



1234 ALPHABET ROAD  
GULFPORT, MS 39503  
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# Parent/Student Handbook

## 2024-2025

### ADMINISTRATION

Melanie Upton, Head of School

Malissia Chitwood, Preschool Director/Director of Operations, Florence Gardens Campus

Amanda Kimball, Preschool Director, Bayou View Campus

I AM HOPE ACADEMY.

I AM THE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

I WILL WORK HARD, BE COURAGEOUS AND PERSEVERE.

I WILL BE HAPPY AND SHOW KINDNESS AT ALL TIMES.

I AM HOPE ACADEMY.

## **HOPE ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT**

The hope and mission of Hope Academy is to inspire and prepare all students to realize their full potential as they develop a passion for life-long learning in a happy, safe and nurturing academic environment.

## **CORE BELIEFS**

We believe that:

- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Each student is a unique individual, with his or her own defining qualities, special strengths and specific needs.
- A secure and nurturing environment allows students to learn and develop to their full potential.
- All programs should provide a rigorous, project-based, hands-on curriculum that encourages creativity and critical thinking.
- Opportunities and experiences should be provided that encourage the exploration of talent in music, art, drama, foreign languages, technology, athletics, leadership and more.
- A positive learning environment is necessary for students to accept in themselves and others the importance of dignity and self-worth.
- Placing the interests of students above all others in every decision we make is essential.
- Family commitment is fundamental to achieving and sustaining excellence.
- Everyone can be a leader.

## **OBJECTIVES**

We strive to:

- Prepare students for academic achievement in secondary and post-secondary education.
- Maintain a safe and secure environment free of distractions.
- Cultivate a spirit of creativity and independent thinking in our students and teachers.
- Provide an innovative, college-prep curriculum that embraces the very best principles of teaching and learning free of the constraints associated with high-stakes state testing.
- Immerse students in the fine arts, foreign language, physical education, technology and leadership habits to provide a well-rounded education.
- Limit class sizes, thus allowing instructors to maximize learning opportunities for each student.
- Nurture confident public speakers and performers through participation in a variety of performing arts programs and Student Showcases.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Enrollment Age**

Hope Academy adheres to age enrollment requirements set by the State of Mississippi Board of Education and the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools. Entering kindergarten students must turn five by September 1.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are 7:45am-3:30pm daily. Please leave a message if you call and there is no answer. We will return your call.

## Extended Care Services

Extended Care Services are available for an additional fee to Hope Academy students only.

- Early Care Program -Monday-Friday from 7:00- 8:00 am.
- After Care Program Monday-Friday from 3:15-5:30 pm.
- Extended Care fees for children who are not potty trained are \$10 per hour. Other children are \$7 per hour. Family rates are available upon request.
- **Extended Care Services will begin the Monday of the first full week of school.**
- Families with delinquent accounts will not be allowed to participate in extended care.
- There will be a fee of \$1 per minute after 5:30 pm that a child is not picked up. If necessary, the proper authorities will be notified for students who are not picked up from Extended Care by 6:00 pm.

## Check-In/Checkout Procedures

All checkouts must be done through the school office. Photo identification may be requested, if a person is unfamiliar to our office staff. We encourage you to schedule your child's appointments after school hours whenever possible. A child who leaves for part of the school day is responsible for getting all classwork and homework assignments completed within 2 school days. Please notify your child's teacher of your checkout plans in advance whenever possible. Students must be signed in and out in the office. Every five check-ins/outs in one quarter at any time during the school day (this includes tardies) will count as an absence against perfect attendance. Late checkouts and check-ins are disruptive to dismissal preparation, thus checkouts are not permitted after 2:30pm without documentation of a doctor's appointment. **Missing more than 15 minutes of a middle school core class will count as an absence against perfect attendance.**

## Lunch

Lunch will be catered Monday through Thursday, and pizza will be available on Fridays for students who pre-pay. Students are required to bring their lunch on days that are not prepaid. All lunches are \$5. Monthly lunch menus will be sent home for the upcoming month at the end of the current month. Families are asked to circle dates to indicate days that students will eat a school lunch that month and attach payment at that time. If families wish to pay through FACTS, that should be indicated on the lunch calendar upon return to school.

## **School Hours for Preschool 8:25am-3:00pm**

Preschool students must be dropped off between 8:00am and 8:25am. Classroom supervision begins at 8:00 am. Students arriving before 8:00am must report to morning extended care. Any student arriving **to school** after 8:25 am is tardy and must enter through the front office door and be signed in by an adult. Preschool students are not independent and may not report to class and join in class activities without one on one teacher direction, which disrupts the learning of others, **therefore preschool students arriving after 9:00am will not be admitted to class, unless a doctor's note is presented.**

## **School Hours for Elementary Students (K- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade): 8:25am-3:00pm**

Elementary age students must be dropped off between 8:00am and 8:20am. Classroom supervision begins at 8:00 am. Students arriving before 8:00am must report to morning extended care. Any student arriving **to school** after 8:25 am is tardy and must enter through the front office door and be signed in by an adult. A tardy pass will be given to the student, and the tardy student may not be escorted to class by parent/guardian. Siblings of middle school students may be dropped off for early care between 7:45-7:55 without being charged.

