



**2025- 2026**  
**STUDENT & PARENT**  
**HANDBOOK**

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## **ABOUT BRANDON ACADEMY**

### **Forward**

This Student/Parent Handbook is designed to help you make the best of what Brandon Academy has to offer, and it is intended to help guide both parent and student. Please read it carefully; we encourage each family to review it together. Although Brandon Academy promotes the development of individual talents and respects the right of every student to his or her own opinion, the Student/Parent Handbook serves as a guide for the expectations of you as a member of the BA community. This includes accepted standards of behavior and communication. It is assumed that you will read them, understand them, and, by your presence in the school, maintain them. We expect each community member to embrace the spirit and the letter of the school rules and policies. Goodwill and good faith must be the basis of our relationship. Brandon Academy assumes that its students enter the school with a serious purpose and that conscience and good sense are sufficient guides to behavior. The school expects honesty from its students. The faculty intends to develop an understanding of responsibility among students for personal conduct and the well-being of our community. Rules and expectations simply impose limits; they do not define mature behavior. Respect for other people, honesty, and courtesy are fundamental standards the school expects of everyone. This cooperation and mutual understanding create an enjoyable and creative community life. That is our shared purpose.. We trust that you will do your part to make this a reality. At Brandon Academy, our hope is that you will not only grow academically, but will also make new friends, grow in community spirit, and enjoy yourself! The BA Student/Parent Handbook is reviewed and revised annually so, even if you're a returning BA student or parent, we encourage you to reread this handbook closely.

### **History**

Brandon Academy was established in 1970 as an independent school in a suburb east of Tampa, Florida. Brandon Academy is a non-denominational college preparatory school that serves the Brandon community. The school attracts a diverse population, including children from many religions, cultures, and ethnicities. In the Fall of 2015, Brandon Academy opened a high school. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered to students in grades 9 - 12, and dual enrollment opportunities are available for students in grades 11 and 12.

### **Mission**

The mission of Brandon Academy is to educate young people in an environment of respect, coupled with a commitment to quality education, in a challenging program for students of average to above-average ability. The school community embraces Brandon Academy's mission, and we incorporate these traits into the school's daily activities, in the classroom, and outside of it. These

themes resonate throughout each student's time at BA and become a source of pride for all Scorpions.

### **Philosophy**

Brandon Academy is dedicated to quality education and developing well-rounded young individuals. Serving pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade students, we seek to provide a challenging curriculum with flexibility to meet the individual needs of average to above-average students. Our belief is that success in life is dependent on students being well-rounded. Brandon Academy strongly emphasizes reading, mathematics, and the sciences. The program combines artistic creativity, Spanish, technology and innovation, physical education, writing, problem-solving, community engagement, and service. Program goals and objectives are carried out in an environment that is friendly, vibrant, and enhanced by a speakers bureau and off-campus travel. Parents are encouraged to be an active part of their child's program. Newsletters, parent conferences, school functions, and volunteer time keep parents active in and informed about the school community. Brandon Academy's faculty have, at minimum, their Bachelor's degrees, with many holding advanced degrees. Continuous faculty development prepares teachers for the challenges facing our young people today. Students, parents, and faculty work together in an environment supported by open communication and community pride. Well-rounded, respectful children with a positive attitude toward learning are the result of the Brandon Academy school program.

### **Core Values**

1. **Respect Everyone.** Treat all individuals with dignity and respect, valuing each person's uniqueness and contributions. This includes peers, teachers, staff, and visitors.
2. **Be Honest and Responsible.** Demonstrate integrity in all actions and take responsibility for your behavior and its impact on the school community.
3. **Be Kind and Supportive.** Foster a positive, inclusive environment by showing kindness and supporting others.
4. **Strive for Excellence.** Commit to personal and academic growth by setting high standards and working diligently to achieve them.
5. **Take Care of Your Environment.** Maintain a clean, safe, and respectful school environment for everyone.

### **Brandon Academy is accredited by**

Cognia

National Independent Private School Association (NIPSA)

National Blue Ribbon School

### 2025 - 2026 Senior Leadership Team

Sarah Browning	Head of School, Ph. D. Sociology, University of Toronto
Brian Galzerano	Assistant HOS, M.S. Curriculum & Instruction, Walden University
Ashley Smith	Lower School Director, B.S. Elementary Education, Univ. of South Florida
Dylan Rudolph	Marketing, B.S. Journalism, University of Florida
Aubrey Wargowsky	Counselor, B.S., Human Development and Family Studies, Penn State University - Wilkes Barre

