support resource for students and their families.
- They allow for tailored discussions on academic progress, behavioral insights, and strategies to promote each student's success.

4.30.2. Benefits of Parent/Teacher Conferences:

- Research underscores the positive impact of parent/teacher conferences on student outcomes.
- When parents actively engage in their child's education, students demonstrate increased motivation, improved behavior, and higher academic achievement.
- According to studies by the National Education Association (NEA), regular communication between parents and teachers can lead to better attendance, stronger social skills, and enhanced student self-esteem.
- Conferences offer a structured environment for discussing strengths, challenges, and solutions, making identifying and addressing students' specific needs easier.

4.30.3. Scheduling:

- After each Quarter 1, 2, and 3 report card is published, parents will receive information about the availability of Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- While participation is optional, we encourage families to take advantage of this resource, especially if concerns or questions about a student's progress arise.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences generally take ten (10) minutes to complete. If additional time is desired, an additional meeting should be scheduled.

4.30.4. How to Participate:

- To schedule a conference, parents must contact the teacher.
- Meetings can be arranged for either in-person or virtually to accommodate different preferences and schedules.

4.31. PART-TIME STUDENTS

- 4.31.1. Part-time students may take no more than four (4) courses, one of which must be a Bible/Christian Studies course.
- 4.31.2. Part-time students receive a 50% discount on school fees.
- 4.31.3. Part-time students may participate in extracurricular activities (e.g., clubs, except for athletics.)
- 4.31.4. Part-time students may earn a Houghton Academy diploma with sufficient credits, provided that the students also pursue Bible/Christian studies through Houghton Academy or an approved outside/independent course of Christian Studies while enrolled part-time at Houghton Academy.
- 4.31.5. Part-time students are not eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian recognition.
- 4.31.6. Part-time students are not eligible for Subject Area Awards.

4.32. PASSION PROJECT

- 4.32.1. Passion Projects at Houghton Academy are nine-week independent research projects that allow students the freedom to pursue topics that are unique to them while working on English Language Arts skills that are essential to success not only in academia but in real life.
- 4.32.2. Each project involves research, application, writing, presentation, and evaluation.
- 4.32.3. Each year, Passion Project students are expected to invest a minimum of twenty hours on project work, and the projects culminate with an Exhibition Night where students share their projects with the community at large.
- 4.32.4. Any fees or expenses associated with a student's project are the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian.

4.33. PHYSICAL EDUCATION WAIVER REQUIREMENTS

The Dean may waive student participation in physical education classes if the following criteria are met:

- 4.33.1. The student participates in an interscholastic or community-based athletic program or other organized physical development program (e.g., ballet company).
- 4.33.2. The parents provide consent in written form.
- 4.33.3. Participation in physical education classes resumes whenever participation in the program ceases.

4.34. REDOING / REVISING COURSEWORK

- 4.34.1. Students are encouraged to redo and revise coursework.
- 4.34.2. The opportunity for redoing or revising coursework is limited to the unit of study (with the exception of Math courses) or the end of the marking period.
- 4.34.3. Teachers will provide time for students to complete redos and revisions before the end of each unit.
- 4.34.4. Scores for student work after retaking, revising, or redoing will not be averaged but will replace the original student score, provided the original work was turned in on time (see Late Coursework Policy).
- 4.34.5. Similar to the [Late Coursework Policy](#), revised coursework will be limited to a letter-grade reduction. Thus, revised A-quality coursework, will receive a grade of no more than a B.
- 4.34.6. Final projects will be assigned in chunks, and the teacher will provide individual feedback at each completion stage.
- 4.34.7. Final exams are exempt from this policy.

4.35. REPORT CARDS

Report cards are posted quarterly online in the school's Learning Management System (LMS).

4.36. SCHOLARSHIPS

4.36.1. Isaiah 61:3 Award and Scholarship

For many years, the Academy's theme verse has been Isaiah 61:3, a powerful scripture that speaks to the maturing and development of those who seek after God. This verse, part of the book of Isaiah in the Bible, is a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of his ministry. It states: *"...that they might be trees of righteousness."*

The full text reads: *"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."*

This verse, a beacon of hope and comfort, speaks to the transformative power of God's grace and redemption. It offers solace to those in the depths of sorrow, mourning, or heaviness and reminds us of the potential for renewal and growth.

The imagery used in this verse is striking and symbolic. *"Beauty for ashes"* suggests exchanging something of little value or significance (ashes) for something of great worth and beauty. It signifies God's ability to restore and renew our lives, even amid despair and destruction.

Similarly, *"the oil of joy for mourning"* speaks to God's comfort and consolation, replacing sorrow with joy. Oil was often used in ancient times as a symbol of abundance, blessing, and healing.

"The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" suggests a transformation from despair and sadness to praise and thanksgiving. This phrase indicates God's power to lift the burden of sorrow and replace it with a spirit of worship and gratitude.

Isaiah 61:3 powerfully reminds us of God's love, mercy, and transformative work in believers' lives. It encourages us to trust God to turn our mourning into joy, despair into praise, and brokenness into beauty.

The faculty and staff at Houghton Academy are surveyed to identify who among our graduating seniors best exemplifies the characteristics identified within this verse and lives out a reflection of our [Expected Student Outcomes](#) or ESOs. These

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nominations, based on the student's academic achievements, spiritual growth, and service to the community, then go to the Head of School to validate, determine, and award the designation.

The Isaiah 61:3 Award symbolizes the highest honor and prestige and is the pinnacle of achievement for a graduating senior at Houghton Academy. This esteemed award is accompanied by a generous financial scholarship, funded by the Board of Trustees and the Head of School, to support the recipient's next educational endeavor, be it offsetting tuition, purchasing books, or covering travel costs.

The Head of School announces the award during the fourth quarter and presents the scholarship during the Commencement Ceremony. The recipient is invited to give a brief oration as the culminating message of the commencement ceremony.

The recipient must submit a written draft of their oration to the Head of School for review and approval no later than 10 days before the commencement. The oration is limited to 1000 words.

4.36.2. **Nicholas B. Merrill Memorial Scholarship**

This award was created to honor the memory of Nicholas B. Merrill, who would have been a member of the Class of 2009 if God had not wanted Nicholas to be at home in Heaven with Him. The family expected that Nicholas would have developed into a well-rounded young man using his God-given abilities in a life of service in the Kingdom.

Thus, the recipient of this award is a young person who desires to be his/her best in each of the following areas:

- **Scholarship:** The student must possess a cumulative grade point average of 90 or higher.
- **Athletics:** The student has earned a Varsity Letter in at least two sports.
- **Faith:** The student is a Christian living a life consistent with a Christian worldview.

The scholarship includes a certificate and financial award for post-secondary education. A committee consisting of the Head of School, the Athletic Director, and a Merrill family member will determine the award recipient. The scholarship is awarded during the Commencement ceremony.

4.37. SCHOLARS RESEARCH PROJECT

The Houghton Academy Scholars Project is designed to allow high school juniors and seniors to explore a self-selected study area in-depth. Through this project, students will engage in academic research, critical analysis, and meaningful presentation of their findings, fostering advanced skills in scholarship, communication, and independent learning.

4.37.1. Eligibility:

- Juniors and seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to complete a Scholars Project.
- Parent/Guardian approval is required.
- Approval from the Dean is required for participation.
- A faculty advisor must approve topics.

4.37.2. Components of the Scholars Project:

- Research Question:
 - The project must identify a straightforward research question to guide the inquiry. The question should be specific, researchable, and relevant to the chosen topic.
 - Examples of research questions include:
 - Topics related to developing a Christian worldview:
 - "How does the concept of forgiveness shape relationships and conflict resolution?"
 - "What does stewardship mean in the context of environmental conservation?"
 - "How can Christian principles influence leadership in public service?"
 - "What role does faith play in promoting mental health and resilience?"
 - "What are the effects of social media on teenage mental health?"
 - "How did the Industrial Revolution impact the daily lives of workers in the 19th century?"
 - "Are there environmental benefits for adopting renewable energy sources in rural communities?"
 - "How do different diets affect athletic performance in high school athletes?"
- Annotated Bibliography:

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- At least 10 credible sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other reputable publications.
 - Each annotation must include a summary of the source, an evaluation of its credibility, and a reflection on its relevance to the research.
 - Research Journal:
 - A journal documenting the student's research process, insights, challenges, and reflections.
 - Journals must be hand-written to encourage deeper engagement with the research process.
 - Regular and multiple entries (as approved by the advisor, depending on the length of the project—e.g., bi-weekly for an 18-week project) are required. The faculty advisor must review them.
 - Presentation or Publication:
 - Students must present their findings through one of the following:
 - A live presentation to peers, faculty, and guests, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.
 - A recorded video presentation submitted to the faculty advisor, lasting between 30 and 45 minutes.
 - Publication of an article summarizing their findings ranging between 3,000 and 6,000 words.
 - Christian Worldview and ESO Implications:
 - The presentation or publication must address the research's implications for a Christian biblical worldview and Houghton Academy's Expected Student Outcomes (ESOs), demonstrating how the findings align with or challenge these perspectives.
 - Time Log:
 - Students must maintain a detailed time log documenting at least 30 work hours on their project.
 - This log should include dates, hours spent, and a brief description of activities.
- 4.37.3. Timeline:
- Step 1: Topic and advisor selection and approval.
 - Step 2: Submission and approval of the initial research question.

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- Step 3: Draft of annotated bibliography.
 - Step 4: Research journal progress check.
 - Step 5: Draft of presentation or publication.
 - Step 6: Final submission and presentation.
- 4.37.4. Support:
- A faculty member must agree to serve as the advisor to the project.
 - Students must provide regular updates to their faculty advisor, including progress reports and any challenges encountered.
 - Faculty advisors will guide students in topic selection, research methodology, and project development.
- 4.37.5. Grading:
- Projects will be evaluated using the rubric below. Students must achieve a minimum of 75% to pass.
 - Successful completion of the project will earn the following credits in the subject area:
 - A minimum of 22.5 hours equals .25 credit hours.
 - A minimum of 45 hours equals .50 credit hours.
 - A minimum of 90 hours equals 1.00 credit hours.
- 4.37.6. Scholars Project Rubric:

Annotated Bibliography	- Includes at least 10 credible sources.	1 0
	- Annotations summarize, evaluate, and reflect on each source effectively.	1 0
	- Sources are formatted correctly in MLA style.	5

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Research Journal	- Contains the minimum number of entries as required by the advisor documenting research progress.	1 0
	- Entries demonstrate critical thinking and self-reflection.	1 0
	The journal is well-organized and complete.	5
Time Log	- Logs at least 45 hours of work with accurate and detailed records.	1 0
Presentation/Publication	- Content is accurate, well-organized, and engaging.	1 5
	- Delivery is clear, professional, and confident (for live/recorded presentations).	1 0
	- Demonstrates depth of learning and application of research to a Christian worldview.	1 0
Overall Quality	- Adheres to timeline and submission deadlines.	5
	- Demonstrates effort, originality, and academic integrity.	1 0

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Total	/100	1 0 0
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- 4.37.7. Recognition: Exceptional projects will be eligible for presentation at school assemblies or regional conferences, and exemplary work may be published on Houghton Academy's website or other platforms.

References:

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Routledge. This research highlights the importance of student-led projects and deep engagement for academic success.

Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. Association of American Colleges and Universities. This study supports project-based learning as a method to enhance critical thinking and communication skills.

Wagner, T. (2008). *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need—and What We Can Do About It*. Basic Books. This book discusses the need for critical thinking, problem-solving, and other 21st-century skills.

Wagner, T., & Dintersmith, T. (2015). *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era*. Scribner. This work emphasizes innovative approaches to education and project-based learning.

4.38. STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

4.38.1. Purpose and Function:

- The Student Support Team (SST) at Houghton Academy is a collaborative group committed to fostering student success by addressing academic, behavioral, and emotional challenges that may hinder progress.
- The SST is composed of the following members:
 - Head of School

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- Academic Principal
 - Dean of Students
 - Boarding Program Coordinator
 - Teacher Representatives
- The team meets regularly to review student cases that involve low academic performance, repeated behavior incident reports, or other concerns raised by faculty or staff.
 - The SST works to develop tailored intervention strategies to support each student's individual needs, helping them overcome barriers and succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

4.38.2. Goals of the SST:

- Provide a holistic, student-centered approach to problem-solving.
- Identify the underlying causes of academic or behavioral difficulties.
- Develop individualized intervention plans that address short- and long-term goals for student success.
- Collaborate with students, parents, and teachers to ensure interventions are effectively implemented and monitored.

4.38.3. Roles and Responsibilities: Each member of the SST contributes unique expertise:

- Head of School: Oversees the team, ensures alignment with school policies, and provides administrative support.
- Principal: ensures alignment with educational goals, instructional and assessment methods, curriculum alignment, and overall positive and supportive learning environment.
- Dean: Offers guidance on students' emotional and spiritual well-being, integrating faith-based support.
- Boarding Program Coordinator: Addresses students' residential life

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issues, including social and behavioral challenges in the dorm setting.

- ELL Coordinator: Focuses on language barriers or learning differences among English Language Learner (ELL) students.
- Nurse: Provides insights into students' physical or mental health needs that may affect academic performance or behavior.
- Teacher Representatives: Share insights from the classroom, including observations of student engagement, work habits, and areas of concern.

4.38.4. The Value of the SST:

- Research supports the effectiveness of multidisciplinary teams in fostering student success.
- Teams like the SST enable schools to address students' needs comprehensively by integrating academic, behavioral, social, and emotional support (Burns, 2011).
- Interventions that involve collaboration between educators and support staff improve student outcomes, including better academic performance and increased engagement in school (Epstein, 2010). Additionally, personalized interventions have increased student motivation and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).
- By working together, the SST ensures that students at risk of academic failure or behavioral issues receive timely, appropriate, and coordinated interventions.
- The holistic support provided by the team helps students build resilience, improve social skills, and achieve academic success, promoting a positive school climate and reducing the likelihood of future incidents.

4.39. STUDY ABROAD

- 4.39.1. Occasionally, a student enrolled at Houghton Academy may elect to be absent from campus for a semester or a year for an alternative

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educational experience. Each student's proposal to be off-campus will be evaluated and approved or disallowed on its own merits.

- 4.39.2. When a student participates in a bonafide study abroad program where all participants are considered to be enrolled in their home schools, the student may be viewed as "on-campus" for some purposes while being viewed as "off-campus" for others. The faculty will make this determination as specific purposes are brought for consideration.
 - National Honor Society – A student in an approved off-campus program will be eligible for induction into the NHS on the same basis as a student on campus. Academic grade reports and supplemental forms must be submitted to the selection committee.
 - Student Elections – A student must be on campus to participate in any student election as a candidate or voter.
- 4.39.3. Students must be on campus during the school year in which they graduate.

4.40. STUDY HALL POLICY [Update]

- 4.40.1. The Study Hall environment must remain quiet and conducive to learning and reading for the entire period (i.e., think Library environment).
- 4.40.2. Study Hall periods assigned to the HU Library are designated as "reading times." Thus, students are expected to utilize the time for reading and are not permitted to talk.
- 4.40.3. With the teacher's approval, in non-library-based Study Halls, students may quietly study together using a low tone of conversation.
- 4.40.4. Students may not play games (e.g., board games, cards, electronic, etc.).
- 4.40.5. Students may not sleep.
- 4.40.6. All electronics and internet use policies apply during Study Hall (e.g., no music or video streaming other than class or assignment related).
- 4.40.7. When using a laptop or tablet, students must ensure they are seated so that the screen of the device is visible to the Study Hall teacher.
- 4.40.8. Water bottles are allowed.

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- 4.40.9. Teachers are expected to be actively supervising students, monitoring each student's activity throughout the Study Hall period (i.e. active rather than stationary).
- 4.40.10. Monday study halls will include designated time to travel to the Houghton University Library, weather permitting.

4.41. SUBJECT AREA & GROWTH AWARDS

The Subject Area Awards at Houghton Academy recognize students who demonstrate exceptional achievement, character, and engagement in specific subject areas. These awards highlight students who not only excel academically but also demonstrate growth in learning and embody the core values and mission of the Academy.

- 4.41.1. One Subject Area Award is granted for all subject areas for both middle and high school students. In addition, one Subject Growth Award is granted for all subject areas for both middle and high school.
- 4.41.2. Subject Area Award Eligibility Criteria:
 - Academic Excellence: The highest score in the subject area at the end of Q3. Students must have an A average in the subject at the conclusion of Quarter 3. If no students meet this criterion, no award will be given for that subject. Plus...
 - ESO Rating: Teachers rank eligible students using the Expected Student Outcomes (ESO) checklist. This rating system ensures a holistic evaluation beyond academic performance. The student with the highest total rating on the ESO checklist will receive the award.
 - ESO Checklist: Teachers rate eligible students on the following criteria, using a scale of 3 (Superior), 2 (Good), and 1 (Fair):
 - Understands and wrestles with biblical values
 - Develops God-given gifts and abilities
 - Evaluates personal decisions and actions

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- Acquires and applies foundational knowledge
- Engages intellectual curiosity
- Demonstrates critical thinking skills
- Respects God, others, and self
- Practices selfless service
- Pursues justice, mercy, and peace.
- Appreciates diverse cultures
- Cultivates meaningful relationships
- Influences positive change

4.41.3. Growth Award Eligibility Requirements:

- Teachers determine the greatest level of growth based on Q1 and Q3 results (i.e., which student demonstrated the most growth over the three marking periods).

4.41.4. Selection Process:

- For subjects taught by multiple teachers (e.g., Bible), instructors must collaborate to select a single award recipient.
- Only one Subject Area award and one Growth Award per subject per division level (Middle School and High School) is granted, with no ties allowed.
- Teachers who have students with tied scores, must submit the results for a decision by a review committee made up of no less than two (2) faculty members who are also current teachers of the student.
- Teachers identify the award recipient and submit the recipient's name and subject area to the office **no later than two weeks before the Awards Ceremony** to allow time for certificate preparation.