**School Hours for Middle School Students (5th-8th grade) 8:00am-3:10pm** Class begins promptly at 8:00am. Middle School students must arrive on campus between 7:45-7:55am. Students arriving before 7:45 am must report to early care. Any student arriving to school after 7:55 am is tardy and must enter through the front office door and be signed in by an adult. A tardy pass will be given to the student, and the tardy student may not be escorted to class by parent/guardian.

## **Pets on Campus**

The school does not allow animals on campus without prior permission from the administration, with the exception of service animals.

## **Golf Carts**

Only licensed drivers may operate golf carts on campus. All drivers, including those in golf carts, must follow the same traffic laws and school car line procedures.

# **CAR LINE PROCEDURES**

## **Loading Zone Regulations and Public Parking**

- **Parking is NEVER permitted in the parking lot during drop off or pick up times.**
- Maintain posted speed limits when traveling through Florence Gardens and on campus.
- Campus speed limit is 5 mph.
- Do not block the school entrance or driveways.
- When passing cars in the carline, proceed with caution as students are loaded. If a student is actively being loaded into a car (open door), do not pass the vehicle.
- **When entering from Alphabet Rd. wait until you reach the right hand turn toward preschool before passing cars and joining the K-8 line.**
- Do not leave your car unattended when it is in the carpool line.
- Do not park on the concrete slab between cafeteria and trash enclosure, per order of Gulfport Fire Department.
- Follow the counterclockwise flow of traffic at all times.
- Everyone is encouraged to use the back gate. It will be locked from 8:30am-3:00pm daily.
- If possible, have children seated on the passenger side, so they may exit on the passenger side.
- Preschool children must be secured in a car seat or booster seat while on campus.

## **PRESCHOOL DROP OFF 8:00-8:25am**

Cars line up and wait in the spots that appear to be marked for parking in front of the preschool building. If you would like to drop off your child without participating in the car rider line, park on Alphabet Road and wait near the light pole at the end of the preschool entrance and wait for a teacher. Adults must remain in their vehicle until the teacher approaches the vehicle to assist with unloading. Do not leave your vehicle unattended. PK2 students must be signed in with the teacher, who will bring the clipboard to the car line. **Students may only be walked to class on their first day**

**of school. On the first day of school** you may walk your child to class. If you are walking your child into the building, park on Alphabet Road and go through the front office door.

### **PRESCHOOL PICK-UP 2:30-3:15 pm**

Supervised loading of Hope Academy students in preschool will begin at 2:30 pm each day at the road in front of the Preschool Building entrance. Cars line up and wait in the spots that appear to be marked for parking. No student will be released without a parent or their designated caregiver present. If you would like to pick up your child without participating in the car rider line, park on Alphabet Road and wait near the light pole at the end of the preschool entrance. Your child will be brought to the pick-up area, exiting through the preschool door. Supervision of children in the loading area is provided until 3:15pm. After 3:15pm, any remaining students will be placed in the afternoon extended care program and extended care fees will be charged. **Adults must remain in their vehicle until the teacher approaches the vehicle with the student. Do not leave your vehicle unattended.** PK2 students must be signed out with the teacher, who will bring the clipboard to the car line.

### **ELEMENTARY DROP OFF 8:00-8:25am**

Cars line up and wait in the three designated spots on the west side of the cafeteria. Do not drop off until an adult is present. Keep in mind that middle school students will be dropped off between 7:45-7:55, so if you are here early, do not drop off during these times, or you will be charged for early care. You may be asked to drive around to clear the area for middle school drop off if you arrive too early for elementary drop off.

If you live in Florence Gardens, you may walk your child to the visitor's parking area for drop off. Only residents of the surrounding neighborhood may walk their children to drop off. All other families must use the car line procedures and remain in their vehicle. **Adults must remain in their vehicle. Teachers are on duty to assist children with exiting the vehicles.** **Students may only be walked to class on their first day of school. On the first day of school** you may walk your child to class. If you are walking your child into the building, park on Alphabet Road and go through the front office door.