### 2025 - 2026 Faculty

Lori Huebner	1st Grade, B.S, Elementary Education, Univ of South Florida
Amy Stimets	2nd Grade, M.S. Social Work, Temple University
Heather Berntsen	3rd Grade, B.A. Biology, Marlboro College
Denise MacLaren	4th Grade, B.A. Mass Communication, University of South Florida
Olivia Dombrowski	5th Grade, M.S. Organization Leadership, Cabrini University
Leign Simonton	Music, B.S. Music Education, Slippery Rock University
Aida Ramirez	Spanish, B.S. Spanish, University De Buenaventura
Maria Hernandez	Spanish, B.S. Tourism, International University of the Americas
Matthew Morrison	English & Language Arts, B.A. English, University of Central Florida
Brittany Parks	English & Language Arts, B.A. English, University of Florida
Suzanne Ullrich	Math, B.S. Secondary Math Education, University of New Orleans
Eric Heller	Math, B.S Education, Westchester University
Bonnie Lehne	Science, B.A. Chemistry, M.S Strategic Intelligence, Colorado Springs
Carolyn Moffett	Science, M.S. Exceptional Education, Nova Southeastern University
Krissy McDaniel	History, M.S. Public History, American Military University
Alex Mattioli	Art, B.A. Museum Studies, University of Tampa

### Contact Information

Administration	Ext	Name	Email
Head of School	116	Sarah Browning	browning@brandon-academy.com
Assist Head of School	111	Brian Galzerano	galzerano@brandon-academy.com
Lower School Director	113	Ashley Smith	smith@brandon-academy.com
Guidance	148	Aubrey Wargowsky	wargowsky@brandon-academy.com
MS Dean of Students	106	Carolyn Moffett	moffett@brandon-academy.com
HS Dean of Students	121	Suzanne Ullrich	ullrich@brandon-academy.com

Finance	124	Dylan Rudolph	drudolph@brandon-academy.com
Front Office	100	Sarah Sparks	sparks@brandon-academy.com
Business Office	115	Dawn Goldklang	goldklang@brandon-academy.com
Athletic Director	111	Brian Galzerano	galzerano@brandon-academy.com

## ADMISSION TO BA

### Policy

At Brandon Academy, we recognize the value of a sustained, long-term partnership with families in their children’s education. A seamless transition from elementary through high school provides a consistent, thorough progression through academic coursework. Because of this philosophy, BA is pleased to offer Continuous Enrollment. This process allows families to know that their child’s seat is secure. From admission, their child will be considered enrolled at Brandon Academy through their high school graduation unless otherwise notified by the parent or guardian. Families will no longer be required to sign another contract unless enrolling a new student.

Admission is open for average to above-average students. Acceptance to Brandon Academy is based on the results of a comprehensive testing program. For younger students, emotional development and readiness are as crucial to a child’s success in school as intellect and achievement. No student will be denied admission based on race, color, national origin, or sexual orientation. All students are expected to meet the academic standards and follow all school policies and regulations. Brandon Academy reserves the right to dismiss a student whose presence in the school is considered detrimental to the student’s best interest or their fellow students. Brandon Academy believes it is essential that a positive working relationship exists between parent/guardian and the school. The school reserves the right to terminate or not renew a student’s enrollment contract if the school reasonably concludes the actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive relationship impossible or seriously interfere with the school’s accomplishment of its educational purposes. Brandon Academy reserves the right to refuse readmission to any student at the beginning of any semester. A student whose tuition is more than 30 days in arrears may not return to school until the account is current.

### Requirements

The admission-testing program covers developmental readiness, reading readiness, intellect, and achievement in subject matter areas. The results are used for instructional placement. Group placement is determined by developmental age, emotional maturity, and level of achievement. Testing for the fall begins in January. Since space and student enrollment are limited, our applications are processed on a “first come, first served” basis. Interested parents should contact the Academy as early as possible.

*New Students*

1. New students must complete all registration forms and provide copies of all testing or report cards from previous school(s).
2. New students must earn satisfactory scores on our entrance testing. The Division Head will determine grade-level placement.
3. Parents of new students need to provide a copy of the child's Birth Certificate.
  - a. To be considered for Pre-Kindergarten, students must be three years old and potty trained by October 1st of the current school year.
  - b. Students must be five years old by October 1st to be considered for Kindergarten.
  - c. Entrance into First grade requires successful completion of a Kindergarten program.
4. New students must have an updated record of immunization. These health records must be filed in the office before the start of school.
5. New students must submit their deposit, the enrollment contract, and book and lab fees before the first day of attendance. Deposits are non-refundable.
6. Enrollment is understood to be for the entire school year.

*Returning Students*

Enrolled students in good standing will be invited to return for the next school year in mid-January. Families planning to attend BA for the next school year will not need to sign a new contract but only pay the re-enrollment deposit on February 1. Families will be emailed about the February 1st deadline to opt out of attending BA for the following school year. Families deciding not to return to BA next year must alert the Head of School in writing (email or letter) by January 30th so they are not charged next year's deposit. Families that decide not to return to BA after February 1 but before May 1 will lose the \$500 deposit but will not owe the entire year's tuition. After May 1, families are responsible for the entire year's tuition.