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- 4.41.5. Research Supporting Subject Awards: Recognizing student achievement through subject-specific awards has been shown to encourage academic motivation and personal growth. Awards that are grounded in holistic evaluation criteria align with findings that emphasize intrinsic motivation over purely extrinsic rewards:
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Springer Science & Business Media. This research highlights the importance of linking recognition to personal development and self-determination.
 - Covington, M. V. (1992). Making the grade: A self-worth perspective on motivation and school reform. Cambridge University Press. This study underscores the value of recognizing both effort and achievement in fostering student self-worth and engagement.
 - Suldo, S. M., & Shaffer, E. J. (2008). "Looking beyond academic achievement: The influence of school climate on students' life satisfaction." School Psychology Review, 37(2), 240-256. This research supports the impact of awards programs on fostering positive school climate and student well-being.
- 4.41.6. Implementation: The Subject Awards are presented during the annual Awards Ceremony.

4.42. TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR ASSISTANTS

Opportunities for High School students to serve as Teacher/Administrator Assistants (TA/AA) are provided at Houghton Academy.

- 4.42.1. Students must inform the Dean of their desire to serve as a TA/AA.
- 4.42.2. The supervising Teacher/Administrator must approve the placement of the TA/AA.
- 4.42.3. TA/AA assignments are assigned as part of the student's weekly schedule, and attendance is recorded.
- 4.42.4. Grades are issued for TA/AA work but are omitted when calculating a student's cumulative GPA.

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- 4.42.5. Students will receive course credit for their work as TAs, though it may not substitute for core graduation requirements (e.g., being a TA in a math class will not count towards the minimum of 3 math credits for graduation).
- 4.42.6. TA/AAs are evaluated based on the [Expected Student Outcomes](#).

4.43. TEXTBOOKS

- 4.43.1. All textbooks are supplied as part of the student's learning resources through the registration fee and tuition.
- 4.43.2. The textbook is a part of the student's learning experience; however, the teacher is the expert in the classroom, and the text should never be considered the expert or allowed to dictate the learning process.
- 4.43.3. Teachers issue textbooks to students by number and include the students' names in both the workbooks and the textbooks.
- 4.43.4. The teacher inventories textbooks at the beginning and end of the school year.
- 4.43.5. At the end of the school year, teachers account for all classroom textbooks and assess the damage.
- 4.43.6. Missing or damaged books are reported to the school office and student accounts are charged for any replacement costs.
- 4.43.7. Students are allowed to retain softback workbooks only.
- 4.43.8. The Principal must approve all books (e.g., textbooks, novels).

4.44. TUTORING / PRIVATE LESSONS

Students may request to the Dean private tutoring or lessons, and tutors may provide tutoring or private classes/lessons at the Academy according to the following guidelines:

- 4.44.1. **Schedule:** Tutoring or private classes provided by an employee cannot be offered during the employee's work hours unless approved by the Head of School, and they may not conflict with required responsibilities or meetings.

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- 4.44.2. **Avoidance of Conflict of Interest:** Teachers are not permitted to tutor or provide private services for compensation with students they teach without advance approval from the Head of School.
- 4.44.3. **Compensation:** the Academy does not set nor recommend fee rates for private tutoring or classes. All fees are subject to an agreement between the student's parents and the tutor.
- 4.44.4. **Use of School Facilities:** Faculty and staff members who offer services on campus may use the area of the facility in which they conduct their work (e.g., classroom or office), provided there is no conflict with the official school use. Non-employees must request the use of designated space.
- 4.44.5. **Written Agreement:** To offer tutoring or private classes/lessons on campus, the tutor must have a signed agreement with the school to use the facilities.
- 4.44.6. **Use of School Curriculum Materials:** Tutors or private classes/lesson providers on campus may request authorization from the Principal to use curriculum materials and school resources, which must remain on campus.

4.45. VALEDICTORIAN / SALUTATORIAN

Houghton Academy honors the top-achieving graduates by recognizing the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Although the Academy does not publish class rankings, these designations highlight exceptional academic achievement and leadership. (Recipients should note that many colleges and universities do not recognize these designations if the graduating class has fewer than thirty (30) students.)

- 4.45.1. **Eligibility Requirements / Determination**

A unanimous decision of the HA Executive Team (i.e., Academic Principal, Dean of Students, Administrative Principal, Head of School) determines the Valedictorian and the Salutatorian, weighing the following considerations:

 - Any graduating Senior who has attended the Academy for the final two years of high school is eligible to be the Valedictorian or Salutatorian.

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- The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are determined by comparing the overall Grade Point Average (GPA) class rank numeric average at the end of the third marking period.
 - Successful completion of university-level or dual-enrollment courses: Preference will be given to students who have completed the most advanced courses, demonstrating academic rigor and college readiness.
 - Leadership roles: Participation in leadership positions, such as National Honor Society (NHS) officer roles or student council membership, will be taken into account, as these roles reflect responsibility, initiative, and service to the school community.
 - Extracurricular achievements, such as involvement in academic competitions, school clubs, or athletics, will be considered when determining top achievers, particularly when leadership or excellence is demonstrated.
- 4.45.2. Co-Valedictorian/Co-Salutatorian: When there is an insignificant statistical difference between multiple students, the administration may award the status of “Co-Valedictorian” or “Co-Salutatorian.”
- 4.45.3. Recognition and Responsibilities:
- The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are announced at the annual Award Ceremony and Senior Recognition Reception following the completion of Quarter 3.
 - Both are asked to provide a brief oration as part of the Commencement Ceremony.
 - Recipients must submit a written draft of their oration to the Head of School for review and approval by 10 days before the commencement.
 - The oration is limited to 600-750 words.

4.46. WRITING FORMAT/STYLE

Houghton Academy teaches and uses MLA style for formatting written documents and research documentation. Using this style across all content areas provides consistency and an opportunity for understanding and mastery.

The MLA style guidelines can be found at <https://style.mla.org/>.

5. Expectations

5.1. AFTER-SCHOOL SUPERVISION

At Houghton Academy, the safety and well-being of our students are of utmost importance. To maintain a secure and orderly environment, the following policy regarding after-school supervision is in effect:

5.1.1. Departure Timeline:

- All students must vacate the campus by 4:00 pm or within 15 minutes following the conclusion of early release days or any school-sponsored activity, such as athletic events, club meetings, or rehearsals.

5.1.2. Supervision Requirement:

- Students who remain on campus beyond the 15-minute window must be under the direct supervision of a designated school employee. Unsupervised students are not permitted to remain on school grounds.

5.1.3. Supervision Fee:

- Parents or guardians will be billed \$20 per fraction of an hour for the supervision provided to students who remain on campus past the 15-minute grace period.

5.1.4. Parent/Guardian Responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to arrange timely transportation for their children to ensure compliance with this policy. Repeated failure to adhere to the policy may result in additional administrative action.

5.1.5. Exceptions:

- Students participating in a scheduled after-school program or other school-approved activities will be exempt from this policy during the duration of those events. However, the 15-minute rule will apply once the activity concludes.

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5.1.6. Communication:

- Parents or guardians must notify the school if unforeseen circumstances will delay pick-up. While the school will make reasonable accommodations in emergencies, the supervision fee will still apply.

5.2. ATHLETIC / CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY

- 5.2.1. While participating in a co-curricular activity, students must maintain a grade average of 1.0 or 65% or above in all classes.
- 5.2.2. If a student's average is below 1.0 or 65% (in any class), they are placed on academic probation and may not participate until the grade in that subject is passing.
- 5.2.3. While on academic probation, students on a school athletic team may practice with the team during the probationary period.
- 5.2.4. Student-athletes on probation will sit on the bench with their team for games.
- 5.2.5. Students who are members of a drama/musical cast and are on probation may participate in practices while raising their average.
- 5.2.6. Depending on various factors, the HA Administration will determine participation in the final production.

5.3. ATTENDANCE POLICY: ABSENCES, EXCUSES, AND TARDIES

Regular and punctual attendance is vital for students' academic and personal development. Studies have shown that consistent attendance fosters academic excellence, enhances social-emotional learning, and increases future opportunities for success. Students who attend school regularly benefit from improved academic performance, higher engagement in extracurricular activities, and stronger social relationships. Conversely, excessive or unnecessary absences can lead to poor work habits, decreased academic achievement, and lower graduation rates. Research indicates that students with chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of school days) are more likely to struggle academically and are at greater risk of dropping out later in their education.

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(Gottfried, 2014; Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). This policy reinforces the importance of consistent school engagement for short-term and long-term student success by emphasizing regular attendance's academic, social, and developmental benefits.

5.3.1. Attendance:

- Students must be in their Homeroom classrooms by 7:45 am or they will be marked tardy and must secure a pass from the front office to proceed to a classroom.
- Students with a Period 1 class at Houghton University, must notify the Front Office (frontdesk@houghton.academy) before 7:45 am if they are going to report directly to the University. The Homeroom absence will be marked as unexcused if they do not notify by 7:45 am.
- Students must be present by 10:00 am to be counted as present for the day.
- Students must be present by noon to participate in afterschool activities (e.g., athletics, drama).
- Students must be present for 50% of the class period to be counted as present for that class.
- Students who do not attend classes due to illness are not permitted to attend athletic events, rehearsals, or any other after-school or extracurricular activities, and must be free of cold or flu-like symptoms or the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to campus..

5.3.2. Absences:

- Absence from school is excused with a parent's email/SMS note to the school office.
- The student must make up missed assignments.
- Should a student accumulate absences equal to or greater than 20% of the class time in a quarter or semester, the student may be

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denied academic credit and may need to repeat the course.

- School-required or school-related activities (including field trips, sports trips, music trips, etc.) that remove a student from the classroom are not considered when calculating excessive absences.
- The student's and parent's responsibility is to track how many absences he/she has accumulated each term.
- Students must sign in or sign out from the Main office for late arrivals or early dismissals.
- The administration will review excessive absences due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., hospitalization due to illness or death in the immediate family) and handle each case individually.
- Students absent for more than 3 consecutive days due to illness, must present a doctor's note to return to class.
- When a student has been absent for ten (10) or more consecutive days without communication from the family, the school reserves the right to withdraw the student administratively.

5.3.3. Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures

- Excused: An absence, tardiness, or early departure may be excused only with written parent/guardian permission received within twenty-four (24) hours following the absence, received at the time of tardiness, and within two (2) hours before an early departure.
- Unexcused: An absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered unexcused if written parent/guardian permission is not received within the time frames noted above.

5.3.4. Tardies:

- Students must obtain a release slip or admittance form from the Main office for late arrivals or will be marked unexcused tardy.

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- Tardies are excused with a parent's email/SMS message to frontdesk@houghton.academy received before the end of the school day on which the tardy occurred.
- Multiple tardies will result in disciplinary action.
- Students must be in Homeroom at 7:45 am or will be marked tardy/absent.
- Boarding students must finish breakfast by 7:40 am before Homeroom.

5.4. ACADEMY ACTIVITIES & NON-ACADEMY STUDENTS

- 5.4.1. The general rule is that Academy activities are offered only to Academy students.
- 5.4.2. On certain occasions, non-academy students may attend, but they must obtain permission from the adult in charge and the Head of School.
- 5.4.3. Yearly activities typically include:
 - Boarding Student Retreat: Boarding students only
 - All School Retreat: Academy students only
 - Senior Retreat – Academy students only
 - Senior Trip – Academy students only
 - Thanksgiving Banquet – Academy students only
 - Lock-In – Academy students only
 - Junior/Senior Prom – A non-academy student may attend with:
 - The advance approval of the Prom faculty/staff advisor and the Head of School.
 - If he/she has a well-established relationship with an Academy junior or senior.
 - And provides a confidential letter of character reference from

their current school administrator.

5.5. BACKPACKS

This policy creates a safe, organized, focused learning environment, fostering academic success and promoting student well-being. Houghton Academy permits students to bring backpacks to school under the following conditions:

- 5.5.1. Locker Fit Requirement: Backpacks must fit entirely inside the student's assigned locker and under their chair.
- 5.5.2. Storage Locations:
 - Approved locations include the student's locker, cafeteria backpack hooks, or under the student's chair in a classroom.
 - Prohibited locations include hallways, classroom floor (other than under the student's chair), locker rooms (other than in a designated locker), auditorium, commons, restrooms, and the cafeteria (other than on backpack hooks).
 - Teachers may also elect not to permit backpacks in their classrooms. In that case, students must leave their backpacks in their lockers or on a designated backpack hook.
- 5.5.3. Appropriate Content: Backpacks may not feature any image or wording considered inappropriate or out of alignment with Academy standards and values, such as violent graphics or references to alcohol or drugs.
- 5.5.4. Subject to Search: Backpacks and lockers can be searched at any time at the administration's discretion.
- 5.5.5. Benefits of the Backpack Policy:
 - Improved Classroom Focus: Prohibiting backpacks in classrooms minimizes distractions. Studies, such as those by Wilson and Rhodes (2019), demonstrate that reduced clutter and visual stimuli contribute to increased student concentration and engagement.
 - Enhanced Safety: Limiting the presence of backpacks in shared spaces reduces tripping hazards and ensures more effortless movement during

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emergencies. According to the National Safety Council (2021), maintaining clear pathways in schools is essential for safe evacuation procedures.

- **Support for Positive School Culture:** By regulating the appearance of backpacks, the policy helps ensure that all visible materials align with the school's Christian values. This contributes to a cohesive environment where students feel supported in their moral and ethical development (Brown, 2018).
- **Encouragement of Organizational Skills:** Storing backpacks in lockers promotes organizational habits. Research by Jones et al. (2020) highlights that structured environments encourage students to manage their materials more effectively, which can lead to better academic outcomes.

5.6. BICYCLE/SCOOTER PARKING

- 5.6.1. Academy students may ride bicycles and scooters to the Academy with the following provisions.
- 5.6.2. Bicycles and scooters may not block a school entrance.
- 5.6.3. Bicycles and scooters must be parked in or near the designated bike rack.

5.7. BRANDING

- 5.7.1. All use of the Houghton Academy name, logos, and images (other than those provided to by the administration), for any form of publication must be pre-approved by the Head of School before use.
- 5.7.2. Electronic signatures may only include the following information:
 - Name
 - Title/Position
 - Mobile Phone (optional)
 - The Head of School must pre-approve any additional wording (e.g. quotes) or images before use.
- 5.7.3. No logos or branding of the Houghton Academy name or image may be

created or distributed without approval.

5.8. BREAKFAST FOR BOARDING STUDENTS

5.8.1. Breakfast Time and Location:

- Self-serve breakfast is available in the cafeteria from 7:20 AM to 7:40 AM Monday through Friday.
- All food provided by the Academy must remain in the cafeteria and be consumed before Homeroom begins.
- Boarding students must remain in the cafeteria during breakfast unless otherwise directed by a staff member.

5.8.2. Guidelines for Use:

- Day students are not permitted to consume the breakfast foods. These are exclusively for boarding students.
- Boarding students may serve themselves during the designated breakfast hours.
- Students are not permitted to enter the kitchen area unless they have received direct permission from the chef.
- Breakfast foods provided by the Academy are not available to Day students.

5.8.3. Consumption of Food:

- Food provided by the Academy must be consumed in the cafeteria.
- Boarding students must remain in the cafeteria during breakfast unless otherwise directed by a staff member.
- Food provided by the Academy may only be consumed during scheduled breakfast and lunch times.

5.8.4. Cleanliness and Responsibility:

- Boarding students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves in the cafeteria.

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- If food is brought into a classroom with teacher permission, boarding students must ensure the classroom is cleaned of any food or waste afterward.

5.8.5. Compliance and Consequences:

- Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in disciplinary action or revocation of breakfast privileges.
- This policy ensures a safe, clean, and respectful environment.

5.9. CELL PHONE / PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

- 5.9.1. Personal electronics such as cell phones, earbuds, Smartwatches, etc., are NOT PERMITTED on campus during school hours
- 5.9.2. Students may only use their approved electronics (e.g., laptop or tablet) for teacher-approved activities when permitted by a teacher or administrator during class time.
- 5.9.3. Approved electronic devices (e.g., laptop) may only be used for instructional purposes.
- 5.9.4. Students may not listen to music, watch videos, or play video games during Study Hall.
- 5.9.5. The teacher or administrator must remain in the student's presence until the use is completed.
- 5.9.6. Personal electronics that have the capability of recording are NEVER allowed in restrooms, bathrooms, or locker rooms at any time (i.e., before, during, or after school hours).
- 5.9.7. A student found with a cell phone or personal electronic device during school hours will surrender the device to the teacher or administrator.
- 5.9.8. A confiscated device will be placed in the office to be retrieved only by a parent/guardian.
- 5.9.9. The staff member who confiscated the phone will submit a behavior report in the school information system to inform parents about the incident.

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- 5.9.10. Parents may provide written or verbal direction for the school to return the surrendered device to the student when the student leaves the campus at the end of the school day.
- 5.9.11. Houghton Academy is not responsible for any damage or loss to student's electronic devices.
- 5.9.12. Policy Exception: students enrolled in Houghton University courses may bring a cell phone on the days they have HU courses, but it must be turned off and remain in the front office cell phone storage locker when the student is on the HA campus.
- 5.9.13. Teachers may use their cell phones for personal use during non-instructional and times when they are not responsible for supervising students. Thus, cell phones may not be used during Study Hall, Chapel, etc.

5.10. CHAPEL / SMALL GROUPS

- 5.10.1. The Chapel convenes weekly in the Rosemary Tysinger Auditorium and alternates between school-wide assembly and small group sessions.
- 5.10.2. Attendance is required of all students and faculty.
- 5.10.3. Textbooks, assignments, classwork, and other extraneous materials must be kept from the chapel.
- 5.10.4. The common Academy courtesies are expected (e.g., no sleeping, slouching, speaking without permission, eating).
- 5.10.5. Chapel Small Groups is where students engage in small groups led by faculty and staff, focused on various activities and themes that encourage the exploration of Christian beliefs and worldviews.
- 5.10.6. Chapel small groups are designed primarily for spiritual enrichment, allowing each student to pose questions about what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- 5.10.7. The small group structure fosters a supportive spiritual, emotional, and mental care environment.
- 5.10.8. Additionally, by centering discussions around shared hobbies or interests,

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students and leaders can connect through commonalities, promoting deeper relationships and fostering community.