### **ELEMENTARY PICK UP 3:00-3:15pm**

Supervised loading of Hope Academy students will take place on the west side of the school outside of the cafeteria beginning at 3:00 pm each day for K-4 students. No student will be released without a parent or their designated caregiver present. Only families that live in Florence Gardens neighborhood may pick up the K-8 students without participating in the established car line procedures. If you live in Florence Gardens and would like to pick up your child without participating in the car rider line, walk from Alphabet Road and wait near the visitor parking area for K-8 students. Your child will be called to the pick-up area, exiting through the cafeteria door. Supervision of children in the loading area is provided until 3:15pm. After 3:15pm, any remaining students will be placed in the afternoon extended care program and extended care fees will be charged.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL DROP OFF 7:45-7:55am**

Cars line up and wait in the three designated spots on the west side of the cafeteria. Do not drop off until an adult is present. Keep in mind that elementary school students will be dropped off between 8:00-8:25, so if you arrive late, do not drop off during these times. You will need to park on Alphabet Road and walk with your child to the office to be signed in late. If you live in Florence Gardens, you may walk your child to the visitor's parking area for drop off. Only residents of the surrounding neighborhood may walk their children to drop off. All other families must use the car line procedures and remain in their vehicle. **Adults must remain in their vehicle. Teachers are on duty to assist children with exiting the vehicles.** **Students may only be walked to class on their first day of school. On the first day of school** you may walk your child to class. If you are walking your child into the building, park on Alphabet Road and go through the front office door.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL PICK UP 3:10-3:20pm**

Supervised loading of Hope Academy students will take place on the west side of the school outside of the cafeteria beginning at 3:10 pm each day for middle school students. No student will be released without a parent or their designated caregiver present. Only families that live in Florence Gardens neighborhood may pick up the K-8 students without participating in the established car line procedures. If you live in Florence Gardens and would like to pick up your child without participating in the car rider line, walk from Alphabet Road and wait near the visitor parking area for K-8 students. Your child will be called to the pick-up area, exiting through the cafeteria door. Supervision of children in the loading area is provided until 3:20pm. After 3:20pm, any remaining students will be placed in the afternoon extended care program and extended care fees will be charged.

## **STUDENT HEALTH POLICY**

### **Allergic Reactions**

For an apparent allergic reaction, we will dispense Benadryl if the appropriate permission has been given. Parents will also be notified. If your child requires epinephrine pens, please contact the Director of Operations. She is trained to administer those medications.

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases**

Hope Academy maintains a healthy environment by instituting controls designed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The term "communicable disease" shall mean an illness that arises as a result of a specific infectious agent that may be transmitted either directly or indirectly by a susceptible host or infected person or animal to other persons. Any student or employee with a communicable disease for which immunization is required by law or is available, shall be temporarily excluded from school while ill and during recognized periods of communicability. Students and employees with communicable diseases for which immunization is not available shall be dismissed from school while ill. If the nature of the disease and circumstances warrant, Hope Academy may require an independent physician's examination of the student or employee to verify the diagnosis of communicable disease. Hope Academy reserves the right to make all final decisions necessary to control the spread of communicable diseases within the school.

Hope Academy proactively prevents the spread of germs by wiping all surfaces that are commonly touched with germ-killing or germ-reducing products (bleach, Lysol, etc.). We also encourage children and staff to wash their hands regularly. Sanitizing stations and sinks are in each classroom and in common areas.

### **Concussions and Head Injuries**

A student who reports or displays any symptoms or signs of a concussion should be removed immediately from physical activity. An incident report will be completed by the supervising staff member, and the student's parent/guardian will be contacted with the assistance of the Head of School, or director who will recommend that the student be evaluated by a licensed, qualified medical professional as soon as possible. Students will not continue to practice or return to play while still having symptoms of a concussion.

### **Coronavirus/COVID-19**

Policies regarding COVID are fluid and will be shared as an addendum to the Hope Academy Handbook and subsequent policies.

## **Doctor's Request for Information**

Occasionally doctors will ask teachers and school officials for information pertaining to the health, behavior, and academics of a child, which will be used to determine appropriate medical plans. When this information is requested, school employees must submit the information directly to the doctor's office through email or regular mail. This information shall not be given to the parent to deliver to the doctor. The contents of this information is confidential, and shall only be given to the doctor with the consent of the parent.

## **Emergency & Health Information**

An "Emergency & Health Information" form is completed with each online enrollment contract. If you need to make changes to the form after submitting your contract, please email the Director of Operations. On the form, parents give or deny permission for the school to administer over-the-counter medicine, such as Tylenol, to a student. School personnel will NOT administer any over-the-counter medicine unless a parent has given permission on this form.

## **Head Lice**

In the case of head lice, the child will be readmitted to school only after he or she has been treated with the proper lice-killing shampoo and is checked in our office, as verified by a box top or receipt for the shampoo treatment. As required by law, the Harrison County Health Department will be notified by the Head of School when a child has the third occurrence of head lice.

## **Illness**

All children who are sick must be kept at home. Sick children (fever of 100 degrees or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, frequent trips to the office for illness, etc.) will be sent home from school. For fevers less than 100, the parent will be called to discuss the child's symptoms and the proper action to take for the welfare of the child and other students in the school. Students should be free of fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea without the aid of medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. In some cases, a doctor's note or a negative COVID and/or flu test may be required before the student returns to school. Students with an infectious condition, fever, or persistent runny nose, green mucus, cough, or sneezing should not be sent to school. In addition, parents will be asked to pick up their child if he/she is found to have conjunctivitis ("pink eye") or head lice.