## **ACADEMICS**

In keeping with our philosophy of education, the instructional goal at Brandon Academy is to provide a challenging, quality curriculum that encourages students to progress and maintain the highest standards of academic instruction. Instructional materials are selected to meet the scope, sequence, and standards of excellence set for each course. The primary emphasis is on basic skills at all Pre-K – High School levels. Enrichment areas include complementary subjects such as art, music, physical education, and Spanish. The curriculum is designed for the average and above-average student, with materials selected in light of a diagnostic approach to instruction.

## **Honor Code**

*Preamble*

With the following policies and procedures, Brandon Academy students will feel responsible for maintaining the high moral and ethical standards outlined in the student handbook. Such empowerment will promote a sense of school pride and spirit. This honor system, which promotes discipline and accountability, is based on self-respect and respect for others in the Brandon Academy community. This includes students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni. The Honor Code allows individuals to develop physically, emotionally, and academically in an atmosphere of trust.

### *Honor Code*

On my honor, I will do my own work, uphold the ideals of Brandon Academy, protect the school's good name, and see that all others do the same. I vow to leave the school better than it was given to me.

I will do my own work both in and out of school. I will not plagiarize, including using AI such as ChatGPT, the work or ideas of others, nor will I allow another student to use any part of my work as his or her own.

I will not lie. I will not forge the signature of another student, my parent, a teacher, or an authority on notes or school documents, including reports, tests, or other communication.

If I fail to meet the standards of this honor code, I will accept the decisions set forth by the Honor Board.

### *Honor Board Procedures for Academic Offenses*

If a student is accused of an Honor violation, the Head of School will investigate and inform the student and parents of the charges. The student will then appear before the Honor Board for a hearing, including the Head of School, Honor Board members, and a faculty advocate. The student will be bound by the Honor Board's decision.

### **Lower School (Grades PK 3 - 5)**

The Lower School learning experience at Brandon Academy is student-centered, with a strong emphasis on fostering both success and self-esteem. Core academic subjects include language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Within the language arts program, students engage in reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and phonics. At BA, we believe that reading is the cornerstone of all future learning. As such, reading development is thoughtfully planned, carefully implemented, and consistently assessed to ensure each student's progress.



In addition to core academics, students also participate in art, music, physical education, and Spanish, helping to develop a well-rounded educational experience. Children are encouraged to embrace and accept themselves as individuals, building confidence and character along the way.

The Lower School lays a strong foundation for future academic success, providing the essential building blocks for continued learning in Middle School and beyond.

#### *Lower School Grading/ Evaluations (PreK-2)*

In our primary grades, students are evaluated on a standards-based grading system. The following indicators are used to describe student's learning:

S=Satisfactory Progress      L= Learning this skill      N=Needs improvement in this area

#### *Lower School Grading/ Evaluations (3rd-5th)*

Our intermediate division uses traditional grading to evaluate students. Within each subject, there are four categories of grades: classwork, homework, quizzes, and tests.

A = 90-100      B = 80-89      C = 70-79      N = 60-69      U = 59 -0

#### *Lower School Homework Expectations*

- Primary (K-2): 30-45 minutes per evening, Monday through Thursday, can be expected. Exceptions to this may be make-up work or long-term projects.
- Intermediate (3-5): 45-60 minutes per evening, Monday through Thursday, is expected. Make-up work or long-term projects may be exceptions.

#### *Make-Up Work Policy for Lower School*

Please contact the teacher to make arrangements to pick up make-up work. Teachers will work with families to set reasonable deadlines for missed work.

### **Upper School (Grades 6 -12)**

The Brandon Academy curriculum is specifically designed for average to above-average students who have strong foundations in the basic skills of reading, language arts, and mathematics. Students are ready to expand and refine these skills and use them in other subject areas. The learning experiences are based on the student's level of development and needs. During the Middle/High School years, the student develops an independent self-concept. While continuing to provide an environment for academic excellence, we strive to help nurture a positive self-image. English grammar, literature, vocabulary, written composition, mathematics, physical education, science, and social studies form the core of the curriculum. Our curriculum is open-ended so that the child's abilities and initiative are the only limits to learning.

#### *Grades 6-8 Grading/ Evaluations*

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 59 -0

*Grades 9 -12 Grading/Evaluations*

A+ = 100-97

A = 96-90

B + = 89-87

B = 86-80

C + = 79- 77

C = 76-70

D += 69-67

D = 66-60

F = 59-0

*Upper School Homework Expectations*

- Grades 6-8: 1-1.5 hours per evening can be expected. Make-up work or long-term projects may be exceptions.
- Grades 9 -12: 2-2.5 hours per evening can be expected. Exceptions to this may be make-up work, long-term projects, and AP Courses.

NOTE: Homework is work that a student can do independently. Students who spend more time than that specified may be completing daily class work. Parents should contact the teacher when they have concerns.

**General Academic Policies**

*Academic Probation* - A student whose academic average in core courses for the semester falls at or below 2.0 or who failed a course will be placed on academic probation. This determination will be made at the end of the semester for internal use and at the end of the school year for official transcript use. Students on academic probation may be restricted from extracurricular activities, including athletics. Students are strongly encouraged to seek teacher support and/or tutoring in classes with a C or below. Students on academic probation who do not exhibit sufficient growth may be denied enrollment for the following year.