- 5.10.9. Chapel programs and small groups aim to facilitate personal spiritual development and introductions to and discipleship in the Christian faith, creating a nurturing space for each student's spiritual journey in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

5.11. CLUB PARTICIPATION

Purpose: This policy encourages student engagement, fosters a sense of community, and enhances the overall educational experience by requiring all high school students to enroll in at least one club per semester.

5.11.1. Mandatory Enrollment for High School Students:

- All high school students must enroll in at least one club per semester.
- Enrollment must be completed within the first two weeks of each semester.
- Students who do not voluntarily enroll in a club will be assigned to a club.

5.11.2. Club Options:

- Students may choose from various academic, athletic, artistic, cultural, and service-oriented clubs.
- A list of available clubs and their descriptions are found in the Handbook Section labeled "[Club Policies](#)."
- Students are also encouraged to initiate new clubs that will interest them and others.
- Once enrolled in a club, students may opt out and enroll in different clubs during the first two weeks of the second semester.

5.11.3. Enrollment Process:

- Students must sign up for their chosen club(s) through the Dean's

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office by submitting a paper or electronic request in writing.

- Club faculty sponsors will confirm enrollment and provide students with meeting schedules and other relevant information.

5.11.4. Participation Requirements:

- Students are expected to actively participate in their chosen club(s) by attending meetings and events.
- Club faculty sponsors will maintain attendance records and report any non-participation issues to the Dean's office.

5.11.5. Exemptions:

- Students with extenuating circumstances may apply for an exemption by submitting a written request to the Dean.
- This request should include a detailed explanation of why the exemption is necessary.
- In consultation with the other administrators, the Dean will review and grant exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

5.11.6. Compliance and Consequences:

- Students who fail to enroll in a club or do not actively participate without an approved exemption may face disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of privileges or suspension.
- Continuous non-compliance may result in further administrative actions as deemed appropriate by the school administration.

5.11.7. Support and Resources:

- The school will provide resources and support to ensure all students can participate in a club.
- The Dean will offer guidance and assistance to students who need help selecting or enrolling in a club.

5.12. COAT STORAGE

To maintain an organized and clutter-free school environment, Houghton Academy has established the following guidelines for coat storage.

5.12.1. Proper Storage:

- Coats must be stored in the student's assigned locker when not being worn.
- Coats are not permitted to be placed on backpack hooks or other areas outside of lockers.

5.12.2. Unattended Coats:

- Coats found outside of lockers will be promptly collected and placed in the Lost and Found.
- If coats are not retrieved from the Lost and Found within one week, they will be donated to charity.

5.12.3. Accountability and Compliance

- Students are responsible for ensuring their coats are properly stored in accordance with this policy.
- Persistent non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.
- Coats and outerwear that are worn during the school day (except during arrival and departure times) must follow the Academy Dress Code policy.

5.13. CONDUCT (STANDARDS OF EXPECTATION)

At Houghton Academy, our conduct policy serves not only to uphold the school's mission but also to create a supportive environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and spiritually. This policy reflects our belief that students benefit from clear boundaries that promote moral development, personal responsibility, and respect for others, all while maintaining a distinctively Christian atmosphere. By adhering to this policy, students commit to a lifestyle that reflects the core values of Houghton Academy, benefiting themselves and the broader

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school community.

5.13.1. Benefits to Students

- **Moral Development:** By upholding ethical standards derived from Christian teachings, students learn the importance of honesty, integrity, and respect for authority—values that contribute to their character growth.
- **Personal Responsibility:** Students develop self-discipline through adherence to these standards, preparing them for responsible living both at school and beyond.
- **Safe and Respectful Environment:** The prohibition of harmful behaviors, such as substance abuse and sexual immorality, fosters a safer school environment conducive to learning and personal well-being.
- **Community Respect:** Students learn to respect the convictions of the Houghton community, gaining an appreciation for how their actions impact others within a shared space.

5.13.2. Prohibited Activities and Items

- **Substance Use/Possession:** Use or possession of items such as tobacco products, lighters, vaping devices, alcohol, and non-prescription drugs is strictly prohibited at all times, including during school vacations on or off campus.
- **Immoral Conduct:** Sexual activity of any kind is not permitted on or off campus, reflecting our commitment to Christian sexual morality.
- **Profanity and Obscenity:** Students are expected to abstain from using profanity, obscene language, acronyms, text abbreviation or gestures, both in and out of the school environment via oral or electronic communication..
- **Gambling:** Engaging in any form of gambling is prohibited on or off campus, as it conflicts with the values of stewardship and responsibility.

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- Immodest Code: Students must follow the school's dress code, which emphasizes modesty and hygiene, reflecting Academy standards during school hours and school-sponsored events (e.g., field trips, concerts, athletic games).

5.13.3. Supporting Research

- Research in educational settings consistently shows that clear, consistent standards benefit students by fostering a structured environment that enhances academic success and personal development.
- Studies in adolescent psychology suggest that students who adhere to well-defined boundaries, such as those involving substance use and ethical behavior, are more likely to succeed in their educational pursuits and personal lives.
- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, schools that enforce strict no-tolerance policies regarding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco have fewer instances of substance abuse, leading to healthier student outcomes.
- Research published by the Journal of Adolescence has found that students in schools with clear standards on sexual activity report higher levels of emotional well-being and academic focus.
- Studies from the American Psychological Association show that environments free from profanity and obscene language contribute to a more respectful and positive learning environment.

5.14. DATING / PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION (PDA)

The following policies are in place to protect the mental and emotional health of students as well as to support the mission of the school:

- 5.14.1. Public displays of affection (PDA) are not permitted on the Houghton Academy or University campus or while attending Academy or University events on or off campus.
- 5.14.2. PDA includes, but is not limited to, embracing, kissing, holding hands,

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massaging, or any form of affectionate touching.

5.14.3. Students may not be in the dormitory of the opposite gender.

5.14.4. Boarding students are not allowed to date or be engaged in exclusive one-boy, one-girl relationships. (See [Resident Life Handbook](#))

5.15. DORM ACCESS

5.15.1. Students who reside in the dorms are not permitted to return to the dorms for any reason other than illness (with the pre-approval and knowledge of the dorm parent.)

5.15.2. Students are expected to bring all materials needed to school at the start of the day.

5.16. DRESS CODE [Updated]

Houghton Academy students are expected to dress in a manner that reflects respect for themselves, others, and the Academy's mission. Our dress code promotes modesty, cleanliness, and a focused academic environment while allowing for personal expression within the bounds of Christian values. Students must be neat, appropriately dressed, and ready to participate in all school activities.

*“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
— 1 Corinthians 10:31*

5.16.1. General Expectations

Students must wear clothing that is:

- Clean, neat, and in good condition
- Modest and appropriately fitted
- Non-distracting to the learning environment

Clothing that contains language or images that promote profanity, sexual content, violence, illegal substances, or messages contrary to the Academy's Christian mission is not permitted.

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5.16.2. Acceptable Clothing

The following clothing is acceptable during the academic day, field trips, and school-sponsored events:

- **Tops:** Shirts, blouses, or sweaters that fully cover the chest, back, and stomach, with sleeves that cover the shoulders.
- **Bottoms:** Pants, jeans, skirts, or shorts without holes or tears that fully cover undergarments and are no shorter than mid-thigh when standing.
- **Footwear:** Wear secure shoes or sandals appropriate for school activities. Closed-toe shoes are required in science labs, the gymnasium, and the kitchen.
- **Outerwear:** Coats, jackets, and scarves may be worn outside or with teacher permission indoors.

Not Permitted

The following are not permitted during the school day, on field trips, or at school-sponsored events:

- Clothing with offensive, vulgar, or suggestive images or language
- Revealing garments, including crop tops, low-cut tops, sheer clothing, or excessively tight clothing that does not meet modesty standards (e.g., leggings)
- Pajamas, sleepwear, or slippers (except during designated spirit days)
- Hats, hoods of any kind, are not to cover the head, or sunglasses worn indoors (unless approved for medical reasons)
- Undergarments that are visible above waistbands or through clothing
- No ear gauges or plugs are permitted (small studs are permitted).
- No nose or other body piercings permitted except ears as noted.

5.16.3. Chapel and Special Event Attire

On designated Chapel days and formal school events, students are expected to wear clean, neat, and smart-casual attire or dressy level. This includes:

- Collared shirts with a tie, blouses, or dresses
- Dress pants, skirts, or khakis (no jeans unless otherwise specified)
- Clean, dress-appropriate footwear

5.16.4. Physical Education and Athletics

Students must wear athletic attire that is modest and appropriate for physical activity:

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- Athletic tops must have straps at least two inches wide
- Shorts must fully cover undergarments and align with modesty standards
- Athletic shoes must be worn in all physical education (PE) classes.
- Athletic attire may not be worn outside of the gym and locker areas of the school (i.e., it is prohibited in classrooms, offices, the commons, etc.).

5.16.5. Enforcement

The dress code will be enforced with respect and grace. If a student is not in compliance with the dress code:

- A faculty or staff member will address the issue discreetly.
- The student will be asked to change or cover the item.
- Repeated violations will result in parental contact and progressive disciplinary action as outlined in the behavior policy.

Our approach emphasizes learning and restoration, not embarrassment or punitive discipline.

5.17. EARLY DISMISSAL

- 5.17.1. Students must have permission from their parent/guardian to be dismissed early.
- 5.17.2. Students must sign out in the office before leaving the school building.

5.18. ENGLISH LANGUAGE USAGE

A significant reason international students enroll at Houghton Academy is to prepare for university studies in English. The best way to become proficient in any language is to use it correctly as often as possible. Unless permitted to do otherwise by a teacher or administrator, students must speak only English in classes and offices during the school day.

5.19. EMAIL OR TEXT USE

- 5.19.1. Email or Text messages may not be used to lodge a grievance or address an argument or dispute. See Grievance / Problem-Solving Policy.
- 5.19.2. Electronic communication is to be limited to the sharing of information.
- 5.19.3. Employees and students must check Academy email accounts at least once in the morning and once before the end of the day (excluding

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weekends or holidays).

- 5.19.4. Employees and students must provide a response (or at least an acknowledgment) to any school-related email inquiry within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt (excluding weekends or holidays).
- 5.19.5. Employees and students must use their school account for school-related emails only and maintain a personal account for non-school-related emails.
- 5.19.6. Employees and students must submit drafts of emails for distribution groups (e.g., all teachers, all parents, all students) to the Head of School before distributing.

5.20. EMERGENCY DRILLS

Conducting regular drills is a critical practice, as mandated by the New York State Education Department, to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. Research supports that routine drills significantly improve response times and reduce panic during real emergencies, helping students feel more prepared and secure (Casserly, 2017). These drills offer students the opportunity to practice life-saving skills, fostering both personal responsibility and teamwork in crisis situations.

5.20.1. Benefits to Students:

- Increased Preparedness: Drills provide a controlled environment to familiarize students with emergency procedures, reducing anxiety during actual emergencies.
- Improved Safety: By practicing efficient evacuations, students are better able to navigate potential hazards, ensuring quicker exits and lower risks of injury.
- Enhanced Focus: Evacuation drills encourage students to stay calm and follow structured procedures, which are essential for safety in emergency situations.

5.20.2. Procedures and Guidelines:

- Quick and Silent Evacuation:

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- Students must exit the building promptly and quietly, avoiding any talking while in hallways or outside. Silence ensures that emergency instructions can be heard clearly.
- Leave All Items Behind:
 - Students are to leave behind all personal belongings (such as backpacks and laptops) and school items to avoid slowing down the evacuation or creating tripping hazards.
- Using the Doors:
 - The first student to reach an outside door must hold it open until everyone has passed through. For double doors, both should be utilized for quicker egress.
- Assembling in Designated Areas:
 - Once outside, students must remain in their class groups on the far side of Thayer Street, opposite the school.
 - Students must line up alphabetically within their groups to facilitate an accurate and speedy attendance check by teachers.

5.20.3. Teacher Responsibilities Before Exiting:

- Take the student roster for attendance.
- Ensure you have the classroom radio for communication with administrators.
- Bring the Red/Green emergency card to signal student safety status.

5.20.4. Attendance and Emergency Signaling:

- Once outside, teachers will immediately take attendance.
- If all students are present and safe, display the Green side of the emergency card.

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- If a student is missing or injured, display the Red side of the card so administrators can respond quickly.

5.20.5. Awaiting the "All Clear":

- Students and teachers must remain outside until the "all clear" signal is given by the administration. At this time, they may re-enter the building in an orderly manner.

5.20.6. Supporting Research: According to studies by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), regular school drills enhance familiarity with escape routes, improve coordination among staff and students, and lead to faster, safer evacuations in real-life emergencies. Schools that conduct regular drills have been shown to reduce evacuation times and injury rates during actual incidents (NFPA, 2018).

5.21. EVENT / ACTIVITIES SCHEDULING

Houghton Academy seeks to provide a structured and efficient process for scheduling events on campus, ensuring minimal disruption to the school community and optimal use of facilities. This policy applies to all student groups and organizations planning events on campus.

5.21.1. Submission of Calendar Event Request Form

- All student groups and organizations must complete the Calendar Event Request Form (available through the front office) prior to planning or promoting any event.
- The form must include details such as:
 - Event name, purpose, and description
 - Name of the group sponsoring the event
 - Description of the event and how it supports our mission and Expected Student Outcomes.
 - Proposed date and time
 - Location request

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- Estimated attendance
- Chaperones
- Location
- Transportation needs
- Facility needs
- Substitutes needed for which teachers and periods if during the school day
- Special requirements (e.g., audio/visual equipment, additional seating)
- Completed forms must be submitted to the Head of School no later than the first two weeks of each semester.
- Approval from the Head of School is required before any event can be confirmed, placed on the Academy calendar or publicized.

5.21.2. Responsibilities of the Sponsoring Group

- For events held on campus, the sponsoring group is responsible for the following:
- Set-Up
 - Arranging all necessary furnishings and equipment in accordance with the approved event plan.
 - Ensuring that any school property used is handled with care and is appropriate for the intended use.
- Tear-Down and Clean-Up
 - Restoring the event space to its original condition immediately following the event.
 - Ensuring all trash is disposed of properly and all items brought in by the group are removed.

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- Verifying that school furnishings and equipment are properly returned to their designated locations.
- Damage and Repairs
 - Reporting any damages to school furnishings or equipment to the Facilities Manager within 24 hours of the event.
 - Covering the cost of repairs or replacement for any damaged items, as determined by the school administration.

5.21.3. Additional Guidelines

- Events must align with Houghton Academy's mission and values.
- All events must comply with school policies, including health and safety regulations.
- Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the denial of future event requests by the sponsoring group.

5.22. EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES (ESOs)

Houghton Academy's ESOs serve to guide all aspects of the schools operations (e.g., curriculum, field trips, activities, clubs, athletics) and the following descriptors serve as the metric and measure for subject area awards. In addition, the ESOs serve as the metric for determining the graduating senior ESO Awards, recognizing the graduates who most authentically embody our values and hopes for students.

Live Authentically

- Understand and wrestle with biblical values
- Develop God-given gifts and abilities
- Evaluate personal decisions and actions.

Learn Deeply

- Acquire and apply foundational knowledge
- Engage intellectual curiosity
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills

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Love Boldly

- Respect God, others and self
- Practice selfless service
- Pursue justice, mercy, and peace

Lead Globally

- Appreciate diverse cultures
- Cultivate meaningful relationships
- Influence positive change

5.23. FINAL EXAM WEEK ATTENDANCE

- 5.23.1. High School students must be present in the school building at least 10 minutes before their scheduled exam period.
- 5.23.2. Students who have exams before and after lunch may not leave the building until their afternoon exams are completed.
- 5.23.3. Students without an exam scheduled are not allowed in the school building except during the lunch period and must immediately exit after lunch.

5.24. FOOD/DRINK

Students must respect the school community and facilities and be mindful of the effort required to maintain a clean environment. Minimizing messes helps reduce custodial work and unnecessary upkeep expenses. Everyone is required to take ownership of maintaining a clean and welcoming space. Also, see the Breakfast policy above.

- 5.24.1. Food or drink (other than water) is only permitted in areas outside the cafeteria with the teacher's permission as part of a learning activity or celebration.
- 5.24.2. Food or drink (other than water) is NOT permitted during Study Halls.
- 5.24.3. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves in the cafeteria and any other school location.
- 5.24.4. Cleaning up includes properly disposing of waste, wiping down surfaces, and ensuring the area is left as clean as it was found.

5.25. FUNDRAISING

- 5.25.1. Fundraising is defined as raising money either by donations or sales/services rendered.
- 5.25.2. All fundraisers must secure approval from the Head of School.
- 5.25.3. All funds raised must either go directly to Houghton Academy or to another designated charity.
- 5.25.4. Funds may not benefit or go to an individual.

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- 5.25.5. Fundraising activities must support the school's mission/vision/goals and not exploit students.
- 5.25.6. Fundraising projects are subject to state law.
- 5.25.7. All proceeds raised must be accounted for, turned in to the school bookkeeper, and receipted.
- 5.25.8. Individuals may not keep any money raised.
- 5.25.9. Donations or events that raise money outside the Houghton community are encouraged and preferred.
- 5.25.10. The coaches and club sponsors must be present during fundraising events.
- 5.25.11. Sports teams may raise money through sales of food and beverages during their own or other teams' seasons.
- 5.25.12. The team in the season has priority over a team of a different season.
- 5.25.13. Any student organization may only conduct fundraising that involves selling a product (e.g., chocolate, or popcorn) once a semester. For example, the Student Council may not hold a rose and popcorn sale in the same semester unless the Head of School provides a waiver.

5.26. GRIEVANCE / PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES

When a student, staff, teacher, administrator, parent, or volunteer, either by words or actions, has a grievance toward another during the school year, for the best interest of our school community, individuals with grievances must seek the restoration in a manner that honors and values relationships (see Matthew 18:15-17). We believe the following procedures serve this end.