## **Immunizations**

Upon registration, all students must provide the school with a Certificate of Immunization Compliance (Form 121). Students entering, advancing or transferring into 7th grade will need proof of an adolescent whooping cough (pertussis) booster, aka Tdap vaccine, before entry into school in the fall. Religious and Medical Exemptions for required vaccinations are recognized by Hope Academy as long as a valid Form 122 is received prior to attendance. The Form 122 is to be sent directly to Hope Academy from MSDH. This policy does not amend the school law Section 41-23-37, Mississippi Code of 1972. Children with a Certificate of Medical/Religious Exemption who are not adequately immunized will be excluded from school if there is a threat of vaccine preventable diseases occurring in the community. The child will be excluded until the infectious disease is no longer present or is no longer a threat to the safety and welfare of the child or other children in the school. Questions regarding the exemption process should be directed to the Office of Immunizations at the MSDH. Hope Academy staff cannot answer questions about the process or specifics of how exemptions are made.

**Non-Prescription Medication**The school office does not dispense any nonprescription medicine other than Tylenol/Ibuprofen, hydrocortisone, antacids, or topical antibiotic cream (i.e. Neosporin). If a child is to receive any non-prescription medication during the school day, the parent or guardian must have authorization on file in the office. *Teachers have been instructed not to dispense medication of any kind, nor should a student keep medication in his or her possession.* If the office is to administer the medication, it will have to be in the original container labeled with the student's name

### **Notifiable Diseases/Illnesses**

Parents are required to notify the Director of Operations of the notifiable illnesses, and in turn, she notifies the families of students who may have been in contact with the infected child.

Notifiable Diseases/Illness include the following: COVID, conjunctivitis (pink eye), encephalitis, hepatitis, influenza (flu), meningitis, diphtheria, high fever, diarrhea, lice, streptococcal, measles, mumps, rabies, rubella, acute respiratory infections (RSV), tetanus, tuberculosis, whooping cough, staphylococcus, pneumonia, any mosquito-borne illness (i.e. Zika, West Nile). Other illnesses that may arise and become a threat to the surrounding area may be added as needed. Hope Academy follows CDC guidelines when responding to cases of notifiable diseases/illnesses.

### **Notification of Illness and/or Accident**

The school office will use information submitted through online enrollment to contact the parent or emergency contacts in the case of accident or injury. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure the information is current. If your contact information changes (phone number, address, email address, or emergency contact lists), email the Director of Operations to make the change in Renweb. This is not the same as FACTS Billing.

### **Prescription Medication**

If a child is to receive any prescription medication during the school day, the parent or guardian must have authorization on file. The medicine to be dispensed will be kept in the office and dispensed according to the doctor's instructions. Medicine must be properly labeled. If your child requires medication during school hours, and we do not have a signed authorization, it will be necessary for you to come to school and personally give it to him or her.

*Teachers have been instructed not to dispense medication of any kind, nor should a student keep medication in his or her possession.* If the office is to administer the medication, it will have to be in the original container labeled with the student's name and time of administration. Prescription medication must be in the pharmacy container. The parent will be responsible for picking up any medicine that needs to be taken home before the office closes at 3:30pm.

Medication must be brought to school by an adult in the original container with the appropriate label intact. If medication is not properly labeled, it will not be administered, and it cannot be left at school. No medication can be brought to school by students. Any medication to be sent back home at the end of the year must be picked up by the parent no later than June 1, or it will be disposed of properly. Please advise the school of any special requirements and/or treatments for allergies, seizure disorders or other medical needs.

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

### **Bias Behavior**

In the event it is found beyond reasonable doubt that an offense was committed by reason of the actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, national origin of the victim, consequences will be assigned based on the seriousness of the offense. This policy applies to all students, parents, school employees and visitors while on



grounds, school sponsored activities, or while to and from school during field trips. Further action, as deemed necessary, may be taken under state statutes 99-19-301 and 99-19-307 of the Mississippi Code.

### **Bullying Policy**

Hope Academy is committed to a safe educational environment for all students and employees, free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Any student or employee who feels that he/she has been a target of harassment or bullying or any parent or teacher who feels a child has been the target of harassment or bullying in school; on school property; or while participating in a school activity shall report the incident promptly, orally or in writing, to the Head of School. All complaints will be investigated by the Head of School. Depending on the nature of the offense, disciplinary action may be taken consistent with school discipline policies.

An allegation of harassment or bullying and the results of the investigation shall be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible under the investigation process. Witnesses and those interviewed shall be informed of the confidential nature of the investigation, and shall be informed that it will be a violation of this policy to disclose the allegations or the nature of the investigation to others, and they will be subject to disciplinary action, if reasonable confidentiality is not maintained.