*Cumulative Records* - Record requests to attend another school must be channeled through the Head of School. Individual teachers are not to be directly contacted with records requests. All check sheets requested for outside services and teacher recommendations for receiving schools will be sent directly to the school.

*Grade Postings*—Teachers will post grades on RenWeb, which allows parents and students to monitor their progress throughout the grading period. Academic updates are issued formally four times a year using report cards and informally, through interims, four times a year. All entries by the teacher

on your child's report cards result from careful evaluation. Report cards and transcripts will be held from families not in good financial standing with the Business Office.

*Standardized Testing* - Brandon Academy gives a standardized test each spring to students in grades 2-8. High School students will have standardized testing in October and March. This information is helpful to our faculty for placement, remediation, and acceleration. Parents will receive the results following testing. There are no make-up days available. Please plan for your children to be present on all testing dates. See the school calendar for testing dates.

*Teacher/Parent Conferences* - In lieu of an 'official' conference week, we encourage parents and teachers to schedule conferences whenever warranted. Please contact your child's teacher via email to schedule a meeting.

*Teacher Grading* - All written assignments will be promptly corrected and returned to the students. Tests will be corrected and returned no more than two days after they are given. Term papers will be corrected and returned within ten days after the teacher receives them.

*Teacher Request by Parents* - We do not accept parental requests for teachers.

## **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESOURCES**

### **Attendance**

Parents must report their child's absence by 8:30 am. Absences should be reported by completing the online form, which can be found at [www.bradon-academy.com](http://www.bradon-academy.com). Make-up work that cannot be sent electronically may be picked up after communicating with your child's teacher.

*Excess Absences* - A student absent more than 34 days during the school year must repeat the entire school year at the same level. For Upper School, students missing individual classes for more than 34 days during the school year must repeat that class at the same level. After twenty absences, a conference (phone or Zoom) with the homeroom teacher will be held for lower school students and the Dean of Students for upper school students.

*Upper School Absences* - When absent, the student will be responsible for getting their assignments. Check the *Remind* text, Google Classroom, email the instructor or call a classmate. If the text needed is not at home, the teachers will be understanding and make accommodations so students can complete their assignments. Students are encouraged to handle the arrangements themselves. Remember, as upper school students, it is important to accept responsibility. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a time to make up quizzes and tests or arrange any additional help from the teacher. An absence on the day before an announced test does not excuse a student from that test.

*Make-up Work* - All assignments missed during absences must be completed. Parents should request work be sent home for extended absences. All make-up work is due within a reasonable time frame determined by the teacher. Make-up work that cannot be sent electronically may be picked up after communicating with the child's teacher.

*Extracurricular Activities* - Students must attend school for at least half the school day to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics, academic competitions, and performances. On noon dismissal days, students must attend the entire day to participate in extracurricular activities.

*Field Trip Absences* - Students' schoolwork may be assigned beforehand. Students will not be penalized for missed assignments and tests; they will be accountable for completing them upon their return to school. The teacher will determine a reasonable time for completion.

### **Tardy Policy**

Tardiness disrupts the educational environment and impacts student learning. Students are expected to be punctual for school and class as follows:

- Lower School: Students should be in their classrooms by 8:00 am.
- Upper School: Students should be in their classrooms by 8:00 am and at the beginning of any subsequent class period.

*Late to School (Lower and Upper School)* - Students arriving after the designated start times must report to the school office for a tardy pass before entering the classroom.

*Tardiness between Classes (Upper School)* - Students who are tardy between classes must report directly to the next scheduled class. The teacher will note the tardiness in *RenWeb*.

*Consequences*—Upon Every fifth tardy (per semester), students will serve detention, and parents will be contacted and will count as one absence, whether excused or unexcused. Disciplinary action will be taken on the fifth tardy and for each following tardy. Disciplinary action will continue to escalate if corrective action is not taken.

### **Student Success Behavior Program (Lower School)**

Each Lower School classroom has an age-appropriate behavior plan that will be communicated with the parents at the start of the school year. Each plan will consist of class expectations, individual rewards and consequences, and group or whole-class rewards and consequences—including verbal warnings, parent contact through planners, email or phone calls, loss of classroom privileges, and a meeting with the Lower School Head.

### **Student Success Behavior Program (Middle School)**

Brandon Academy is committed to fostering a positive and disciplined learning environment by implementing a comprehensive merit system that rewards exemplary student behavior. The Student Success Behavior Program for Middle School aims to uphold high moral standards and self-respect among students while maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning. This policy outlines the structure and criteria of the merit system that will be used to reward students based on their conduct and adherence to school rules. Discipline is an integral part of school life. Students are expected to maintain control and a positive relationship with their peers and faculty. Through policy and regulations, the administration and faculty aim to promote high moral standards and self-respect in an atmosphere conducive to learning. The following system of infractions and rewards has been established to provide classroom structure and discipline. Teachers will institute the infraction system in their classrooms. The issuing teacher will send merit and demerit reports to the Dean of Students, who will maintain records of all disciplinary interactions. enter infractions into *RenWeb*, and the Dean of Students will maintain the records.