- 5.26.1. Speak directly to the person closest to the problem. We expect the individual with the grievance to approach the person who caused the grievance, explain the problem, and seek restoration through a face-to-face meeting. It is highly recommended that all parties document what took place in the meeting (typically a follow up email to all parties articulating what was discussed and any mutually agreed upon action items).

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- 5.26.2. To ensure accountability and emotional safety, it may be appropriate for the individual bringing the concern to request the conversation take place in the presence of a school administrator. If the problem is unresolved, then...
- 5.26.3. The individual with the grievance may request a conference with the direct supervisor of the individual with whom they have a grievance and the individual with whom they have the grievance. If the problem is unresolved, then...
- 5.26.4. The individual with the grievance may request a conference with the Head of School.
- 5.26.5. The Head of School's decisions are final and without appeal, other than a Grievance related to the Head of School in relationship to being out of compliance with a School or Board Policy, which may be appealed to the Board of Trustees.
- 5.26.6. Grievances must be resolved in person, allowing all parties to speak face-to-face.
- 5.26.7. Grievances may initially be reported via email; however, Academy employees and volunteers may not engage in grievance resolution via email or other electronic forms. Resolution must be conducted in person.
- 5.26.8. Students, parents, volunteers, and employees are prohibited from posting or sharing disparaging or negative comments about Houghton Academy (see Social Media Policy).
- 5.26.9. Participating in the Grievance Procedure is confidential. Speaking to anyone not directly participating in the procedure or publishing a grievance electronically or in print is grounds for immediate dismissal.

5.27. HOMEROOM EXPECTATIONS POLICY

The homeroom period at Houghton Academy serves as a foundational start to the school day. It is designed to ensure students are prepared, informed, and compliant with school policies before engaging in academic activities. This policy ensures a structured, respectful, and productive start to each school day at Houghton Academy. The following expectations outline the responsibilities of

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both homeroom teachers and students.

5.27.1. Teacher Responsibilities:

- **Greeting Students:** Homeroom teachers are expected to greet students warmly as they enter the classroom each morning. This helps foster a positive and welcoming environment.
- **Dress Code Compliance:** Teachers will conduct a quick, respectful check of each student's attire to ensure compliance with the school dress code. Any violations must be addressed immediately and sent to the front office if necessary.
- **Attendance:** Teachers must complete attendance promptly within the first five minutes of homeroom.
- **Morning Announcements:** Teachers ensure all students listen to the morning announcements. Teachers should encourage students to be attentive and note important information.
- **Email Check:** Teachers will remind students to check their school email accounts each morning. This practice ensures that students stay informed of any updates, assignments, or critical communications from teachers and administrators.

5.27.2. Student Responsibilities:

- **Punctuality and Preparation:** Students are expected to arrive on time to homeroom, fully prepared for the day ahead, wearing the proper uniform or attire according to the dress code.
- **Dress Code Compliance:** Students must comply with the school's dress code before arriving in homeroom. Any issues should be addressed before the start of the day.
- **Listening to Announcements:** Students must listen carefully to the morning announcements and take note of any information that pertains to them. This includes updates about school events, deadlines, or critical school-wide communications.
- **Checking Email:** Each morning, students must check their school email accounts for important messages from teachers, counselors, or administrators. This should be done promptly and with the understanding that staying informed is part of their daily responsibilities.

5.27.3. Accountability:

- Teachers will immediately follow up on dress code violations or

other homeroom expectations and take appropriate action as outlined in school policy.

- Students who fail to comply with the expectations may face progressive disciplinary actions.

5.28. HYGIENE

Houghton Academy is committed to fostering a learning environment that is healthy, respectful, and conducive to academic and social success. Proper hygiene is essential for personal well-being, public health, and maintaining a positive school atmosphere. This policy outlines expectations for student hygiene and cleanliness to promote personal responsibility and community well-being.

5.28.1. Daily Personal Hygiene Expectations:

- Bathing/Showering: Students must bathe or shower daily to remove dirt, sweat, and bacteria.
- Oral Hygiene: Students must brush their teeth at least twice daily (morning and night) and are encouraged to floss regularly to prevent cavities and bad breath.
- Clothing: Students must wear fresh, clean clothing daily. Clothing should be free of noticeable odors and should be laundered regularly.
- Deodorant/Antiperspirant: Students who have reached puberty should use deodorant or antiperspirant to manage body odor.
- Hair and Nail Care: Hair should be kept clean and brushed regularly. Nails should be trimmed and clean to prevent the spread of bacteria.

5.28.2. Additional Hygiene Practices:

- Handwashing: Students should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after using the restroom, and after coughing or sneezing.
- Use of Facial Tissues: Students should use tissues or the inside of their elbow when sneezing or coughing to prevent the spread of

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germs.

- Foot Hygiene: Socks should be changed daily, and shoes should be properly maintained to prevent odor and infections.
- Use of Personal Care Items: Students should not share personal hygiene items such as combs, toothbrushes, razors, or towels.

5.28.3. Hygiene Support and Accommodations

- Boarding Students: Boarding students will be provided with guidance and access to laundry facilities to ensure personal hygiene and clothing cleanliness.
- Health and Wellness Education: Houghton Academy will incorporate hygiene education into health and wellness programs to reinforce best practices.
- Support for Hygiene Needs: If a student faces barriers to meeting hygiene expectations (e.g., access to hygiene products), they are encouraged to speak with a school administrator for assistance.

5.28.4. Research Supporting Hygiene Policies

Proper hygiene practices contribute significantly to personal health, academic performance, and social interactions. Research highlights the following benefits:

- Improved Health and Reduced Illness: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that daily hygiene habits, such as handwashing and bathing, reduce the spread of infectious diseases, including colds and flu (CDC, 2023).
- Enhanced Academic Performance: Studies indicate that students with poor hygiene may experience social stigma, leading to lower self-esteem and increased absenteeism, which negatively impacts academic achievement (Journal of School Health, 2020).
- Better Social Interactions: Research in developmental psychology suggests that personal hygiene influences peer perceptions, social acceptance, and overall emotional well-being (American

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Psychological Association, 2021).

5.28.5. Implementation and Enforcement

- Faculty and staff will encourage students to maintain good hygiene through reminders and wellness programs.
- If a student consistently does not meet hygiene expectations, they may be addressed in a private and supportive manner by a school administrator.
- If necessary, the school may provide educational resources or assistance to ensure students can meet hygiene expectations as well as disciplinary measures.

5.29. INITIATIONS, PRANKS, HAZING, etc.

5.29.1. Initiation is not permitted at the Academy.

5.29.2. Pranks are expected to be wholesome and good-natured (see “Senior Pranks” policy)

5.29.3. Hazing, bullying, and activities that interfere with persons or property will result in disciplinary action.

5.30. LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY TO PREPARE FOR JUNIOR/SENIOR PROM

If the Junior/Senior Prom is on a school day, students attending may leave school at lunch. Students responsible for decorating are excused for the day.

Other permissions:

- If a student is absent unexcused on the day of the Prom, he/she may not be allowed to attend the Prom.
- Before inviting a non-Academy student, permission must be secured from the Head of School.

5.31. LOCKER GUIDELINES

5.31.1. Locker decorations and posters are visible to students and visitors and must reflect the Academy’s standards and beliefs.

5.31.2. Items affixed to locker doors must be in good condition (e.g., not frayed,

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bent, or ripped).

- 5.31.3. Additionally, photos/pictures in lockers must not include photos not aligned with Academy principles, must not have alcohol or other drug references, or contain inappropriate statements.
- 5.31.4. Subjects must be dressed modestly and with no sexual innuendo. A good guideline for this is the Academy dress code.
- 5.31.5. All writing must contain no foul language or double meanings.

5.32. MAIL HANDLING

- 5.32.1. Houghton Academy receives and processes all mail and packages delivered to its physical addresses. Individuals acknowledge and consent to the school's mail handling procedures outlined in this policy by sending or receiving mail at the school
- 5.32.2. Authority to Open Mail: To ensure the safe and efficient handling of all mail and deliveries, Houghton Academy reserves the right to open, inspect, and process any mail or package delivered to the school's address, regardless of the name to which it is addressed. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and other recipients who receive mail at the school.
- 5.32.3. Exceptions:
 - Mail labeled "Confidential" or "Personal" and addressed to a student must be opened in the presence of a faculty or staff member to ensure compliance with school policies and safety regulations.
 - If an employee has specific concerns regarding their mail, they should make arrangements to receive mail at an off-campus address.
- 5.32.4. Handling and Distribution:
 - Mail and packages addressed to students, faculty, and staff will be distributed through designated collection points.
 - The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of mail or packages after they have been distributed to the recipient.

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5.32.5. Unclaimed Mail & Disposal:

- Unclaimed mail or packages will be held for a reasonable period (typically 14 days unless otherwise communicated).
- After this period, the school may, at its sole discretion, dispose of, return, or repurpose the unclaimed mail without further notice to the intended recipient.

5.32.6. Safety & Security Considerations:

- Any mail or package that appears suspicious, damaged, leaking, or otherwise concerning may be inspected and, if necessary, reported to appropriate authorities.
- Prohibited items (such as contraband or hazardous materials) found in mail or packages will be confiscated, and appropriate actions will be taken.

5.32.7. By receiving mail at Houghton Academy, individuals acknowledge and accept the terms of this policy.

5.33. MONEY AT SCHOOL

- 5.33.1. Students must not leave money unattended at any time, including in their lockers, gym bags, or the pockets of clothes they are not wearing.
- 5.33.2. If students need to bring money to school, they must give it to an appropriate adult for safekeeping.
- 5.33.3. Boarding students must keep their money out of the dormitory room.
- 5.33.4. Business Office personnel operate a “student banking service” and will keep students' money for them.
- 5.33.5. Students may deposit money anytime the office is open.
- 5.33.6. Students may withdraw money according to the established procedures and during the designated banking hours.

5.34. PROM (JUNIOR / SENIOR BANQUET)

As part of Houghton Academy’s commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and

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Christ-honoring environment, the following policy outlines the expectations for student participation, behavior, and attire at the annual Prom. The Prom is a formal, school-sponsored event designed to celebrate student achievement and foster community in a manner consistent with the Academy's mission and values. The Houghton Academy Prom is a joyful and memorable celebration. We invite students to participate with integrity, modesty, and a commitment to honoring God and one another.

5.34.1. Arrival and Departure Times

- Late arrivals: Students arriving more than 30 minutes after the start time may not be admitted unless prior approval is given.
- No re-entry: Once a student or guest leaves the venue, they may not re-enter.

5.34.2. Behavior Expectations

- All Houghton Academy behavioral standards apply during the Prom, including expectations related to respectful conduct, language, and interactions.
- Students and guests must behave in a way that reflects the Academy's Christian values and upholds the dignity of the event.
- Inappropriate behavior may result in immediate removal from the event and further disciplinary action.

5.34.3. Check-In and Supervision

- Check-in procedure: All students and guests must check in at the entrance upon arrival.
- Guests' Photo ID is required: Guests must present a valid photo ID upon entry. The Prom Advisor will retain the ID until the end of the event, at which time it will be returned to the guest.

5.34.4. Dancing Expectations

- All dancing must be respectful and modest. Lewd, sexually suggestive, or physically inappropriate dancing will not be tolerated.

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- Students who fail to comply with dance expectations will be given one warning. A second offense will result in dismissal from the event.

5.34.5. Dress Code and Attire Approval

To preserve the formality of the event and promote a culture of modesty, dignity, and self-respect, the following Prom Dress Code applies to all attendees:

- General Guidelines
 - Prom attire must be modest and approved in advance by the Dean or designated Prom Advisor.
 - Dress code expectations for modesty apply to both Houghton Academy students and their guests.
 - Questions about attire must be submitted to the Dean (or designee) via email at least two weeks before the Prom.
 - **IMPORTANT:** Students whose attire does not meet the required dress standards will be prohibited from entering the Prom.
 - Parents or guardians (or dorm parents) are responsible for ensuring that students are appropriately dressed before leaving home or the dormitory for the event.
- Dress Code Requirements
 - Boys: Semi-formal or formal attire is required, including:
 - A suit or tuxedo OR
 - Dress pants with a sport coat, dress shirt, and tie.
 - Dress shoes are required. Open-toe footwear is not permitted.
 - Girls: Dresses or gowns must reflect modesty and appropriateness, including:

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- Modest necklines — no visible cleavage.
- Backs that are not low-cut or completely open.
- Length that falls below the knee when standing.
- No exposed midriff — dresses must fully cover the stomach.
- Bare shoulders and dresses with no sleeves are permissible as long as they have straps.
- Slits must not extend higher than the fingertips when standing upright.
- Dresses with sheer or illusion fabric in restricted areas (neckline, midriff, back, or above the allowed slit) are not permitted.

5.34.6. Eligibility to Attend

- The Houghton Academy Prom is exclusively for current Juniors and Seniors (grades 11 and 12) of the current academic year. Students in other grades are not permitted to attend, even as guests. If space permits, waivers to this policy can be submitted to the Dean in exceptional circumstances (e.g., a senior who has been dating a sophomore for at least six months). The Dean must endorse the exception and recommend the policy waiver to the Head of School for final approval.
- Juniors and Seniors may invite one outside guest (male or female), subject to prior approval by the Dean or designated advisor.
- All non-HA guests must submit a Recommendation Letter on school letterhead from their current school Principal to the HA Dean at least two weeks before the event.
- In addition, all non-HA guests must submit a letter of request to the HA Dean, along with a recommendation from their Principal. This letter must include acknowledgment of and agreement to all Academy rules and dress code expectations.

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- **Disciplinary Eligibility:** Students under disciplinary probation or with recent behavioral infractions are ineligible to attend the Prom without the permission of the Principal and approval by the Head of School

5.34.7. Financials

- The budget must be approved by the CFO.
- The budget must include the ticket costs for chaperones and an administrator (e.g., Boarding Director, Dean, Principal, Head of School), as well as their spouses, to attend as guests of the Junior Class.
- **Refund Policy:** Tickets are non-refundable. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Head of School.

5.34.8. Music and Photography

- Music selection must be appropriate for a school-sponsored, Christian environment.
- A DJ or band must submit their song list at least 2 weeks in advance for administrative approval.
- Photography and videography will be conducted during the event for school use. Participation in the event equates to permission to use photos and videos of the event for HA purposes (e.g., social media, newsletters, promotional materials).

5.34.9. Substance Use and Search Policy

- **Drug/alcohol-free policy:** Prom is a drug- and alcohol-free event. Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or drugs will result in immediate removal and further disciplinary consequences.
- **Search policy:** The school reserves the right to search bags or personal belongings upon entry and at any time throughout the event..

5.34.10. Transportation

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- Students must arrange their transportation to and from the event unless the school provides group transportation.
- Students who wish to transport other students must submit written permission from the parents/guardians of all persons in the vehicle to the prom coordinator at least one week in advance.

5.35. RECORDING (Video, Audio, or Photographic)

To protect the privacy and well-being of all individuals within the Houghton Academy community, the following policy applies:

5.35.1. Recording Release

- By enrolling their child at the Academy, parents/guardians acknowledge and understand that school activities and in-class instruction may be subject to video and audio recording, as well as photographs taken for social media, public relations, and HA publications (e.g., Podcast, Promotional Materials, Yearbook) and as such, video/photographic images and audio recordings of their child might be captured and distributed by the school.
- Parents or guardians can exempt their child from this policy by sending a written request to the Head of School to restrict the recording and distribution of their child's images.

5.35.2. Recording Prohibition

- No person (i.e., employee, student, parent, volunteer, or guest) may record via video, audio, or photography any other person on campus or during a school event without the written permission of the Head of School and in the case of video and audio recording the explicit permission of those being recorded.
- Even with written permission from the Head of School and the persons being recorded, no person may duplicate, distribute, broadcast, or upload the recording to any storage device or cloud location other than an approved electronic folder in the HA Google

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Drive.

5.35.3. Restricted Areas

- To ensure the safety and dignity of all individuals, recording devices (e.g., cell phones, cameras, and audio recorders) are strictly prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms, and other private areas at all times.
- These restricted areas include restrooms in the school building, dorms, and HA houses.

5.35.4. Recording of Classroom Instruction

- HA (i.e., teachers and administration) may record any class via video and audio. Recording instruction via video conference is strictly forbidden by all others (e.g., students or parents).
- HA's video and audio recordings focus primarily on the instruction and the teacher, not the students in the class. However, students' questions and comments may be included in the recording.
- Teachers may give their students access to a class video recording of the instruction. HA shall not make the recordings public in any capacity.
- Viewers of class videos understand that neither they may not capture, save, or distribute classroom recordings.

5.35.5. Consequences for Unauthorized Use

- Using a recording device without appropriate permission or sharing an unauthorized image, audio, or video recording constitutes a severe breach of privacy and community trust.
- Such actions may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion (for students) or termination of employment (for staff and faculty).

5.35.6. Supporting Research and Legal Foundations

- Research on Privacy in Educational Settings: Studies, such as those conducted by the International Journal of Law and Education,

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emphasize the importance of privacy protections to create a safe and respectful learning environment. Unauthorized recordings can lead to bullying, harassment, and long-term psychological harm, especially for students.

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): FERPA protects the privacy of students' educational records, and unauthorized recordings may inadvertently expose personal information, violating these federal protections.
- New York Civil Rights Law Section 50: Prohibits the unauthorized use of a person's likeness or voice for recording purposes without explicit consent.
- Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA): This federal law underscores the importance of safeguarding oral, written, and electronic communications from unauthorized interception or recording.
- Title IX Protections: Unpermitted recordings in areas like locker rooms or restrooms may violate Title IX, which prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sex in educational settings.

5.36. RESTROOM USE

Houghton Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and well-maintained environment for all students and staff. This policy is in place to protect privacy and promote an atmosphere of respect. The following guidelines outline the expectations for restroom use on campus:

5.36.1. Prohibition of Recording Devices

- The use or possession of electronic devices that have the capability of recording audio or video, including but not limited to cell phones, tablets, or laptops, is strictly prohibited in locker rooms and restrooms in all HA facilities (i.e., school building, dorms, houses).