### **Cyberbullying**

The use of a Hope Academy device or email is limited to educational purposes. Students who use a HA device or account related to their HA email to harass, intimidate, bully, or encourage social isolation will be subject to disciplinary action. Typically, HA will not be involved in cyberbullying that occurs outside of school hours on personal devices and personal accounts not associated with HA, however, if the cyberbullying has an obvious effect on the learning environment at school, it will be addressed by the Head of School. If the situation outside of school continues, it could result in disciplinary action by Hope Academy at the discretion of the Head of School.

### **Cell Phones and Smart Devices**

Students will not be permitted to use cell phones during the school day. If you have a message for your child that cannot wait, please call the school office, and the office manager will deliver the message to your child. Student cell phones and Smart devices, such as Apple watches will be held by the teacher until dismissal or the end of extended care. Headphones, earbuds, AirPods, etc. are not allowed to be worn, except when teachers direct students to do so. They may not be worn between classes.

### **Parent Conferences**

Appointments with the Head of School, Preschool Director, and teachers should be scheduled in advance. If you wish to come to the school for a conference, we will do our best to accommodate your schedule. You may request a conference by sending a Remind text, note, or email directly to the teacher. **Please do not attempt to conference with a teacher during times that they are responsible for supervising or teaching students, particularly in the mornings.** Conferences will be scheduled for each student during the first and third terms of the academic year; however, parents are encouraged to request conferences more often, if the need arises. **Teachers are not allowed to use their cell phone during times that they are supervising children. Keep this in mind when communicating with teachers during school hours.** Please avoid calling a teacher at home during the evening hours or on weekends in order to respect their family time.

## **Safety**

With the exception of drop-off and pick-up times, we will remain in a soft lockdown at all times. All exterior doors shall remain closed and locked. **All visitors must enter through the front office door at all times. For the safety of students and staff, any visitors proceeding beyond the front office must present an ID and receive a visitor's pass.**

## **School Offices**

The school office areas are designed to facilitate the efficiency and professionalism of the school, therefore, the office, supplies, and equipment may only be used by HA faculty and staff. When visiting the office, maintain low volume and use appropriate language as we commonly have students in the office, campus visitors, and phone calls.

## **Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy**

Hope Academy prohibits and does not tolerate sexual harassment or misconduct at school or at any school-related activity. Hope Academy provides procedures for employees, students, volunteers or any other victims of sexual harassment or misconduct to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual harassment or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined.

## **Sexual Harassment Reporting Policy**

Immediately report suspected sexual harassment or misconduct to the Head of School. Hope Academy will take all allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. Hope Academy will utilize an outside third-party to conduct an investigation of abuse or misconduct. Hope Academy will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. Hope Academy will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible, while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

## **Tobacco Use**

No person shall use or possess any tobacco or related product on any school property. This includes vaping devices, vaping fluids, or other related paraphernalia. School property means any school building, vehicle, campus, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned, used, or operated by Hope Academy being used for school-related purposes or during a school related activity.

## **Visitors**

Hope Academy welcomes parents to visit the school; however, instructional time will be protected from undue interruptions or delays. Parents should arrange visits ahead of time whenever possible. Visits with students are limited to lunch, special programs, field trips or by appointment. Parents may not sit in class or participate in enrichment activities, such as PE or recess. This is not conducive to learning or teaching.

For the safety of students and staff, any visitors proceeding beyond the front office must sign in and receive a visitor's pass that is visible to staff and students while the visitor is on campus. This includes preschool visitors.

## **Weapons Policy**

Hope Academy prohibits the possession of firearms, knives, ammunition, explosive devices (including fireworks) weapons, and weapons-related items in any form by any person on school premises or at school functions, with or without an enhanced permit, except for commissioned law enforcement officers.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Additional Instructional Support Program**

Hope Academy is a college-preparatory school that focuses on preparing students for higher learning by building a strong academic foundation. Students who need additional support may find Hope Academy's high academic expectations beyond their abilities. In those cases, families will be counseled regarding those observations.

Based on our admissions process, Hope Academy may identify a student who needs additional support to achieve academic success. These exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of Hope Academy, and it will be contingent upon enrollment in the Additional Instructional Support Program.

DATA CONSIDERATIONS- Data gathered during the admissions process or after the admissions process will be used to determine the need for AIS. This includes standardized test scores, academic ability, observations, input from classroom teachers, work samples, and emotional or behavioral factors. It is the sole discretion of Hope Academy to determine the need for AIS.

TUITION- Students who are enrolled in the AISP will be assigned either level 2 or level 3 AIS. Tuition for these students is adjusted based on the level recommended. Tuition Schedule for AISP students is available upon request.

RETURNING STUDENTS- Students who are currently enrolled in grades K-8 are not required to complete the admissions process again. However, returning students may be identified as a student in need of AIS based on the same data considered through the admissions process. Teacher and principal observations are heavily considered in regard to returning students eligibility for re-enrollment or enrollment with AIS. If a student needs AIS for the next school year, the parent will be informed and a conference will be scheduled.