#### *Infractions*

- Minor classroom disruptions will receive a verbal warning for a first offense and an infraction for continued disruptive behavior.
- Issues like repeated dress code violations, tardiness, inappropriate language etc., will receive one or more infractions to stress the need to change the behavior.
- Continuing the behavior can result in multiple infractions or more severe consequences, including detentions, office referrals, and/or suspension.
- More serious offenses, including online bullying or harassment of a fellow BA community member, will result in an automatic detention (6 or more infractions) or suspension (8 or more infractions) in a week.

Weekly, infractions will be calculated and assigned the following letter grades:

0 - 1 infraction for the week	A (95%)
2 - 3 infractions for the week	B (85%)
4 - 5 infractions for the week	C (75%)
6 - 7 infractions for the week	D (65%)
8 or more infractions for the week	F (55%)

Grades will be averaged numerically at the end of each quarter to produce a quarterly letter grade or comment for all upper school students. This system will be reported weekly via *Renweb* and officially recorded on report cards. Middle School students will receive a Quarterly Conduct Grade on their report cards. The Dean of Students will write a Quarterly Comment for high school students with a C or lower conduct grade.

Students who have an average grade of A or B for the nine-week grading period will receive a reward that may include half-day or full-day activities instead of class time.

### *Merit System Policy*

To encourage and reward students for demonstrating good behavior, fostering a positive and disciplined learning environment. All students can earn merits for exhibiting exemplary conduct and adhering to school rules. Merits can be earned through various positive behaviors, such as:

- Demonstrating respect towards peers and staff
- Consistently following classroom and school rules
- Showing responsibility in completing assignments on time
- Participating actively and positively in class
- Helping others and displaying acts of kindness
- Demonstrating leadership qualities and teamwork

### *Merit Tracking*

Teachers and staff will send merits earned by students to the Dean of Students for recording in *RenWeb*. *RenWeb* will track and update students' merit points. Students and parents will receive regular updates on merit points to encourage continuous positive behavior. Students who accumulate several merits within a designated period will be eligible for rewards.

### **Student Success Behavior Program (High School)**

A school is defined by its culture. By the time students enter high school, they are expected to have a clearer understanding of appropriate school behavior and that poor choices result in consequences commensurate with the seriousness of the choice. Teachers will often be the first line of defense against such poor decision making. As such, they are expected to intervene early and redirect behavior where possible. While Brandon Academy embraces the concept of the “Teachable Moment” we also recognize the importance of keeping records should the behavior require further action. We must protect the student culture from being degraded by the actions of the few.

Teachers, staff, and administrators are expected to document instances of poor behavior using our internal form. As part of the reporting, they designate one of three categories of seriousness for the offense: minor, intermediate, or serious. Examples for the categories are given below with the understanding that no such list can be exhaustive.

**Minor offenses:** cell phone use, inappropriate language, classroom disruption, dress code

**Intermediate offenses:** egregious language, disrespect of adults/peers

**Serious offenses:** violence, property damage/theft, bullying (including online)

The reports go to the Dean of Students who will determine required action in consultation with the Head of School when necessary. Examples of possible consequences are given below.

**Minor consequences:** verbal warning, family contact, lunch detention, loss of privileges

**Intermediate consequences:** after school detention, in-school suspension

**Serious consequences:** out-of-school suspension, expulsion

The Dean of Students will communicate with the family regarding consequences. Please note that the accumulation of many ‘minor’ offenses suggests that a more serious consequence is required to correct behavior. Thus the importance of accurate record keeping and clear, consistent communication with families. Brandon Academy recognizes that teenagers are still developing and may offer to expunge disciplinary records upon long-term, significant improvements in behavior.

*Good Faith Reporting* - All concerns relating to bullying, harassment, or hazing by community members should be reported immediately to school officials. We also expect that anyone, whether student, faculty, staff, or family member, who witnesses or has knowledge of such an incident of bullying, harassment, or hazing will report the incident to the administration immediately. When the school administration becomes aware of bullying, harassment, or hazing, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any student found to have harmed our school community will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from school for serious violations. No adverse action will be taken against anyone who makes a good-faith report of bullying, harassment, or hazing. Retaliation against anyone for making a good faith complaint under this policy or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any retaliation should also be reported according to this policy and is a cause for disciplinary action.

### **Dress Code**

The Dress Code Policy was developed to provide an environment that enhances academic excellence, builds pride and respect, and considers cost to parents, ease of enforcement, and appropriateness. Brandon Academy reserves the right to determine appropriate dress and appearance for its students and appreciates family cooperation in upholding the requirements of the Dress Policy.