5.36.2. Reasonable Time Limit

- Students must limit their time in the restroom to what is necessary for its intended purpose. Prolonged occupancy without legitimate

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reason is not permitted.

5.36.3. Reporting Maintenance or Custodial Needs

- Any maintenance or custodial concerns, such as a blocked toilet, an empty soap dispenser, or any other issue, must be reported immediately to the front office. Prompt reporting ensures a clean and functional restroom environment for all.

5.36.4. General Expectations

- Restrooms are to be used responsibly and respectfully. Acts of vandalism, inappropriate behavior, or misuse of facilities will result in disciplinary action.

By adhering to these guidelines, all members of the Houghton Academy community contribute to a safe, respectful, and well-maintained environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

5.37. SEARCH & SEIZURE

This policy's primary goal is to create a secure learning atmosphere that aligns with the Academy's mission to foster integrity, responsibility, and community well-being.

5.37.1. Benefits to Students and the School Community:

- **Enhanced Safety:** Regular and proactive searches help identify and remove dangerous or inappropriate items, contributing to a safer school environment. Research shows that when implemented fairly, student searches can prevent harmful incidents, including bullying and violence, improving overall school safety (U.S. Department of Justice, 2021).
- **Encouragement of Responsibility:** The policy reinforces personal responsibility by holding students accountable for maintaining school property and the contents of their personal belongings. Studies have found that when students are aware of potential searches, they are less likely to bring prohibited items, contributing to a more positive and responsible school culture (Cruz, 2019).
- **Promotion of Trust and Fairness:** Transparent and consistent enforcement of search and seizure policies ensures students

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understand the boundaries of acceptable behavior, fostering trust between the school community and administration. Research indicates that clear communication of rules and consequences increases students' perception of fairness and respect for school policies, ultimately leading to better compliance (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014).

- Deterrence of Misconduct: The possibility of searches is a deterrent to engaging in misconduct. This contributes to a more orderly environment, as students are less likely to bring contraband or items that could disrupt the learning environment. Studies have shown that such policies, when coupled with educational interventions, reduce the incidence of rule violations (Shah, 2017).
- 5.37.2. Desks, lockers, and school-issued learning resources/materials remain the property of the Academy.
 - 5.37.3. Students are responsible for maintaining the condition of any school property in their care or use.
 - 5.37.4. Any vandalism, destruction, or damage to school property and facilities will result in disciplinary action, including expulsion from the Academy.
 - 5.37.5. Parents/Guardians of students responsible for vandalism, destruction, or damage to school property (e.g., facilities, furniture, equipment, technology) are responsible for replacement and repair expenses.
 - 5.37.6. The Academy reserves the right to search students and their personal property (e.g., pockets, backpacks, lockers, vehicles) at any time and for any reason deemed necessary to maintain safety and security and ensure policy compliance.
 - 5.37.7. The Academy has the authority to seize personal property to ensure a safe, orderly environment and uphold its standards of conduct.
 - 5.37.8. Any seized property may or may not be returned to the student/family at the discretion of the Head of School. Personal property brought onto campus (e.g., cell phones) is subject to this policy.

5.38. SENIOR PRANK

During the last week of the third quarter, seniors may express themselves in a tradition that has come to be known as “Senior Prank.” This tradition is welcomed and encouraged within a context without adverse effects on the Academy, its people, or its property. Vivacious, creative fun is suitable for all.

- 5.38.1. The Senior Prank must be submitted for approval by the Head of School by the end of the first Semester.
- 5.38.2. Students may only be in the school facilities with a faculty/staff person present.
- 5.38.3. “Pranks” that interfere with the safe functioning of the routine will be corrected immediately.
- 5.38.4. Technology hardware (computers, projectors, etc.) must not be moved or affected in any way.
- 5.38.5. The personal property of teachers must be left alone.
- 5.38.6. When “pranks” are acceptable, they will be left intact for all to see and enjoy.
- 5.38.7. Seniors must “return things to normal” (i.e., clean up) before the school day is over.
- 5.38.8. Beginning at the end of the lunch hour, all Senior Privileges will be suspended until everything is returned to normal.
- 5.38.9. With administrative approval, specific “pranks” may remain in place for extended periods.

5.39. SENIOR PRIVILEGES & QUALIFICATIONS

5.39.1. Introduction / Rationale:

- The Senior Privileges policy encourages academic responsibility and personal development among senior students.
- This policy promotes self-regulation, time management, and a sense of independence that supports students' transition to

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post-secondary life by granting increased autonomy and trust.

- Research shows that when students are entrusted with privileges tied to performance and behavior, they often demonstrate improved academic outcomes, self-efficacy, and responsibility (Marzano, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002).
- This policy supports the development of crucial life skills—such as time management, self-regulation, and responsibility—while aligning privileges with academic and behavioral standards.
- Research indicates that offering structured autonomy and linking privileges to performance can positively impact student outcomes, preparing them for the challenges of higher education and beyond.

5.39.2. Qualifications:

- Academic Performance:
 - To obtain and retain their privileges, seniors must maintain a minimum grade of 83% in all courses.
 - This requirement incentivizes academic engagement, as research suggests that setting academic thresholds tied to privileges motivates students to maintain consistent performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

5.39.3. Behavior and Accountability:

- Seniors who receive a behavior notification for violating school policies will forfeit their privileges until corrective action is taken, as determined by the HA Administration.
- This provision reinforces the importance of personal accountability, aligning with restorative discipline practices that emphasize correcting behavior while maintaining student dignity (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

5.39.4. Privileges:

The following privileges are extended to qualifying seniors effective on the first day of Quarter 2.

Late Arrival:

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- Seniors who submit parent written approval in advance to the front office with a Period 1 Study Hall are not required to attend Homeroom or Study Hall on that day or days.
- Seniors who submit parent written approval in advance to the front office with a Period 1 course at Houghton University are not required to attend Homeroom on those days.
- Seniors who submit parent written approval in advance to the front office who have a combination of Study Halls or HU classes at the start of the day (e.g., Periods 1, 2, and 3) before their first HA class are not required to attend Homeroom or Study Halls on those days.

Optional Study Hall Attendance:

- Seniors who submit parent written approval in advance to the front office are not required to attend Study Halls that occur before their first class of the day and may leave campus early if they have a Study Hall at the end of their day (i.e., no classes following their afternoon Study Hall), but they must sign out in the front office before leaving campus and sign in upon returning to campus

Commons Study Hall Utilization:

- Seniors may use the Commons during Study Hall under the following conditions:
- They must check in and complete attendance in their assigned Study Hall room.
- After recording attendance, they can proceed to the Commons with a permission slip from their Study Hall teacher.
- If more than 9 other seniors are in the Commons, they must return to their assigned Study Hall location.
- All other [study hall policies](#) outlined in the School Handbook apply to seniors who use the Commons during study hall.

5.40. SCHOOL BUSES

5.40.1. The same general expectations for students throughout the campus

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facilities govern student use of Houghton Academy school buses.

- 5.40.2. When the bus is in motion, students are to remain seated.
- 5.40.3. Noise levels must be moderate to low.
- 5.40.4. Headphones must be used to listen to music.
- 5.40.5. Nothing human or inanimate must be extended out of the windows.
- 5.40.6. Nothing must be thrown within or out of the bus.
- 5.40.7. Students of opposite gender, if sharing a row must sit in the front five rows.
- 5.40.8. The aisle of the bus must not be blocked in any way.
- 5.40.9. The final authority on any matter arising rests with the bus driver or HA chaperone if using a charter bus.
- 5.40.10. In New York State, seatbelt requirements for school buses depend on the type of bus:
 - Large School Buses (Over 10,000 lbs.): NYS law requires that large school buses be equipped with seatbelts. However, state law does not require students to wear them.
 - Small School Buses (Under 10,000 lbs.): These vehicles are considered more like passenger vehicles and must have seatbelts that students are required to wear at all times.

5.41. SOCIAL MEDIA PARENTAL CONSENT AND CRIMINAL LIABILITY

Houghton Academy is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, staff, and volunteers. In recognition of the potential risks and impacts of social media, the following policy is enacted to ensure our students' responsible use of social media platforms and to maintain the integrity and safety of our school community.

5.42. Parental Consent for Social Media App Downloads

- 5.42.1. Mandatory Parental Consent: Parents or legal guardians must provide

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explicit consent for their children to download and use social media applications on personal or school-provided devices. This consent must be documented and available for submission to the school administration upon request.

- 5.42.2. Monitoring and Guidance: Parents/guardians are encouraged to actively monitor their children's social media activity and provide guidance on appropriate and safe usage of these platforms.

5.43. Criminal Liability for Misuse

- 5.43.1. Prohibited Activities: Any use of social media by students that targets the school, its employees, or volunteers in a harmful, harassing, defamatory, or threatening manner is strictly prohibited.
- 5.43.2. Legal Accountability: Parents or legal guardians will be held criminally liable for any social media activity conducted by their children that violates this policy and is directed toward the school, its employees, or volunteers.

- 5.44. Reporting and Enforcement: The Academy may actively monitor for violations of this policy and report any misuse incidents to the appropriate legal authorities. Consequences may include disciplinary action by the school and legal action as deemed appropriate.

- 5.45. Acknowledgement: Parents and legal guardians acknowledge and agree to comply with this policy by enrolling their children at Houghton Academy.

5.46. SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

- 5.46.1. It is expressly prohibited to use Houghton Academy's name, logos, likeness, or images on any form of social media, print, or online publication without prior approval from the Head of School.
- 5.46.2. Employees, volunteers, and students are expressly prohibited from posting images of employees, volunteers, or students on personal social media accounts without written authorization from those photographed. (Email confirmation is acceptable).
- 5.46.3. Any individual seeking to utilize or establish social media accounts or websites for instructional or other school-related purposes must have prior written approval from the Head of School and meet any applicable

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requirements.

- 5.46.4. Using the school's name or logos as part of a social media account's identity is strictly forbidden, other than those accounts owned and managed by HA.
- 5.46.5. All HA-related social media accounts and websites must include administrative rights to the HA website and social media manager.
- 5.46.6. Employees, students, and parents must consider that HA has students whose pictures cannot be published in any instance, whether a school-approved venue or a personal social media account (blogs, Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- 5.46.7. Students, parents, volunteers, and employees are strictly prohibited from posting or sharing any disparaging or negative comments about HA in any form (e.g., electronic, print, audio, or video).
- 5.46.8. Students, parents, volunteers, and employees must manage all grievances through the school's Grievance Policy.
- 5.46.9. Any individual who violates HA policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 5.46.10. Students must provide HA the ability to view their social media accounts upon request by HA administration.
- 5.46.11. HA students, parents, and employees may not publish on social media or distribute in print or electronic form any image or text that is not in alignment with the school's mission, beliefs, and values, is derogatory, or negatively reflects upon the school programs, students, faculty, staff, administration or school community.
- 5.46.12. HA employees, except for the official HA social media account managers, may not use social media messaging apps (e.g., Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp) to provide official school-related information.
- 5.46.13. The only approved HA social media accounts are as follows:
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/school/houghton-academy>

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- <https://www.facebook.com/HoughtonAcademy>
- <https://www.instagram.com/houghtonacademy>
- <https://x.com/HoughtonAcademy>
- WeChat ID: JonKeith_USA

5.47. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL-OWNED EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE, AND TECHNOLOGY

5.47.1. Purpose:

- This policy outlines the responsibilities of Houghton Academy students regarding the care, use, and replacement of school-owned equipment, furniture, and technology.
- The aim is to ensure all students understand their role in maintaining a safe and functional school environment.
- Students adhering to this policy contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment. Houghton Academy values the cooperation of all students in taking responsibility for the school's resources.

5.47.2. Scope: This policy applies to all middle and high school students at Houghton Academy.

5.47.3. Care and Proper Use:

- Students must treat all school-owned equipment, furniture, and technology carefully.
- Students must use all school property according to the instructions provided by teachers, administrators, or the equipment manuals.

5.47.4. Responsibility for Damage or Loss:

- Any student who damages, loses, or otherwise compromises school-owned property, intentionally or through negligence, will be held financially responsible for repairing or replacing the item(s).
- The administration will determine the cost of repairs or replacement based on current market prices or the actual repair costs, plus the

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cost of labor required and associated with replacement.

5.47.5. Reporting Damage or Loss:

- Students must immediately report any damage or loss of school property to a teacher or administrator.
- Failure to report damage or loss may result in additional disciplinary action.

5.47.6. Replacement Procedure:

- Upon assessment of damage or loss, the administration will notify the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) of the necessary steps for replacement.
- Payment for repairs or replacements must be made within a specified timeframe determined by the school administration.
- In cases of financial hardship, alternative arrangements may be discussed with the school administration.

5.47.7. Consequences for Non-Compliance:

- Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to loss of privileges, detention, or suspension.
- Unresolved financial obligations may also impact the student's eligibility for specific school activities or the release of academic records.

5.48. VEHICLES / STUDENT DRIVERS

5.48.1. Automobiles: Day students may drive cars to school. However, cars may not be used during the school day unless the parents and HA administration grant permission, and students may not ride with other students without parent and Administrative permission.

5.48.2. Trucks: In addition to the expectations regarding automobiles, students may not ride in the back of pickup trucks.

5.48.3. Parking: All student vehicles must be parked in the North Lot (closest to

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Luckey Drive) or the lot south of the Gymnasium.

5.48.4. Regarding transportation to/from school activities:

- The priority is for students to ride in a school-owned or school-rented vehicle.
- The second preference is for students to ride with faculty/staff.
- The third preference is for students to ride with a parent volunteer who has completed a background check.
- Only under unusual circumstances may a student drive a personal vehicle to a school function with or without other students on board. In such instances, parental and school permission must be obtained at least 48 hours in advance.

5.49. VACATION TRAVEL FINES

- 5.49.1. International students must plan their travel schedules to leave Houghton after classes are dismissed and return to Houghton the day before classes resume.
- 5.49.2. The Boarding Program Coordinator is available to assist boarding students in making travel arrangements that fit the schedule of classes.
- 5.49.3. If students schedule transportation that requires them to miss class, arrive or depart late at night, or very early in the morning, a \$250 charge will apply.

6. Discipline

6.1. ADMINISTRATION OF DISCIPLINE & CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1.1. Academy administration, faculty, and staff are responsible for implementing policies related to student deportment and discipline.
- 6.1.2. Under the guidance of the Residence Life Director, the dormitory head residents and resident assistants are responsible for implementing policies related to deportment and discipline in the residences.
- 6.1.3. All faculty, support staff, and residence life staff are responsible for maintaining and ensuring discipline-related information is treated as

confidential.

6.2. CONDITIONAL FINANCIAL AID, TUITION ASSISTANCE, DISCOUNTS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

At Houghton Academy, we are committed to supporting students and their families through tuition assistance and scholarships, ensuring access to a Christ-centered education for those who qualify. This policy encourages academic excellence and adherence to Houghton Academy's values and standards while maintaining fairness and accountability. In alignment with this commitment, the following expectations apply to all students receiving financial assistance or scholarships:

- 6.2.1. Academic Performance: Students receiving tuition assistance, discounts, or scholarships must maintain a minimum grade of C (76%) or above in all courses throughout the academic year.
- 6.2.2. Good Standing: Students receiving tuition assistance, discounts, or scholarships must remain in good standing and adhere to all Academy expectations, including conduct, attendance, and compliance with school policies.
- 6.2.3. Review and Accountability: Academic performance and compliance with Academy policies will be reviewed at the end of each grading period. If a student falls below the required academic threshold or is found to be in violation of school expectations, the tuition assistance, discount, or scholarship may be discontinued for the remainder of the school year, as determined by the school administration.

6.3. DISMISSAL

This is the severing of the student's enrollment at the Academy, with no period for consideration of return/re-enrollment.

6.4. FACULTY / STAFF AUTHORITY

Faculty and staff at Houghton Academy are responsible for guiding, instructing, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. Students are expected to respond to directions from faculty and staff promptly, respectfully, and without immediate questioning. If a student has a concern or disagreement with a directive, they must first comply and then address the issue through the steps

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outlined in the [Grievance/Problem-Solving](#) policy.

6.4.1. Faculty and Staff Authority:

- Faculty and staff have the authority to direct students in classrooms, during extracurricular activities, and in all school-related settings.
- Faculty and staff directions must be consistent with school policies and the principles of fairness, safety, and respect.

6.4.2. Student Responsibilities:

- Students are required to follow directions from faculty and staff immediately and respectfully.
- Students should refrain from arguing, questioning, or displaying defiance in response to directives.
- If a student believes a directive is unfair or unreasonable, they should adhere to it at the moment and raise the concern later through the Grievance/Problem-Solving policy.

Benefits to Students:

- Foster a respectful and orderly environment conducive to learning.
- Teach students the value of respectful communication and appropriate channels for problem-solving.
- Promote emotional regulation and self-discipline by encouraging thoughtful responses over impulsive reactions.
- Ensure the safety and smooth functioning of the school community by minimizing disruptions.

Supporting Research:

- Respectful Authority and Academic Achievement: Research indicates that a respectful relationship between students and teachers improves academic outcomes and positive classroom climates (Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S. "The Key to Classroom Management," Educational Leadership, 2003).
- Emotional Regulation and Compliance:
Encouraging students to comply first and address concerns later supports the development of emotional regulation, which is linked to better decision-making and interpersonal relationships (Gross, J. J., "Emotion Regulation: Conceptual Foundations," 2007).
- Clear Boundaries and Student Development:

Policies establishing clear expectations for behavior while offering structured avenues for feedback and resolution help students develop critical life skills, including respect for authority and effective conflict resolution (Baumrind, D., “The Influence of Parenting Style on Adolescent Competence and Substance Use,” 1991).

6.5. INELIGIBILITY

Students who receive multiple behavior notifications for violations of school policy may be deemed ineligible to participate in special events (e.g., Prom), class trips, or athletics or fine arts activities.

6.6. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Occasionally, mitigating circumstances may influence a disciplinary decision. Factors worthy of consideration include but are not limited to, prior record, intent, provocation, and attitude. The administration reserves the right to make decisions regarding discipline in situations not covered in this handbook.