### **Attendance Requirements**

The Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law states that it is the responsibility and duty of the parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Hope Academy follows this procedure for compliance. A child that has **missed more than 20 days of unexcused absences may not be promoted to the next grade.** The student shall be reported to the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Office for truancy based on the guidelines of the law. (Please see Middle School addendum for additional information.)

### **Perfect Attendance**

Perfect attendance shall be defined and observed as no absences and no more than 5 check-ins/outs from school in one term. Exceptions will be made for school sponsored field trips and certain religious holidays observed by students and their families, as requested in writing. **Missing more than 15 minutes of a middle school core class will count as an absence against perfect attendance.**

## **Awards**

Students are recognized for special awards during Student Showcases and/or during special recognition days near the end of the school year. Awards for perfect attendance and academic achievement are reserved for students who have attended Hope Academy at least two full terms. Only HA grades will be used to determine eligibility for academic awards. Due to time constraints for ordering trophies, all awards will be based on the students' status on the last school day in April. No changes will be made to awards after this date. This includes AR points and grades for awards/trophies.

## **Awards and Criteria**

A and B Honor Roll-quarterly certificates are presented to recognize students who have either an A or B in each subject on their end of quarter report card.

All A Honor Roll- quarterly certificates are presented to recognize students who have an A in every subject on their quarterly report card.

Honor Roll All Year- A medal is presented annually which recognizes students who have either an A or B in each subject for all 4 quarters. The 4th quarter is determined based on the grade on the cut-off day.

All A's All Year Honor Roll-A large trophy is presented annually to recognize students who have an A in every subject for all 4 quarters. The 4th quarter average is based on the grade on the cut-off day.

Perfect Attendance- Perfect attendance shall be defined and observed as no absences and no more than 5 check-ins/outs from school in one term. Exceptions will be made for school sponsored field trips and certain religious holidays observed by students and their families, as requested in writing.

AR Award- A medal will be awarded to students who met their AR goal all 4 terms, with the 4th quarter goal being met on or before the cut-off date. The goal is met when the required number of points are earned, the student's average book level is within range, and the student's quiz average is 85% or higher. The Renaissance Accelerated Reader program is used to set and monitor goals.

AR Champion-A large trophy is presented annually to one student per grade level that earned the most points, the average book level is within range, and has an 85% or higher average based on the Renaissance Accelerated Reader program.

Outstanding Student Achievement Awards- Each enrichment teacher will select two students annually who best exhibited leadership qualities and talent in the areas of Spanish, physical education, art, and music.

Citizenship Awards-Small trophies are presented annually to students who best exhibit the HA creed standard, "I will be happy and show kindness at all times." This award is given at the discretion of the teacher(s).

Leadership Award- A large trophy is presented to one or two students per grade level (depending on size) who consistently apply the 7 Habits and the highly effective practices learned through the Leader in Me program. Teachers and the Head of School have full discretion to choose students for this prestigious award.

Additional awards are given by teachers to recognize students in other ways. These awards are given at the discretion of the classroom teacher(s).

## **Challenged Materials**

Hope Academy recognizes the rights of individual parents regarding controversial materials used by their children. However, the Board will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections. A parent or student who challenges the use of materials will follow the procedures outlined here.

1. Parents or students first make a verbal or written request to discuss their concerns with the teacher.
2. Teacher meets with the complainant and attempts to resolve the issue.
3. If a resolution is not found, the complainant meets with the Head of School to share concerns.

4. If a resolution is not found, the complainant may submit a written complaint detailing the questionable material, the bad effect it is thought to have on students, and what replacement materials are suggested.
5. Inform the complainant of the review process and provide a timeline for resolution.
6. The parent shall submit the materials and written complaint to the Head of School.
7. The Head of School will submit the materials to the Leadership Team for review.
8. The Leadership Team will review the materials and concerns provided by the parent.
9. The Leadership Team will provide a written report of their review to the Head of school.
10. The Head of School shares the findings of the review with the family.

If there is no resolution, the parent may request an appeal. If an appeal is requested, a copy of the original complaint and the review of the team will be sent to the Chairman of the Board of Directors for review.

While the complaint is being explored, the challenged material will remain available, except to the student involved in the challenge.

## **Curriculum**

The classroom teacher will provide information regarding the curriculum to the parents (Reading, Math, Science, Spelling, English, Social Studies, etc.). A combination of the ACT standards and the Mississippi Department of Education standards will be used to guide instruction and to provide each student the best opportunity for high school and post-high school success.

## **Handwriting and Cursive**

Beginning in preschool, we will use the Learning without Tears curriculum to teach print and cursive. The transition to cursive will begin during the second half of second grade. Cursive instruction will continue through 3rd grade. Beginning in 4th grade, students will receive typing instruction.

## **Distance Learning**

When deemed necessary, Hope Academy will offer distance learning opportunities for students. A Distance Learning Handbook will be provided at such a time, which outlines attendance/participation, grading policies, and expectations of students, parents, teachers, and administration. Distance learning is limited to students who will be absent for medically-related reasons for more than three consecutive days.