#### *Dress Code for Brandon Academy Students*

- Khaki, navy, black, or gray solid colored bottoms of appropriate length.
  - The plaid skirt, skort or jumper from Land’s End may also be worn.
  - Bottoms must be worn at the waist and undergarments should not be exposed.



- Sweatpants and pajama pants are not permitted.
- Polo shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies must have the Brandon Academy logo.
  - **Black** shirts/sweatshirts/hoodies are reserved for **high school students**.
  - Tops must be purchased at Brandon Academy
- Closed-toe shoes or sneakers are required. Crocs are prohibited for safety reasons.
- Hats are not allowed inside buildings unless for religious purposes or special dress days.
  - Hoods should not be up inside buildings.

*PE Dress Code*—All 4th—8th grade and HOPE students must dress out for PE. These uniforms must be purchased at the school store.

*Friday “Spirit Day” Dress* - On Fridays, students may wear their Friday Shirts or shirts that specifically promote a recognized BA team, club, etc. Friday shirts are sold in the Business Office and may be worn every Friday with appropriate bottoms.

*Consequences for Dress Code Violations* - Administrators will address students dressed inappropriately, and repeated violations will impact conduct grades and/or result in detention.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Parents are strongly advised not to call or text their children between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. This is a crucial part of our school's policy. If it is necessary to contact a student during the school day, parents should call or email the office, and the message will be relayed to the student. Students cannot record lectures or class meetings without the teacher’s permission. The presence of electronic equipment in testing situations is a serious matter that may prompt an Honor Council investigation. The school reserves the right to confiscate and review any personal electronic devices of students to clarify honor or discipline situations. The school does not assume or accept responsibility for the loss of or damage to personal property.

While we understand that some lower and middle school students may need to carry cell phones for after-school activities, cell phones must remain in their backpacks during the school day. If a student violates this policy, the phone will be confiscated, with possible disciplinary action for students in grades JK—8. A parent or guardian may pick up confiscated cell phones.

Cell phone use is permitted on campus for high school students except during detention, meetings, classes, standardized testing, and other required appointments. Cell phone use in a class is only allowed under the direction of the teacher. Each student is responsible for demonstrating respect for others and ensuring their cell phone does not interfere, interrupt, or distract them at any school meeting or function.



### **FLVS Classes**

Brandon Academy will pay for one full-year FLVS course or two 1-semester courses per school year for any high school student. Any additional courses are at your own expense.

The following stipulations apply:

- Students are only allowed to take a course not offered at Brandon Academy or one that does not fit into their schedule.
- This does not apply to any credit recovery courses.
- The course must be completed by the end of the current academic year. For seniors, it means before their graduation.
- Any student who does not successfully complete (pass) the class within the required time frame may be required to reimburse BA for the FLVS fees.

All courses must be approved by the administration before FLVS enrollment.

### **Bike Riders**

Parents of bike riders should discuss safety issues with their children. All students are expected to follow safety and road rules. Bike riders must lock their bikes on campus. Any student not following the rules for safe riding will not be allowed to ride a bicycle to school. Helmets must be worn if the child is under 16. A permission form for riding the bike must be written and signed by the parent/guardian and will be filed in the student's cumulative file.

### **Bookbags**

Bags should be manageable and fit beneath the student's desk. Parents are urged to check bookbags daily for notices and other important information. Rolling book bags are not permitted. All students are encouraged to use a book bag or backpack to protect textbooks, binders, computers, and other school materials.

### **Clubs**

At Brandon Academy, students are encouraged to join clubs as these activities help to apply and extend the ideas they learn in their academic classes. Participation in clubs offers substantial benefits. Students can learn interpersonal skills that aid in developing leadership, confidence, determination, and responsibility. Students can align their co-curricular activities with their academic program to enhance their areas of strength. Lower school students will have Club Day on the first Friday of every month. Upper school students can initiate a club of their choice with the support of a faculty sponsor. Meetings for upper school clubs will be scheduled as required, typically during breaks or lunch hours. However, it's important to note that if students are on campus outside of regular school hours, they must be supervised by an adult or enrolled in our aftercare program for safety reasons. We cannot make exceptions to this rule.

### **Community Service**

Community service is strongly encouraged for all lower and middle school students. This is a requirement for candidates who wish to join the National Elementary Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society. Community service is required for all high school students. Students applying for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship are required to have 100 service hours by 12th grade.

### **Lockers**

Students in grades 6 to 8 are responsible for their lockers. They must purchase a combination lock and give the combination to their advisor on the first school day. Students can use their lockers during specific times each day and before and after school. Lockers are the property of BA and may be searched at any time.

### **High School Student Parking**

Students who can drive to school must park in the designated area and register their vehicle with the Front Office..

### **Technology**

All students will sign an Acceptable Use Policy (eTRUP) before using the Internet. Parents will also be expected to read over this information, discuss it with their child, and return the Agreement to school. Internet privileges may be revoked if misuse is found. Serious violations of the Internet Policy can result in your child being dismissed.