6.7. PROBATION

Probation is a disciplinary procedure designed to address academic or behavioral concerns and offer a structured opportunity for personal growth, reflection, and restoration. It aligns with restorative justice principles by emphasizing student accountability, support, and the potential for positive change.

6.7.1. Purpose:

- The goal of probation is to provide a student who does not yet demonstrate the expected attitude, conduct, or academic engagement with adequate time, resources, and support to align with the Academy’s standards.
- Probation is a rehabilitative measure, allowing students to reflect on their actions, receive mentorship, and develop the skills necessary for long-term success.

6.7.2. Benefits to Students:

- Research shows that restorative justice practices, including probation, promote student engagement and behavioral improvement by fostering a supportive environment where students feel heard and understood (Fronius et al., 2019).
- Instead of focusing purely on punishment, probation encourages

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students to take responsibility for their actions while providing them with tools to succeed academically and behaviorally.

- This approach leads to the development of critical problem-solving skills, emotional regulation, and enhanced peer relationships (González, 2012).
- Students on probation benefit from the following:
 - Personal Growth: Structured reflection and goal-setting sessions with mentors.
 - Support Network: Access to academic tutoring, behavioral coaching, and mental health resources.
 - Restoration of Trust: Opportunities to repair relationships with peers, teachers, and the school community through restorative dialogue and activities.

6.7.3. Conditions of Probation

- Failure on the part of the student to make measurable progress during the probation period of conditional enrollment may result in expulsion.
- Probation may be academic or behavioral, depending on the nature of the issue.
- A student on probation may not hold office, receive honors or recommendations, represent HA on an athletic team or performance group, or participate in extracurricular events without the approval of the Head of School.
- Probation focuses the student's energy on personal development and academic or behavioral correction.

6.7.4. Evaluation and Re-enrollment

- Students on probation are only eligible for re-enrollment with the approval of the Head of School.
- Probations are reviewed quarterly, with regular check-ins to assess progress.
- The minimum probationary period is no less than one full quarter of the academic year, ensuring ample time for the student to engage in a meaningful process of self-improvement.

6.8. PROHIBITION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

- 6.8.1. Controlled Substances includes, but is not limited to alcohol, non-prescription drugs, tobacco and vaping products).

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- 6.8.2. Persons under the actual or apparent use of a controlled substance are prohibited on the school campus, residential units, and grounds.
- 6.8.3. The possession, purchase, consumption, or sale of a controlled substance on school premises, at school activities, or while conducting school business is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including enrollment expulsion or employment termination.
- 6.8.4. Exceptions may be submitted to the Head of School for approval for adult-only events (e.g., alumni events).

6.9. PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE [Updated]

Rooted in Our Mission, Guided by Our ESOs

At Houghton Academy, we believe that discipline is most effective when it aligns with our mission and promotes student growth, responsibility, and community care. Our approach reflects our commitment to restorative justice and is guided by our Essential Student Outcomes (ESOs): to Live Authentically, Learn Deeply, Love Boldly, and Lead Globally.

Discipline at Houghton is not about punishment, but about learning and restoration. When a student makes a mistake, we work together to repair the harm, grow in character, and restore community trust. However, clear boundaries and consistent accountability are essential for a safe and respectful learning environment.

6.9.1. Three Strikes Accountability Structure

To uphold a positive school culture, Houghton Academy follows a clear “Three Strikes” system. Any student who receives three documented policy violations in a semester will lose all non-academic privileges for the remainder of that semester. Loss of privileges includes, but is not limited to:

- Participation in school-sponsored field trips
- Representation of the Academy in sports, music, drama, or other extracurriculars
- Attendance at social events (e.g., lock-ins, prom, banquets, senior trip)

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- Leadership roles or public representation of Houghton Academy
- Our goal is to cultivate self-discipline and respect—this structure ensures that students understand the cumulative impact of their choices.

6.9.2. Categorization of Infractions Based on ESOs

Infractions are categorized according to the Essential Student Outcomes they compromise:

- **Live Authentically:** Reflects integrity, honesty, and moral responsibility. Examples of Infractions:
 - Academic dishonesty
 - Lying, cheating, or misrepresentation
 - Violation of technology use agreements
- **Learn Deeply:** Demonstrates academic engagement, curiosity, and preparedness. Examples of Infractions:
 - Repeated classroom disruptions
 - Unexcused absence from class or H.A.T.
 - Sleeping in class
 - Unauthorized use of electronic devices
- **Love Boldly:** Exemplifies respect, kindness, and compassion toward others. Examples of Infractions:
 - Bullying or harassment
 - Inappropriate language or gestures
 - Social exclusion or gossip
 - Disrespect to peers, staff, or guests
- **Lead Globally:** Exhibits responsibility, service, and global citizenship. Examples of Infractions:

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- Vandalism or property damage
- Skipping assigned duties or responsibilities
- Inappropriate online conduct impacting the school
- Repeated minor violations
- Discipline Levels & Interventions

6.9.3. Level 1: Minor Infractions: Typically handled with a restorative conversation and written documentation. Examples: Tardiness, dress code issues, low-level disruptions.

- Response:
 - Verbal correction
 - Restorative conversation
 - Written behavior notice
 - Parent/guardian notification
 - Accumulation: Three Level 1 infractions = One Strike

6.9.4. Level 2: Moderate Infractions: Behavior that disrupts learning, shows disregard for expectations, or disrespects others. Examples: Academic dishonesty, repeated Level 1 behaviors, minor aggression, skipping class/school

- Response:
 - Formal behavioral reflection assignment
 - Required student conference with Dean or Principal
 - Parent meeting
 - Restorative action (e.g., apology letter, restitution, service task)
 - Each Level 2 infraction = One Strike

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6.9.5. Level 3: Severe Infractions: Behaviors that pose safety risks, legal violations, or major disruption. Examples: Physical violence, possession or use of illegal substances, major theft, repeated Level 2 offenses

- Response:
 - Suspension or immediate review for expulsion
 - Family meeting with administrative team
 - Each Level 3 infraction = Automatic three strikes and potential dismissal

6.9.6. Accountability and Redemption Pathway

If a student reaches three strikes in a semester:

- A Privilege Suspension Notice is issued.
- The student may continue academic participation but is excluded from non-academic privileges for the remainder of the semester.
- After each semester, all students begin fresh with a clean behavior record.
- In select cases, a student may apply for early reinstatement of privileges through a written request and demonstration of:
 - Reflective growth
 - Completion of restorative actions
 - Staff recommendations
 - This redemption process is meant to reflect our Christian belief in grace and transformation.

6.9.7. Restorative Philosophy

We encourage all students to:

- Reflect: Understand the impact of their actions on others and the community.

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- Repair: Take steps to make things right.
- Restore: Rebuild trust and re-engage fully with the Houghton community.

We believe every student is capable of learning from mistakes, and we are committed to walking with them on that journey. “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6:8

6.10. WITHDRAWALS

6.10.1. REQUESTED WITHDRAWAL

- A requested withdrawal asks parents to voluntarily withdraw their student from the Academy without this request or any action noted on transcripts.
- Whenever it becomes clear that a student does not correctly regard Houghton Academy’s patterns of social or religious life, does not cooperate fully in the maintenance of procedural patterns, or has not made a happy adjustment to boarding life at the Academy, he or she may be asked to leave, without any specified behavioral or academic violation.

6.10.2. WITHDRAWAL

- A student may officially withdraw from the Academy if the parent submits a withdrawal form.
- Before submitting the form, a student should confer with the administration.

7. Activities

7.1. ARTIST AND LECTURE SERIES

The Houghton University Artist Series is an outstanding opportunity for Academy students to attend a series of concerts.

Each year, the university presents a series of lectures made available to all

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registered Academy students, providing the opportunity to meet respected voices from various disciplines.

7.2. ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

The athletic program is organized around the motto “athletics for everyone and everyone for athletics.” In addition to the Academy gymnasium, the use of the university athletic facilities includes fields, a gymnasium, a fitness center, a swimming pool, rock-climbing wall, in-door running track, tennis courts, hiking/cross-country ski trails, and more.

Based on interest levels of students and qualified coaching staff, in interscholastic varsity competitions, soccer, basketball, tennis, and track are offered to boys, with volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, tennis, and track for girls. Allegany County Athletic Association rules govern girls' participation on any boys' team. Finally, golf may be offered annually to boys or girls who are not beginners.

Intramural activities vary yearly but may include badminton, basketball, floor hockey, golf, indoor soccer, paddleball, pickleball, softball, swimming, table tennis, tennis, track, and volleyball.

Students who play or participate in the Academy's regularly scheduled activities must maintain “good standing.” Such standing is best accomplished with a positive attitude, outlook, and demeanor and a balanced approach that includes having fun and enjoying life with one’s peers, the faculty, residence life, and support staff within a context of achieving excellence.

Please review the [Houghton Academy Athletic Handbook HERE](#).

7.3. MUSIC

Music at Houghton Academy plays a meaningful role in the lives of those who participate. It is an attractive and valuable vehicle for expressing musical and spiritual ideas.. Private lessons in voice, piano, and other instruments are available. Academy students who qualify are invited to participate in the Houghton University Symphony Orchestra and/or Choir.

8. Student Organizations

8.1. ADVISORS

8.1.1. Each class and student activity must operate with an advisor.

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- 8.1.2. Advisors are always faculty or staff members and assume responsibility for the supervision of the group.
- 8.1.3. Organizations, whether a class, extracurricular, literary, musical, etc., meet only with the approval and presence of the advisor.
- 8.1.4. Action taken in the absence of or without the advisor's approval is automatically null and void.
- 8.1.5. Advisors shall act as chaperons at all organization functions.
- 8.1.6. The Dean must clear and approve the appointment of advisors and all club activities and projects.

8.2. FINANCES

- 8.2.1. Student Organizations and Clubs are not part of the school's budget, and any funding necessary for the operation of the club is the responsibility of the club to secure through fundraising of donations or sales.
- 8.2.2. All monies must be channeled through the business office.
- 8.2.3. Student organization treasurers are, in effect, financial secretaries.
- 8.2.4. When collected and recorded by the respective organization, the various monies must be turned in to the office before the end of the business day.
- 8.2.5. Checks in payment for any duly approved expenditure will be handled by the controller.
- 8.2.6. Organizations may not set up or maintain separate checking or savings accounts; no fees will be collected without prior Administrative approval.
- 8.2.7. Organization funds or credits may be allowed to accumulate over more than one school year.
- 8.2.8. An individual must never keep the money longer than required to deliver to the office.

8.3. FORMATION

- 8.3.1. Students may organize clubs or group activities under the sponsorship of a faculty advisor through the approval of the Dean.

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8.3.2. Requests for such organizations are to be submitted in writing to the Dean for consideration with the following information:

- Name of the club
- Student leadership names
- Name of the faculty/staff advisor
- Club policy outlining of the proposed group's nature, purpose, procedures, meeting times, and funding (if needed).

8.4. NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

The Houghton Academy chapter (#13607) of the National Honor Society has existed since 1967.

The National Honor Society places a premium on loyalty and commitment on the part of the student to the school. An NHS member's attitude toward and participation in school activities, from classes to co-curricular activities, must be positive and supportive. NHS members must set examples by participating in class- and school-wide activities and encouraging others to do the same. With NHS privileges come some responsibilities. Failure to meet the following expectations for NHS members will result in losing some or all privileges.

- Maintaining a grade average of 92% (3.7) or higher.
- Consistently attending NHS chapter meetings and meeting general expectations.

Houghton Academy holds a high standard for selection to membership in the NHS. It is recognized that not everyone can achieve the qualifying grade average, but everyone can grow in character, service, leadership, and attitude toward learning. All are encouraged to pursue such growth, which pleases God and man.

8.4.1. Students who transfer to Houghton Academy after being inducted into the National Honor Society at their previous school bring that membership with them.

8.4.2. Each winter, eligible juniors and seniors are elected into the Honor Society by a majority vote of a faculty council.

8.4.3. Honor Society members are responsible for a service project each

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semester.

8.4.4. NHS Selection Process:

The NHS faculty council comprises five (5) voting faculty members appointed annually by the Principal. The faculty council will select the student members based on the following criteria:

- To be eligible, a junior or senior must have a minimum cumulative (i.e., all high school credits) grade average of 92%.
 - The candidate must have been in attendance for at least one semester.
 - The student will be selected based on scholarship, leadership, service, and character.
 - Successful completion of an interview with the NHS Selection Committee (optional).
-
- Scholarship: Each student to be considered has at a 92% average. The NHS faculty council will consider the student's interest, effort, and maturity level toward learning.
 - Character: This includes responding to authority, compliance with school rules, and conducting oneself with integrity, maturity, and personal responsibility.
 - Service: This is only sometimes easily observed unless we work with the students in a service capacity. Service can be assessed by how the person sees and seeks to meet the needs of others in class, school, and the community.
 - Leadership: Leadership can be observed in several ways. If a person is diligent so that others take notice and follow, that is a form of leadership. If a person is a positive force in the school and community and takes initiative in planning things, that also is a form of leadership. When a student takes a stand for what he believes, that is leadership. A person does not need to hold an elected position to exhibit leadership, although that would also be a consideration.

8.5. STUDENT SENATE

- 8.5.1. The Student Senate is a student organization advised by a faculty member.
- 8.5.2. The Senate may represent student body matters or proposals to Academy administration and is responsible for several social and academic activities, such as the Thanksgiving Banquet and Student Senate Day.
- 8.5.3. The incumbent senate nominates officers of the Student Senate for each coming year and, upon HA Administration approval, are voted on by the student body.
- 8.5.4. A student may not simultaneously be President of the Student Senate and a Class President.

8.6. MANDATORY CLUB PARTICIPATION FOR HS STUDENTS

- 8.6.1. The purpose of this policy is to enhance the overall educational experience at Houghton Academy by encouraging students to engage in extracurricular activities.
- 8.6.2. Participation in clubs and organizations is vital for fostering a sense of community, developing leadership skills, and promoting personal growth.
- 8.6.3. All High School students enrolled at Houghton Academy are required to actively participate in at least one approved club each semester.
- 8.6.4. This requirement aims to ensure that students are involved in the broader school community beyond academic studies and athletics.
- 8.6.5. Middle School students are encouraged, but not obligated to participate in a club.
- 8.6.6. Club Registration and Participation:
 - Students must select and register for a club by the end of the second week of each semester.
 - Students are encouraged to explore various clubs and choose activities that align with their interests and goals.

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- Participation is defined as regular attendance at meetings and active involvement in club activities or events.

8.6.7. Exemptions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as medical conditions or significant personal commitments, upon review and approval by the Dean. Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation.

8.7. CLUBS

8.7.1. ART CLUB POLICY

- Purpose
 - We created the Art Club to allow students to experiment further with different art mediums, discover their hidden artistic talents, and expand on those already discovered.
 - Art Club is for students in art class who would like more opportunities to create pieces of art that are not related to Art Class. It is also for students not in Art Class who want to use their creative side.
 - Students can create pieces of art to be entered into Art Shows and Art Competitions, both locally and nationally.
- Meetings
 - Meetings will be held weekly.
 - Meetings will take place in the Art Room, with the potential to go off campus depending on what medium we are working with.
- Sponsor
 - The art teacher is the designated sponsor.
 - The Dean can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.2. BUSINESS CLUB POLICY

- Purpose

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- We created the Business Club to provide a platform for exchanging ideas, leadership, insight, and marketing skills in a diverse environment at Houghton Academy.
- At the core of the Business Club is the opportunity to connect with like-minded professionals, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders. Our events and meetings provide a platform for members to build valuable connections, share insights, and forge meaningful relationships within the business world.
- HA is a multicultural place where students from different cultures learn together. We host exclusive networking events throughout the year, including mixers and industry-specific gatherings. These events allow members to interact in a relaxed and social atmosphere, fostering relationships that can lead to collaborative opportunities.
- Meetings
 - Our events are held multiple times each month.
 - The meetings occur in multiple places (like multiple restaurants outside Houghton).
 - The meetings consist of different kinds of activity.
- Sponsor
 - Our school's Boarding Director is the designated sponsor.
 - The Deam can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.3. CHEERLEADING

- The Houghton Academy Cheerleading Team is a dedicated sideline cheer squad that performs during the boys' and girls' basketball seasons. Our cheerleaders are committed to fostering school spirit, energizing the crowd, and supporting our basketball teams during home games. They lead cheers chants, and perform routines to motivate the teams and engage the audience.

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- As a non-competitive, sideline-focused squad, our primary goal is to enhance the game-day experience with enthusiasm, positivity, and sportsmanship.
- Cheerleaders are expected to uphold the highest standards of teamwork, dedication, and respect, representing Houghton Academy with pride on and off the court.
- Participation in the cheerleading team requires regular attendance at practices and games and a commitment to supporting all scheduled basketball events throughout the season.

8.7.4. COOKING CLUB POLICY [Feb 2025]

- Purpose:
 - The purpose of the Cooking Club is to provide students an opportunity to develop their cooking skills and explore various cuisines in a fun and collaborative environment. It is also to provide a space for students who love cooking or baking to learn cooking techniques, explore recipes, and improve their practical and creative skills in the kitchen.
- Meetings:
 - Time: The club will meet on Saturdays from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
 - Location: Meetings will take place in the school kitchen or cafeteria .
- Attendance/Commitment:
 - All members are expected to attend meetings regularly and arrive on time.
- Supervisor: Mr. Sompie
 - The Dean may appoint additional sponsors as needed.