## **Grading Policies for 1st-8th grade**

Teachers shall post a minimum of one (1) daily grade per week (9 per term) and a minimum of four (4) tests per term for a minimum of 13 grades per term per core subject. Core subjects in 1st and 2nd grade are reading, language arts, math, and phonics/spelling. Core subjects in 3-4 are math, science/STEM, language arts, and reading. Core subjects in 5-8th are STEM, math, English, and social studies. One grade per week must be posted for Middle school Spanish. In grades 3-4, one grade per week must be posted for science and social studies and all grades are equally weighted, whether they are a test or daily assignment. In 1st and 2nd grade letter grades, not numerical grades, are assigned for science and social studies using the traditional E, S, and U letters. Projects can count as more than one grade, provided they are due in stages and grades are posted at each stage. Projects cannot count more than one (1) test grade, and do not count as one of the 4 minimum test grades, nor do they count as one of the 9 minimum daily grades. Project grades will be above and beyond the minimum number of daily/test grades.

Daily grades will count as 40% and test grades will count as 60% in core subjects. This formula will be used to determine each term grade. Term 1 and term 2 will be averaged to determine semester 1; term 3 and term 4 will be averaged to determine semester 2; semester 1 and semester 2 will be averaged to determine the final grade, which is posted on the cumulative record/official transcript.

**FACTS SIS (Student Information Systems):** Through the online Parent Portal, parents/guardians may view their child's attendance, discipline, and grades (1st-8th only).

**Homework:** Homework is a vital part of every child's education. The primary purpose of homework is to provide the child with independent personal reinforcement of skills that have been introduced in class. The school and the home share responsibility regarding homework. At school, it is the teacher's responsibility to assign appropriate homework and to check or go over all completed homework. At home, it is the responsibility of the parents to set aside a time and a place each day for homework. The responsibility for completing the homework and remembering to bring it back to school rests with the student.

**Make Up Work:** The responsibility for making up missed work rests upon both the school and the home. The teacher will issue the assignments and communicate a deadline for the work to be turned in.

**1st-4th Late Work:** After the teacher establishes a deadline for work or make-up work, the teacher may assign a zero or reduce the grade daily until the work is completed. The teacher has full discretion to make this decision.

**Progress Reporting:** Students in all grades K-4 will have a Take Home Folder. Teachers will discuss with parents the purpose of the folder and how he/she plans to use the folder throughout the year. Progress Reports in grades K-8 will be sent home at the midpoint of each term.

**Report Cards:** Report cards for students in grades K-8 will follow the school calendar, which is available on our school website. Report cards will only be issued for quarters in which the student was enrolled and present at least 15 days of the quarter and for families whose financial accounts are current.

### **Elementary School Grading Scale (1st-4th grade)**

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Description of Progress/Work</u>
A	95-100	Outstanding
B	85-94	Very Good

C	75-84	Satisfactory: fully meets grade expectations
D	70-74	Poor
F	0-69	Not Passing

## Retention

The faculty of Hope Academy work diligently to ensure the success of all students. However, there may be instances when a student needs to be retained for academic reasons. Retention may occur for a student in K-5 after there is (1) documented evidence of lack of academic success (grades); (2) a strong recommendation for retention from the teacher; (3) a discussion and an agreement with the Head of School and/or other support personnel that retention is the best course of action; and (4) a conference with the parent outlining the reasons the student will be retained. The final decision to retain a student will be made by the Head of School, under the recommendation of the classroom teacher. (Middle School retention policies are included in the addendum.)

## Leader in Me

Hope Academy is a Leader in Me school. LIM is an evidence-based comprehensive school improvement model to inspire students to become leaders using their unique gifts and talents. Every student will receive weekly leadership instruction using the LIM curriculum.

**Library Class and Library Books** The library is operated on a flexible schedule for all students. Students are allowed to check out up to two books at a time. The Media Specialist communicates additional library and technology procedures at the beginning of each school year. Restitution for lost or damaged library books can be the replacement cost determined by the Media Specialist, OR families can replace the book from Amazon or other vendors. Students will be allowed to check out books again once restitution has been made. The Media Specialist will also reinforce Leader in Me lessons during weekly library classes.

## Physical Education

Physical Education (PE) is part of the total school program. If your child cannot participate because of illness or injury, please send a note with your child. Without a note, a child will not be excused from PE class. Children who are not able to participate in PE activities will also be restricted from participating in recess activities. The PE teacher may restrict a child from participating, if she feels that it is in the best interest of the child or group.

Middle school students have additional minutes added to their PE time, so that they may change into clothes for PE. They may change into a Hope Academy t-shirt or a solid, royal blue t-shirt and athletic pants, shorts that are at least fingertip length or no more than 4 inches above the knee, or athletic leggings. If leggings are worn, their shirt must cover their bottom or they can wear shorts over the leggings.