## **PARENT EXPECTATIONS AND RESOURCES**

### **Classroom Visits by Parents**

Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms; however, this is to be done after a parent requests an appointment before the visit. Teachers are directed to refer parents who make unscheduled visits to the office so that appointments can be made as required. We ask parents to cooperate with this policy so our teachers' attention is not taken from their students.

### **Clinic**

The clinic is housed in the Administration Office, which can be reached by calling (813) 689- 1952, ext. 100.

### **Communication**

Parents are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with teachers and the administration. Brandon Academy uses various communication tools such as Back-to-School events, Curriculum Nights, ParentsWeb, Remind texts, parent/teacher conferences, the school's website ([www.brandon-academy.com](http://www.brandon-academy.com)), phone calls, emails, informal notes, and classroom newsletters to keep

families informed. If you have a concern, please don't hesitate to share it. It's best to address problems promptly by taking them to the person involved or an administrator. Delaying or sharing problems with someone unable to address them can worsen matters. Approaching the teacher before contacting an administrator for classroom issues is important. If you're unsatisfied with the resolution at the initial level, escalate the matter to the next level and, if necessary, to the Head of School. Effective communication between parents, the school, and the community is vital for Brandon Academy. Any concerns should be discussed directly with the relevant parties rather than with other parents or friends. Seeking information from the right source can help prevent misinformation from turning into rumors.

**Delinquency**

Parents are reminded that the school will hold report cards if charges, book debts, etc., have not been paid during their distribution. This includes Extended Day fees and tuition.

**Drop-off/ Pick-up Students**

There are two car lines for drop off and pick up, one in the front and one in the back. Safety Patrols and teachers will be on hand to assist with the loading/unloading of the students. Parents who wish to park and walk their child(ren) to class should park in the back parking lot.

Students dropped off between 7:00- 7:40 a.m. must attend the Morning Care in the gym, which is charged to the parents. After 7:40 am, students are permitted to enter their classrooms. Students not picked up by 3:30 will be sent to Aftercare.

Please do not block driveways or use our neighbors' yards to turn around. Please do not park in the reserved spots from 7:45 am to 3:15 pm.

We worked closely with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to develop the safest plan for our campus. Our students' safety is extremely important to us; therefore, we ask that you follow the following at pick-up/dismissal:

1. Follow the direction of the administration.
2. Pull as far into the driveway as possible and stay with your vehicle.
3. The speed of your vehicle should not exceed 5 MPH.
4. No parking on street sidewalks. The county has informed us they will ticket or remove your automobile.
5. Please ensure that all adults picking up your child(ren) know our procedures.
6. For the safety of our community, please do not use your cell phone while in the carline.

**Emergency Communication**

In case of an emergency, please check the website, Remind text, and school-wide emails.

### **Extended Day Program**

Families may enroll their children in supervised care before and after school. The hours for this program are as follows:

- Morning Care is from 7:00 – 7:40 am for all students in the gym.
- After-school care for all students is from 3:30 – 6:00 pm.
- Students must be picked up by 6:00 pm, or a fine of \$1.00 per minute will be imposed. This must be paid in cash at pickup.

### **Field Trips**

Visits to local museums, theaters, libraries, places of business, etc., are an integral part of our program. Parents help chaperones and may be asked to drive on these trips. Dress for field trips is the Brandon Academy uniform unless otherwise specified by the teacher. We are sorry that we cannot permit non-enrolled children, including siblings, on Brandon Academy field trips, with prom as the exception. This is an insurance issue, so please refrain from asking the school to make exceptions. Students in Kindergarten, JK and PK3 must use a parent-provided car seat or booster seat. Parents wishing to be considered as drivers should have their driver's license and insurance card in the front office.

#### *Field Trip Guidelines for Parents*

Parents volunteering as drivers on field trips should consider the following points before volunteering:

1. Supervision is the key to safety. Parents must help out by supervising the students in their care.
2. The teacher in charge should handle all discipline.
3. Once students are in the vehicle, buckle all seatbelts. Students are not permitted to sit in the front seats without parental permission.
4. Under no circumstances is a child to change carpools, leave early, or alter tour groups without the supervising teacher's permission.
5. An adult must supervise students who need to use the restroom while on a trip. Please take your entire group or have another chaperone take the child to the restroom for you.
6. When driving, unauthorized or unscheduled stops are not permitted.

#### *Out of Town Field Trips*

There are several out-of-town extended field trips offered to our students. All fees must be paid in full for the child or parent to attend.

### **Fire/ Safety Drills**

Fire drills will be held monthly.

### **Fundraisers**

Participation in fundraisers at Brandon Academy is by your choice..

### **Guest Sign-in**

Anyone not employed by the school should check in at the front office.

### **Inclement Weather**

Brandon Academy follows the Hillsborough County School District's plan for weather-related closures. If the county schools close due to weather, BA will close unless parents are notified otherwise. Parents will be informed via email, social media, Remind, and our website if Brandon Academy can reopen before the public schools.