8.7.5. CULTURE CLUB POLICY

- Purpose
 - We created the Culture Club to provide a platform for sharing each unique culture represented at Houghton Academy.
 - Culture Club exists:
 - To educate (learning about other cultures)
 - To celebrate (to celebrate our differences and to

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honor different countries, such as different festivals)

- To make others aware of cultural sensitivity (learn what is sensitive in different countries so we won't offend people from different countries)
- To value our own culture (without spending time with mixing cultures and interacting with different cultures, you can't really understand your own culture)
- To have fun (enjoy food around the world because food is a big part of the culture and having fun with all those aspects above)
- HA is a multicultural place where students from different cultures learn together. We want to use this opportunity wisely and allow everyone to express their culture and traditions formally, creatively, and thoughtfully.
- Houghton students will have the opportunity to become internationally-minded people.
- This club is open to all students grades 6-12
- Meetings
 - Our meetings are held multiple times each month.
 - The meetings take place in the ELL classroom on the first and third Tuesday of the month.
 - Other events and meetings will occur throughout the year to celebrate, inform, and educate Houghton Academy students, staff, and teachers
- Sponsor
 - The ELL Teacher/Coordinator is the designated sponsor.
 - The Dean can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.6. DRAMA CLUB POLICY

- We created the Drama Club to allow additional practice time for students in grades 6-12 who will be taking on major roles in the winter and spring productions.
- Due to the small size of our student body, we are currently allowing homeschool students to audition for parts, with preference being given to full-time Academy students.
- The club will meet on Thursdays from 2-3:15pm
- The meetings will take place in the auditorium
- All members are expected to attend all meetings, arriving on time.
- Members will be expected to commit as much time as needed outside of club in order to memorize their lines. Failure to work in a timely manner on memorization will result in the loss of the casted role for that specific play.
- Sponsor: Mrs. Davidson and the Dean can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.7. FILM CLUB

- Houghton Academy Film Club was created to provide students with a space to explore and develop their filmmaking skills, from scriptwriting to editing and directing.
- The Film Club is open to all students, regardless of prior experience, who wish to engage in the creative process of making films.
- Students will create original films to be entered into film festivals, competitions, and school showcases, both locally and nationally.
- Meetings will be held weekly on Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 PM.
- Meetings will take place in the Auditorium, with opportunities for off-campus filming depending on project needs.
- The designated sponsor for the Film Club is the music teacher Mrs.

Kurtz.

- The Dean may appoint additional sponsors as needed.

8.7.8. GAMING CLUB (E-SPORT) Policy

- Purpose
 - We created the Gaming Club (E-Sport) to provide a platform for students to meaningfully explore and engage by expressing their skill and talent in playing video games.
 - Significant unexplored potential exists within video gaming for engagement with the Christian community. Christian video game scholar Kevin Schut underscores this notion in his book *Of Games and God*, arguing that video game environments present a unique opportunity for the profound and intellectually stimulating exploration of religion, faith, and spirituality.
 - As a multicultural school, Houghton Academy gamers can share and exchange knowledge and stories about video games as we collaborate and compete in events internally and externally.
 - We hope students develop the following five skills: Cognitive and Social skills, problem-solving, Creativity, Self-awareness, and Time Management.
- Meetings
 - Our events are held multiple times throughout the school year.
 - Official meetings occur once a week in the designated classroom after school.
 - The schedule is flexible. During our meetings, we will read and discuss Kevin Schut's book *Of Games and God* (and/or any related books/topics), enjoy each member's uniqueness in a collaborative gaming opportunity, organize events for

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gamers to compete and show their skills (interschool events), and find opportunities to connect with other schools for collaboration and competition.

- Sponsor: The Dean appoints the sponsor.
- Houghton Academy Gaming Club Code of Conduct / Biblical Foundation
 - Our gaming club is rooted in the principles of love, respect, and integrity as taught in the Bible. We believe in treating each other with kindness and dignity, following the example of Jesus Christ. The following Scriptures guide our conduct:
 - • Love Your Neighbor: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:31)
 - • Encourage and Build Each Other Up: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up." (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
 - • Speak the Truth in Love: "Speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ." (Ephesians 4:15)
- Expected Behavior
 - Our gaming club is dedicated to providing a positive, encouraging, and harassment-free experience for everyone, reflecting the love and respect we are called to exhibit as Christians. We expect all participants to:
 - • Show respect and kindness to all members, regardless of their background or personal preferences.
 - • Avoid using offensive language or engaging in inappropriate discussions or behavior.
 - • Encourage one another, offering support and constructive feedback.
 - We recognize that every individual is made in the image of

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God (Genesis 1:27) and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

- Unacceptable Behavior
 - Examples of unacceptable behavior include:
 - • Disrespectful Comments: Making offensive or demeaning comments related to gender, age, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, or personal gaming preferences.
 - • Inappropriate Content: Sharing or displaying inappropriate or sexualized content, including clothing, imagery, or discussions.
 - • Harassment: Engaging in any form of harassment, including deliberate intimidation, stalking, or unwanted attention.
 - • Disruptive Behavior: Causing disruption during meetings or events, including excessive arguing or failure to cooperate with club leadership.
 - • Inappropriate Physical Contact: Engaging in physical contact that is unwelcome or inappropriate.
 - We understand that disagreements may occur. However, these should be handled respectfully, without escalating to personal attacks or disruptive behavior.
- What to Do if You Witness or Experience Unacceptable Behavior
 - If you witness or experience any form of harassment or unacceptable behavior, please contact a club leader or school staff member immediately. We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants and will take necessary action to address concerns promptly.
- Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior
 - If a participant engages in unacceptable behavior, they will

be asked to stop immediately and are expected to comply. Depending on the severity of the behavior, consequences may include a warning, temporary suspension from the club, or permanent expulsion from the club.

8.7.9. MATH CLUB POLICY

- Purpose:
 - The primary purpose of setting up the math club is to stimulate students' interest in math and get more students involved. Math is the cornerstone of science subjects, so joining a math club can provide the likelihood of more career opportunities, especially if students intend to apply for science majors. It is an excellent math experience for students with a great passion for math and science. This experience is also something that looks great on college applications.
 - Joining the mathematics club can not only effectively supplement in-class knowledge but also expand new extracurricular expertise and improve one's mathematics level. For students interested in mathematics, the club is an excellent way to express and develop themselves. Mathematics clubs often provide opportunities to work on formidable math problems and engage in problem-solving activities. This can lead to a significant improvement in your math skills and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.
 - Mathematics has always been an excellent way to practice clear thinking. Even if you are not proficient in mathematics, joining a mathematics club can improve logical thinking and teamwork. Houghton Academy is an excellent Christian school that recruits outstanding students from all over the world. In the club, you can experience the different forms of mathematics from different parts of the world and the unique charm of mathematics in different regions.
 - Our math club participates in math competitions and

contests. These enriching experiences help gauge mathematical abilities against students from other schools or regions.

- Meeting:
 - The activities are held multiple times each month.
 - The schedule is flexible. During our meetings, we will arrange a time and place suitable for everyone for the next event.
- Sponsor:
 - A teacher serves as the designated sponsor.
 - Two students serve as the coordinators.
 - The Dean approves the sponsor and coordinator roles.

8.7.10. MODEL UNITED NATIONS (M.U.N.) CLUB POLICY

- Purpose
 - We created the Model United Nations Club to provide a platform for exchanging ideas, leadership, insight, and decision-making skills in a diverse environment at Houghton Academy.
 - Model United Nations is a globally influential academic activity in which students take on the role of delegates at United Nations meetings and international multilateral conferences, discussing one or more international issues, following specific rules of procedure, and producing a resolution document through speech, debate, and negotiation.
 - HA is a multicultural place where students from different cultures learn together. We want to use this opportunity wisely and allow everyone to express their culture and traditions formally and thoughtfully, using wisdom from all over the world to solve the world's problems. We expect this

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from the Model UN Club and what we are trying to do. Houghton students will have the opportunity to become internationally-minded people.

- Meetings
 - Our events are held multiple times each month.
 - The meetings take place in the classroom.
 - The meetings consist of the officers and representatives from each country.
 - We will also hold 1 to 2 conferences per school year that will take place on a Saturday at the school.
- Sponsor
 - The social studies teacher is the designated sponsor.
 - The Dean can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.11. NATIONAL HISTORY DAY CLUB POLICY

- Purpose
 - We created the National History Day Club to provide students with college- and career-ready skills of collaboration, research, writing, and innovative thinking from studying history and civics in a diverse environment at Houghton Academy.
 - National History Day (NHD) Club is an internationally recognized program in which students research a historical topic related to an annual theme and then present their work in one of NHD's five creative categories. You may then enter the local NHD contest that serves you.
 - Students learn historical research skills and how to collaborate with team members, summarize and articulate arguments, manage their time, and persevere. The confidence gained by participation prepares young citizens

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to be critical thinkers who can digest, analyze, and synthesize information.

- Meetings
 - Our events are held multiple times each month.
 - The meetings take place in the classroom after school.
 - The schedule is flexible. During our meetings, we will arrange a time and place suitable for everyone for the next event.
 - If chosen, students' exhibits will be displayed at local, regional, and/or national contests.
- Sponsor
 - The social studies teacher is the designated sponsor.
 - The Dean can appoint other sponsors.

8.7.12. SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM (SFT)

- SFT members will be selected based on recommendations from teachers and faculty members.
- SFT members demonstrate a commitment to their faith and a love for Jesus, evident in their actions, compassionate demeanor, and care for others, aligning with Biblical teachings.
- SFT members have dedicated themselves to Jesus and strive to live according to His teachings.
- SFT members will collaborate with the Dean to plan Chapel services and support leaders in small groups.
- SFT members will receive mentorship from the Faculty Spiritual Life Team to further develop their leadership skills within the Houghton Academy community.
- Regular meetings will be held to plan and prepare for chapel services, and frequent gatherings will be held for devotional time,

prayer, and discussions.

8.7.13. TABLE TENNIS CLUB POLICY

- Purpose: The Table Tennis Club aims to promote physical activity, skill development, teamwork, and sportsmanship through the sport of table tennis. The club is open to all students interested in learning and improving their table tennis skills.
- Membership:
 - Eligibility: Membership is open to all students enrolled at Houghton Academy. No prior experience in table tennis is required.
 - Enrollment: Students must sign up at the beginning of each semester. Late enrollments may be accepted at the discretion of the club supervisor.
- Meeting Times:
 - The club will meet every Monday, Wednesday, Friday during school hours in the 5A/B period (i.e. 11:55 am - 12:50 pm).
 - Special practice sessions or matches may be scheduled with advance notice.
- Code of Conduct:
 - Sportsmanship: All members are expected to demonstrate respect, fairness, and good sportsmanship at all times.
 - Behavior: Disruptive or unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or expulsion from the club.
 - Safety: Members must adhere to all safety guidelines, including proper use of equipment and adherence to the rules of the game.
 - Dress Code: Appropriate athletic attire and non-marking shoes must be worn during all practices and matches.

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- Equipment:
 - Provided by the School: The school will provide table tennis tables, nets, and balls.
 - Personal Equipment: Students are encouraged to bring their own paddles/rackets, although a limited number will be available for use.
 - Care and Maintenance: Members are responsible for the proper care of the equipment. Any damage must be reported immediately.
- Practice and Competition:
 - Practice Sessions: Practices will focus on skill development, strategy, and conditioning. Attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure steady improvement.
 - Competitions: The club will organize internal tournaments and may participate in inter-school matches. Selection for competitive play will be based on skill level, attendance, and sportsmanship.
 - Coaching: Club sessions will be supervised by a coach or faculty advisor with knowledge of the sport.
- Attendance and Commitment:
 - Regular Attendance: Members are expected to attend all scheduled practices and matches unless excused by the club supervisor.
 - Commitment: Members are encouraged to commit to the club for the entire semester to ensure team cohesion and personal development.
- Leadership:
 - Club Officers: The club may elect officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, etc.) to assist in organizing events and

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managing club activities.

- Faculty Advisor: A designated faculty member will oversee the club's activities, ensure adherence to school policies, and provide guidance to the club officers.
- Discipline and Dispute Resolution:
 - Discipline: Any member found violating club rules, engaging in unsportsmanlike behavior, or failing to follow the code of conduct may face disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the club.
 - Dispute Resolution: Conflicts or disputes among members should be reported to the club supervisor, who will mediate and resolve the issue in a fair and timely manner.
- Parental Involvement: Parents are encouraged to support their children's participation in the club by attending matches, volunteering for events, or assisting with transportation as needed.
- Amendments:
 - This policy may be amended as necessary by the club officers and faculty advisor, with approval from the school administration.
- Contact Information: For questions or more information about the Table Tennis Club, please contact Mr. Ayub at azmat.ayub@houghton.academy.

8.7.14. TECH/SOUND CREW CLUB

- The Tech/Sound Crew is dedicated to providing exceptional audio-visual support for school events and performances. Our mission is to ensure that every assembly, meeting, and production held within the Tysinger Auditorium runs smoothly and that audiences and participants enjoy a high-quality sound and light experience.
- Responsibilities

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- Audio Management: Set up and operate sound equipment, including microphones and speakers, to deliver clear audio for events.
- Lighting Support: Manage lighting systems to enhance the visual impact of performances and presentations.
- Equipment Maintenance: Regularly check and maintain audio-visual equipment to ensure everything is in working order.
- Meetings
 - Frequency: Weekly meetings will be held to discuss upcoming events and training opportunities.
 - Location: Meetings will take place in the auditorium or designated tech areas.
- Event Support
 - Preparation: Collaborate with event organizers to understand technical needs and set up equipment in advance.
 - Execution: Provide on-site technical support during events, ensuring everything runs according to plan.
- Membership
 - Eligibility: Open to all students interested in learning about sound and lighting technology.
 - Roles: Members can take on various roles, including sound technician, lighting operator, and equipment manager.
- By joining the Tech/Sound Crew, students will gain valuable skills in technical production and teamwork, contributing to a vibrant school community.

8.7.15. ULTIMATE FRISBEE CLUB

- The purpose of Ultimate Frisbee club is to engage students in

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physical activities as well as to build teamwork, physical fitness, hand-eye coordination, and build students abilities to think quickly and reactively to different situations.

- Ultimate frisbee is a fantastic means of building fitness. Through constant sprinting as well quick changes of direction, students will build agility as as well as endurance. Players can run upwards of five miles per match depending on the game.
- Frisbee also builds skills in hand-eye coordination as well as helping students to react quickly and efficiently to different situations. Frisbee is a fast paced and scenario based sport. It puts players in situations where they must make split second decisions and analyze ever changing situations to come to the best decision for that moment. This is a skill that can translate into almost any activity and is something that is built through playing Ultimate Frisbee.
- Meeting
 - Frisbee club will be held every week as the weather allows. It will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays after school from 4-5pm.
 - Meetings will take place in different locations around the Academy and University as availability allows.
 - Frisbee club will meet until it is too cold to play outside.
- Sponsor
 - a. The Houghton Academy Art teacher is the sponsor for this club.
 - b. The Dean can appoint other sponsors as he sees fit.

8.7.16. **WORSHIP TEAM** (Club Policy)

- Purpose: The purpose of the worship team is to develop students' musical gifts, to grow leaders, and to foster an appreciation for worship through music at Houghton Academy.

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- Meetings:
 - Worship Team will meet as a whole on a weekly basis to plan music for the upcoming chapel, to select the “team” actually leading in the upcoming chapel, and to learn/practice music together.
 - Sometimes the Worship Team will meet outside of school hours, often a Sunday or Monday evening, in order to find a time when all of a particular week’s team is available to practice.
- Responsibilities of Team Members:
 - Learn and practice the music selected for the week
 - Lead the musical part of the weekly chapel services
 - Plan and implement additional opportunities, like a full praise chapel, a night of praise, or leading worship at an area church
 - Participate in chapel set up and clean up
 - Be good stewards of the musical equipment belonging to Houghton Academy
 - Code of Conduct for Team Members:
 - Maintain good academic standing
 - Maintain good behavior standards
 - Dress appropriately for leading worship on stage
- Sponsor: Mrs. Hilsher and the Dean can appoint other sponsors.

9. **Policy Addendums**

9.1. **BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

HA ensures that all students, faculty, staff, and volunteers have a safe environment to learn

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and work. Therefore, HA maintains a zero-tolerance policy on bullying in our community. Any harassment, intimidation, or bullying will not be tolerated.

9.1.1. School Expectations

HA believes that all students are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are safe, supportive, and respectful. Our mission is based on a philosophy of deep respect for each individual's inherent worth, regard for the environment, and belief in personal growth capacity. We commit to forming relationships with people so that each person may experience a sense of belonging, dignity, and hope. Through relationships, students and staff grow in understanding of their value as creations of God. Therefore, the school's safe and civil environment is necessary for our students to fulfill this mission, learn, and achieve high academic and behavioral standards.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, affect not only the victim but also the entire school community, disrupting students' ability to learn and our ability to educate students in a safe environment.

Meeting this expectation requires the involvement of students, teachers, administrators, and parents. We expect all community members to participate in stopping inappropriate behavior. Clear structure and open communication are essential to this process to ensure that students receive regular and consistent feedback regarding expectations and their behavior. While administrators may sometimes primarily address bullying, all teachers and staff work to promote a school environment that is free of bullying.

9.1.2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is when one or more persons repeatedly and intentionally intimidate, harass, belittle, or physically harm another person on or off school property, at a school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or in cyberspace.

Bullying is constituted by a pattern of behaviors that include but are not limited to:

- Physical aggression (hitting, kicking, punching)
- Verbal aggression (name-calling, spreading rumors)
- Intimidation (threats of any kind)
- Exclusion (deliberately isolating from a peer group or activities)
- Deliberate damage to property or theft
- Electronic communication that does any of the above (e.g., via social media or

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text)

These behaviors often occur when one or more people exercise power and control over another person and the actions:

- Are deliberate and hurtful
- Are repeated over a period of time
- Make it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

People Involved in Bullying Incidents:

- Victim: the student whom the action hurt
- Bully: the student or students who are the aggressors
- Bystanders: other students who witness or are aware of bullying

Indications That a Student is Being Bullied:

- Unexplained reluctance to go to school
- Fearfulness or unusual anxiety
- A drop in academic performance (grades)
- Trouble sleeping and nightmares
- Vague physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches), especially on school days
- Belongings that come home ruined or that go missing altogether

9.1.3. What Bullying is Not

Bullying is not an isolated incident of aggression between children. While harmful and unacceptable in our community, these incidents will occur periodically and be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in our School Handbook and Code of Conduct.

9.1.4. What to Do in a Bullying Situation if You Are:

- A Student:
 - Tell the bully to stop (specifying the behavior to be stopped)
 - Walk away and find a place where you will be safe
 - If it continues, report the incident to an adult you trust (Teacher, Parent, Principal, etc.) and keep telling someone

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until you know something has been done. If a student is being bullied, time is of the essence. Therefore, the student must report the bullying immediately to a HA Staff Member.

- A Parent:
 - Provide support to your child
 - Ask questions and gather information (successful intervention requires specific names and details of the incident)
 - Break the silence: Report the incident to school authorities (Principal, Dean, Teacher, etc.)
- A Teacher or Staff Member:
 - Intervene immediately: stop the bullying behavior as soon as you see it or become aware of it
 - Talk to the bully and talk to the victim separately
 - If more than one child is involved in perpetrating the bullying, talk to each of the perpetrators individually in quick succession
 - Expect that the perpetrator(s) will minimize and deny his/her/their actions and responsibility.
 - Refer to school and class codes of conduct in telling the bully why their behavior was unacceptable
 - Tell them what behavior you expect of them
 - Inform the bully(ies) of the possible disciplinary consequences of their behavior
 - Record incidents of bullying (including time, date, who is involved, what happened) to demonstrate a behavior pattern
 - Report situations of bullying to the Principal.
 - Continue monitoring the situation and maintain communication with administrators about the problem until it is resolved.
- Administrators:
 - The Principal will help students in bullying situations stop the behavior, providing emotional support and disciplinary consequences as necessary.
 - The Principal will meet with each student involved (victim, bully, and bystander) to gather information regarding the situation. They may consult with and request the

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involvement of the Dean in this process.

- The Principal will inform the parents of the bully and the victim as soon as possible.
- The Principal will consult with the Head of School if they haven't already, and the Principal will create a plan of action.
- Parents will participate in the action planning whenever possible and appropriate.
- Action Plans will specify:
 - Disciplinary Consequences: Since bullying behavior can occur in many different ways and with varying severity levels, it is imperative to treat each case individually. When a student exhibits bullying behavior, documentation of the incident will be placed in the student's permanent file, and he/she will receive one or more of the following consequences:
 - Removal from the classroom or other activities for a period of time
 - Initiation of a behavior contract
 - Suspension
 - Permanent expulsion

"Bystanders" to a bullying incident, as passive participants, may also receive disciplinary consequences as described above.

Furthermore, HA will remove the bully or bullies if the bullying continues despite school personnel's concerted efforts.

IMPORTANT NOTE: For administrators to implement disciplinary consequences, bullying incidents must be verified and validated by employee testimony or the independent testimony of multiple student eyewitnesses.

Reprisal or Retaliation Against Reporters

Reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be strictly prohibited. The Principal shall determine the consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation.

9.2. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All Houghton Academy employees and volunteers (i.e., non-employees given student supervision responsibilities) must complete a background check before employment or volunteer service.

Houghton Academy considers the safety and protection of its students as a primary responsibility. A student may safely speak with any employee about an unsafe or abusive situation. As soon as the Academy becomes aware of an unsafe situation, it will address it promptly and appropriately. Such situations include activities that expose a student to mistreatment, including emotional abuse, physical neglect or abuse, and sexual abuse. “Addressing the situation” includes school reports to appropriate government authorities and agencies.

Students must be aware that:

- Houghton Academy employees and volunteers are mandated to receive and report immediately to the Child Protection Team any knowledge or reasonable suspicion they have that child abuse or neglect is occurring (or has occurred) to an Academy student, regardless of where it has taken place,
- Houghton Academy requires its employees to submit a written preliminary report within 24 hours of their awareness of abuse suspicions or allegations;
- Houghton Academy will pursue and investigate all allegations, even if the alleged victim does not personally want the allegation investigated;
- Houghton Academy will not allow the alleged offender and victim to confront each other, and
- While respecting the “presumption of innocence,” Houghton Academy recognizes that the internal investigation of Houghton Academy is not part of any criminal/judicial system and thus does not require the same legal protections of the alleged offender.

9.3. DIRECTORY INFORMATION / PHOTO RELEASE POLICY

The following information is considered “directory information” under terms of the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act” (FERPA) and may be published or disseminated as appropriate:

- name of student and parents;

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- home address;
- home phone number;
- student's birth date;
- email address(es);
- class schedule;
- height and weight (for students involved in athletics);
- dates of attendance;
- honors and awards;
- clubs and teams to which the student belongs;
- pictures of the students participating in school events.

Students' photos may be displayed on the Houghton Academy website, social media, press releases, marketing materials, etc. If a parent wishes to restrict the use of such photos of his/her student, the school must be notified in writing.

Houghton Academy may release such directory information to Houghton University or other recruiters. Parents who prefer that any or all of this information not be released (for example, in the online student directory) must notify the school office in writing at the outset of the school year, indicating which information is not to be classified as "directory information."

9.4. HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE TUITION BENEFIT

- 9.4.1. Dependent children of full-time Houghton University employees receive a 100% Houghton Academy tuition benefit.
- 9.4.2. Houghton University employees are responsible for the annual fee and optional meal plan for each child enrolled at the Academy.
- 9.4.3. Dependent children of part-time Houghton University employees receive a tuition reduction equal to the percentage of employment time (e.g., 50% part-time employment equates to a 50% tuition reduction).

9.5. INTERNET USE POLICY

- 9.5.1. **PURPOSE:** Learning is the primary purpose of the Internet connection at Houghton Academy for all who use the school wi-fi connection to the Internet. The IT department uses filters to screen out material unsupportive of the school's educational philosophy. Students must read and agree to the following guidelines and regulations, signing a user contract to access the school's Internet connection. A parent or guardian

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must also sign the student's contract if the student is a minor.

- 9.5.2. ACCESS TO GOOGLE SERVICES: By enrolling their children, parents/guardians provide permission for their child to use all Google Services that are part of the school's online learning environment.
- 9.5.3. GUIDELINES: Houghton Academy reserves the right to change the following guidelines and regulations at any time without notice:
- Access entails responsibility. Users are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks, just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. General school rules apply.
 - Use of the Internet is a privilege and not a right.
 - All users are responsible for everything that happens during a session on the Internet, and when they are finished, must log out of their account.
 - Computer games and videos may not be streamed or played over the school's network unless they are part of instruction and approved by a teacher. **IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Violating this policy may result in a high Policy Infraction Fee, as streaming games and videos strain our internet bandwidth and negatively impacts our network and the school's system.
 - Students may not use a Virtual Private Network (VPN).
 - Students and employees must check their Academy email at least twice daily (i.e., during homeroom and again in the afternoon before leaving school).
 - Instant Messaging (e.g. Google Chat) is not permitted except for class-based groups established by a teacher.
 - Viewing social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, tiktok) is prohibited during school hours.
 - Streaming audio (e.g., music) or video files is prohibited during school hours.

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- Houghton Academy reserves the right to examine all data stored in machines involved in the Internet link to ensure that all users comply with school Internet use guidelines and regulations.
- Users should change passwords regularly to avoid easily guessed passwords.
- Users should conserve system resources by frequently deleting email messages and unused files.
- Students must notify an administrator whenever they encounter information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate, or uncomfortable.
- The administration must approve subscriptions to mailing lists, bulletin boards, chat groups, commercial online services, and other information services.
- Network storage areas will be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communication to maintain system integrity and ensure users use the system responsibly. Users must not expect that files stored on servers are private.
- This Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to using all electronic devices in all Houghton Academy facilities.

9.5.4. PERSONAL DEVICE USE:

- Students, Faculty, Staff, Guests may use their personal devices on the school's internet wifi but must bring their device (e.g., laptop, tablet, phone) to the office to register the device address before first network logon each year.
- Personal devices must have adequate antivirus protection on the device.

9.5.5. EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES: (not intended to be all-inclusive)

- Attempting to use or view information on an employee's computer without prior permission and direct observation during use by the faculty or staff member.

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- Accessing, sending, storing, or displaying offensive, pornographic, or obscene messages or pictures
- Using obscene language or profanity
- Harassment, hate mail, discriminatory comments, insulting remarks, or attacking others
- Damaging computers, computer systems, or a network
- Illegal, unethical acts, including the use of the link to gain unauthorized access to other systems on the network
- Plagiarism, file sharing, application sharing, and illegal software distribution, otherwise known as pirating.
- Encrypted communication
- Giving out personal information (name, address, telephone number) without permission to people contacted via the network
- Making appointments, without permission, to meet people in person who have been contacted via the network
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords or sharing your password with others
- Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes
- Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals
- Attaching huge files to messages

9.5.6. SANCTIONS:

- Violations may result in a temporary or permanent loss of access.
- Additional disciplinary action may be determined up to and including expulsion from the Academy.

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- When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.
- Houghton Academy reserves the right to discipline a student for off-campus actions if those actions are intended to adversely affect another student or if they adversely affect the safety and well-being of another student while in school.

9.5.7. HIGHLY PRAISED ACTIVITIES:

- Frequently changing your password and using obtuse passwords
- Printing less
- Conserving network resources/not saving what you don't need
- Turning off your computer and reading a book, running a lap, kicking a ball, or lifting a weight

9.6. MEDICAL RECORDS

All student medical records shall be confidential and stored under "lock and key." Admissions personnel are authorized to collect the student medical records and are responsible for securing them appropriately, both physically and electronically. Further access shall be limited to the School Nurse, Athletic Director, Administrators, and Administrator designees (such as Resident Life Staff accompanying students to medical appointments or actual medical professionals examining students as patients, etc.) based on specific needs. If a person without clearance accompanies a student to an appointment, medical records will be placed in a sealed envelope to be opened by the medical provider.

Medical records stored in the Academy's online student information system will have limited viewer access. Only the positions above will be provided security permissions to view the student's personal information.

9.7. [RESIDENT LIFE HANDBOOK LINK](#)

9.8. SEXTING POLICY

- 9.8.1. In keeping with the Academy's responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students, the following policy is in force regarding the issue of "sexting:"

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- 9.8.2. Sexting is the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit or suggestive messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices. Students engaged in such activities are subject to state laws and school discipline.
- 9.8.3. The school considers sending, sharing, possessing, or even viewing pictures, text messages, or emails that contain a sexual message or image a violation of this policy; a violation that will result in school discipline, up to and including expulsion, and may include the notification of local law enforcement.
- 9.8.4. Students must immediately report such activities to a teacher or a school administrator.

9.9. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Houghton Academy recognizes its moral and legal responsibility to provide an environment free of sexual harassment. At the Academy, students and faculty members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. Biblical principles, such as the one found in Ephesians 5:3-4 (NIV), are to be the guiding standards of each life:

But among you, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, impurity, or greed because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking which are out of place.

Houghton Academy will not tolerate sexual harassment and will take immediate action to remedy infractions on this policy. These remedies range from informal or formal apologies to expulsion or termination of service. Houghton Academy is committed to providing a supportive, non-coercive environment where people can pursue spiritual, academic, and social maturity.

9.10. SEXUALITY - PHYSICAL PRIVACY

This policy is enacted to advise members of the Houghton Academy community of their duties concerning the use of restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and any other Houghton Academy facilities where individuals may be undressed in the presence of others.

- Definitions
 - Sex means the biological condition of being male or female as determined at

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birth.

- Member of the Houghton Academy community means any Houghton Academy employee, volunteer, student, parent, or visitor.
- Sincerely Held Religious Belief on Sexuality
- Houghton Academy's sincerely held religious belief is that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as either male or female and that these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26–27). Rejection of one's sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- Policy
 - Notwithstanding any other policy, Houghton Academy restrooms, locker rooms, and showers designated for one sex shall only be used by members of that sex.
 - In any other Houghton Academy facilities or settings where members of the Houghton Academy community may be undressed in the presence of others (e.g., changing costumes during school theatrical productions), Houghton Academy shall provide separate, private areas designated for use by members of the Houghton Academy community based on their sex.
 - Houghton Academy recognizes there may be instances where members of the Houghton Academy community experience disparity between their sex and their feelings about their sex. This disparity can motivate them to behave contrary to God's Word and life plan. Houghton Academy encourages members of the Houghton Academy community struggling with their sexual identity to seek help from their pastor and other trained professionals who might best assist them in clarifying and defining their sexual identity per God's Word.
 - Houghton Academy will constantly interact with members of the Houghton Academy community according to their sex. A school community member who wishes to express a gender other than his or her sex is understood to reject the truth and the image of God within that person. Biblical Christianity requires the body of Christ to compassionately dwell in the truth and assist those we love in doing the same (Ephesians 4:15).
 - A member of the Houghton Academy community who openly and unrepentantly rejects their sex, either in or out of school, is rejecting the image of God within that person—behavior that dishonors the Holy Trinity and the Word of God. Such behavior constitutes a person's failure to adhere to his/her commitment to abide by the behavioral standards established by Houghton Academy, which is cause for terminating his/her privilege of membership in the Houghton Academy community.
 - To preserve the function and integrity of Houghton Academy and provide a

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biblical role model to members of the Houghton Academy community and the community at large, all members must agree to and abide by this policy.

9.11. USE OF ALCOHOL / ILLICIT DRUGS

- 9.11.1. The use of alcohol or illicit drugs is incompatible with the purposes and objectives of Houghton Academy. It is detrimental to the health and well-being of students, employees, and volunteers. Any substance abuse, possession, distribution, or influence of alcohol or drugs while on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or in any capacity representing Houghton Academy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination of employment.
- 9.11.2. If a student or employee remains enrolled or employed at the Academy following a substance-related offense, the Academy reserves the right to require:
 - Random drug and alcohol testing at the parent's or individual's expense. By enrolling a child at Houghton Academy, the parent/guardian provides express consent, as required by New York Education Law § 912-a, for the Academy to administer drug and alcohol testing at its discretion, with or without reasonable suspicion.
 - Participation in biblically-based counseling with a professional recommended by the Academy.
 - Additional conditions as determined necessary by the administration to support accountability and restoration.
 - The Academy's procedure may also include legal action where appropriate.
- 9.11.3. Reporting and Investigation Process
 - Mandatory Reporting to the Head of School – Any administrator, faculty, staff member, student, parent, or volunteer who becomes aware of suspected substance abuse must report it to the Head of School immediately.

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- Confidential Investigation – The administration will conduct a confidential and timely investigation, which may include interviews, searches, and drug/alcohol testing.
 - Parental/Guardian Notification – In cases involving students, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as reasonably possible unless there is an immediate safety concern.
- 9.11.4. Testing Protocols – The Academy reserves the right to administer random or suspicion-based drug and alcohol testing to students at any time. By enrolling a child at Houghton Academy, the parent/guardian provides express consent for such testing, with or without reasonable suspicion, as permitted by New York Education Law § 912-a. Refusal to comply may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, or termination.
- 9.11.5. Voluntary Disclosure – Voluntary disclosure of personal substance use may be considered during disciplinary proceedings. However, it does not guarantee mediation or exemption from disciplinary action. Disclosure must occur before any faculty, staff, or administrator becomes aware of the incident to be considered voluntary.
- 9.11.6. Workplace and Student Support
- For employees, failure to adhere to this policy may result in termination. However, when appropriate, the Academy may offer an opportunity for rehabilitation, provided that the employee complies with all requirements, including random testing and counseling.
 - For students, the Academy emphasizes a restorative approach while maintaining accountability. Support services may be required for a student's continued enrollment, including referrals to counseling and accountability programs.
- 9.11.7. Houghton Academy acknowledges and complies with New York Education Law § 912-a, which requires parental consent for drug and alcohol testing of students. By the act of enrolling a child at Houghton Academy, the parent/guardian provides this required consent, authorizing the Academy to administer drug and alcohol testing at its discretion, with or without

reasonable suspicion.

9.12. WHISTLE-BLOWER POLICY

The Academy's internal controls and operating procedures are intended to detect and prevent or deter improper acts. However, even the best control systems cannot provide absolute safeguards against irregularities. Intentional or unintentional violations of laws, regulations, policies, and procedures may occur and constitute improper activities. Therefore, employees, volunteers, students, and parents are responsible for reporting suspected improper activities, and the Academy is responsible for thoroughly investigating any allegations received.

Reporting Concerns

- a. Individuals wanting to report suspected improper activities may do so by one of several methods:
 - i. Contact the Head of School to set up a meeting to discuss the concern.
 - ii. Submit your concern in writing. A sealed envelope can be sent to the Head of School by U.S. mail. While we would prefer that you use your name in case additional details are needed, the allegation will still be thoroughly investigated if submitted anonymously.
 - iii. If the concern involves an allegation against the Head of School, it should be directed to the chair of the Board of Trustees.
- b. Relevant concerns may include but not be limited to:
 - i. Financial irregularity, fraud, theft, corruption, bribery, dishonesty (including misuse of Academy credit card, falsification of expense reports, etc.).
 - ii. Any illegal act
 - iii. Directing an employee to perform any of the above
 - iv. Deliberate concealment of any of the above
 - v. Any violation of Academy policy as stated in the School Handbook, the Employee Manual, or the Board of Trustees Manual.
- c. Retaliation

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- i. No individual who reports a concern in good faith shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences.
 - ii. An employee or student who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith will be subject to disciplinary action, including discharge or expulsion.
 - iii. Any employee or student who believes they have been retaliated against should contact the Head of School.
- d. Investigation of Concerns Received
 - i. Every allegation will be investigated promptly.
 - ii. Upon receiving a report of suspected improper activity, the Head of School will immediately begin an investigation and may choose to do so with an appropriate administrative officer.
 - iii. If the allegation is directed towards the Head of School, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees will immediately begin an investigation and may choose to do so with another Board member.

2024 - 2025 School Handbook Acknowledgement

After a review of the Houghton Academy School Handbook, print, sign, and return this form to your homeroom teacher or the Main Office.

MY SIGNATURE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT I HAVE READ THE HOUGHTON ACADEMY SCHOOL HANDBOOK AND AGREE TO BE GOVERNED BY THE EXPECTATIONS OUTLINED HEREIN:

Student Name (Please PRINT): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____