### **Labeling of Clothing / Personal Items**

Uniforms should be labeled first and last with your child's name. All jackets, sweaters, hoodies, and water bottles should also be labeled.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and Found is located behind the High School building in a designated bin. Items will be held for one nine-week period only. Items not claimed at the end of the quarter will be donated to charity.

### **Lunches**

Students may bring lunch or order from our monthly menu. Lunches are ordered through the Family Portal on our website. If a child is absent on a day he/she bought lunch, that lunch is lost with no refund. Students who do not have lunch will be provided a sandwich upon student request. This is given at an extra cost determined by the school. Lunch deliveries from outside services to the school are prohibited. High school students may purchase drinks from the vending machine from the Commons.

### **Medication**

Per the State of Florida Health Department's regulations, BA cannot dispense medication without parental permission. Parents must register their child's medication with the school office. Medication will be dispensed to the child per the written directions of the prescribing physician. The office has forms on file for school officials to administer medication. All prescription medication must be in prescription bottles from the drugstore. Parents are asked to send a spoon with liquid prescriptions in a labeled bag.

### **Non-Custodial Parent Policies**

All communications generated by the school will be available to the custodial parent, step-parent(s), and non-custodial parent alike. Similarly, both natural (and step-parents) will be granted permission to visit BA or participate in school-sponsored trips regardless of who pays the fees.

Given the unique legal situations of families, the school may make exceptions to the policy, particularly in removing the student from the school campus by the non-custodial parent. This issue should be addressed to the administration at the time of the signing of the enrollment contract. Should court orders limit the non-custodial parent's access to the student or student information, Brandon Academy requires a copy of the court order to become part of the student's permanent file.

### **Parking**

Parallel parking on Bates is acceptable if you do not block the sidewalk. Cars blocking the sidewalks risk being ticketed by the county. There is plenty of parking in the lot on Telfair.

### **Party Invitations**

Party invitations should not be distributed to the school unless all students in your child's class have been invited.

### **Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The Brandon Academy Parent Teacher Organization is vital in connecting our school community. The BA Parent Teacher Organization is dedicated to being a resource to volunteer organizations, families at the school, and BA leadership. By facilitating volunteer support and creating meaningful opportunities for education and connection, the PTO seeks to enhance and enrich the parent experience. Positive school culture is sustained through thoughtfully organized acts of appreciation, service, and wholehearted support of school activities. Please contact [pto@brandon-academy.com](mailto:pto@brandon-academy.com) for more information.

### **Protection of Children**

At Brandon Academy, student safety is of prime importance. We know that our school's parents also feel strongly about safety. The gates in the front and back of the school are locked from 8 am -3 pm daily. Parents should enter the school through the Main Office to check-in. A child will never be released to anyone other than his custodial parent or guardian unless a written or verbal request is sent to the school. Parents must pick students up in the front office for an early dismissal or medical appointment.

### **School Notices**

Brandon Academy communicates with families through multiple channels to ensure they stay informed and engaged. The school website provides up-to-date information on events and important announcements. Additionally, the school distributes a newsletter called "The Scoop" every Friday, covering a range of school-wide updates. In the lower school, teachers send home a weekly newsletter via email and as a hard copy in students' folders. This newsletter details upcoming classroom assignments and activities.

### **Sick Children**

The school will notify the parents when a child becomes ill at school. Please do not send your children to school if they are not feeling well, have thrown up in the last 24 hours, or have a fever. Students should remain at home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers. Students must be signed out in the Front Office if leaving for the day.

### **Social Media Policy**

The Social Media Policy is written to guide all members of the Brandon Academy community in the increasing use of these tools. The following list details the school's official social media presence:

- Facebook: The School has an official Facebook page that typically features news and video stories about members of the BA community.
- Instagram: The School has an Instagram account that displays photos that describe the BA experience.

Social media can be a powerful way to communicate with others, but it can also be disruptive and potentially harmful to individuals and groups. We ask that community members use social media carefully and reserve the right to take action if a student or family member uses social media in a way that is detrimental to school culture, including cyberbullying and harassment.

### **Tutoring**

Occasionally, private tutoring will be recommended. Many of our staff members tutor after school. Your child's teacher will happily assist in arranging an appropriate tutor.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are a welcome addition to our school. There are many opportunities for parents, grandparents, and friends to volunteer. You may contact the classroom teachers and specialists to see how you can volunteer your time. Children love to see their parents on campus. If you volunteer on campus or for field trips, please help us with confidentiality and do not report any field trip or classroom behavior or achievement to other community members. The school and its staff strive to present such information to parents about their children promptly and professionally.

**Website**

Please be sure to explore our school at [www.brandon-academy.com](http://www.brandon-academy.com). Look for the new links to all forms, important dates, and event directions. Be sure you have activated your *ParentsWeb* account to access the above information.

**Yearbooks**

Yearbooks are included in the curriculum fees. In the first semester, flyers about advertising opportunities will be sent out.