ALL students must wear tennis shoes to PE, so that they can fully participate in PE. Participation is not optional, and middle school students receive a grade for participation, effort, and attitude for PE.

## Planners

Students in grades 5-8 will be given a planner. Students will be responsible for writing homework, dates for upcoming tests or quizzes, projects, and other due dates in their planner daily. Parents must initial the planner each day Monday through Thursday. Teachers may provide incentives and/or consequences to encourage students to have their planner signed.

## **Schoolwide Enrichment Program**

Students attend enrichment classes on a specific schedule. The schedule will be provided to parents by the classroom teacher upon request. Leadership, library, art, music, technology/STEM, physical education, and Spanish are all part of our schoolwide enrichment program, which incorporates the gifted outcomes: critical thinking skills, creativity, information literacy, success skills, social and emotional skills, and communication skills.

## **School Productions**

Students typically participate in two major productions during the school year, one per semester. Participation in a school production helps build skills in teamwork and cooperation. Being on stage also promotes self-confidence. All students are expected to participate in both the matinee and evening performances of both major performances. Dates are provided well in advance for planning purposes. Part-time preschool student participation in school productions may vary.

## **Student Showcase**

The student body and teachers gather one Friday a month at 8:45am for a Student Showcase program during which the students sing together, hear important school and community news, share talents and information, and/or are recognized for achievements. Parents and visitors are encouraged to attend the Student Showcases. All beverages (especially hot drinks) should be in a covered cup at all times on school property. Please turn off all cell phones or set on vibrate/silence. Parents and visitors are asked to refrain from chatting during the Student Showcase. Students are not allowed to chat, and everyone is asked to respect the presenter(s).

## **Skipping a Grade/Double Promotion Policy**

A parent requesting that their child skip a grade must first meet the following requirements before consideration:

1. The child must have successfully completed one full academic year in a traditional school setting for any grade K-5. Consideration will not be given for students beyond 5th grade or before 1st grade. The child must undergo a complete, comprehensive evaluation by a licensed professional to determine academic levels and developmental levels, to include social, emotional, and developmental appropriateness. The parent is responsible for securing and paying for the comprehensive assessment.
2. The parent must provide a written request for consideration, which includes the results of the assessment for review by an Academic Review Team for consideration.

The final decision regarding placement is at the discretion of the Hope Academy Academic Review Team and may not be challenged. This process may only be requested once for consideration.

## **Student Placement and Transfer Policy**

To ensure academic integrity among MAIS member schools, Hope Academy requires the following for student placement and transfer:

1. Kindergarten – Hope Academy will abide by applicable state laws regarding appropriate age for kindergarten admission. Mississippi requires a child to have reached the age of 5 on or before September 1 of the school year for which application is being made in order to be eligible for admission to kindergarten.
2. Elementary – Hope Academy will abide by applicable state laws regarding appropriate age for admission to first grade. Mississippi requires a child to have reached the age of 6 on or before September 1 of the school year for which application is being made in order to be eligible for admission to first grade.



3. Hope Academy may accept, by transfer, kindergarten and elementary students who do not meet the school's state requirement, if the student was previously enrolled in a school in a state or country that allowed entrance at an earlier age.

4. Secondary –Hope Academy may accept previously earned credits of transfer students who demonstrate competence in the subject area of the credit that is being transferred through proper documentation or placement testing. If there is not a match between the instructional/educational needs of a student applying for transfer into Hope Academy and our school mission and/or its admission policy, the school may refuse admission to the student or acceptance of a transfer credit.

## **Student Transfers**

To ensure academic integrity, Hope Academy requires official school records from an accredited institution before a student's admission is complete. If a student has participated in a homeschool program or other non-traditional program or non-accredited program, Hope Academy will conduct an assessment to determine appropriate grade placement and/or to decide if enrollment is appropriate. If the instructional/educational needs of the student cannot be met by Hope Academy faculty, admission may be denied.

## **Testing**

Hope Academy does not administer any state tests. We participate in national assessments, the SAT 10 in grades K-2, the Iowa Standardized Test in grades 3-7, and the Pre-ACT in grade 8. Neither assessment is considered a high-stakes test because they are not used for promotion or retention considerations. Instead, the results are used for the purpose of monitoring the growth of each child and making curriculum and instruction choices. Students in grades K-2 take the SAT 10 test in the Spring, which is an untimed, paper/pencil test administered by the classroom teacher over several short testing sessions. The IST is a computer-based, timed test, which is given to students in grades 3-7 over three sessions (math, English, reading). The Pre-Act is a paper-based test that mirrors the ACT, and it provides a predicted ACT score for 8th graders. Results are shared with appropriate stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administration, and board members.

# **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

## **Academic Integrity and Honesty**

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden. Any form of cheating will result in a zero for the assignment and a discipline referral. Students who violate the Academic Integrity and Honesty policy are not eligible for membership in any honor clubs, such as Beta Club and National Junior Honor Society, for one calendar year from the date of the incident. Writing assignments, such as essays, narratives, reports, etc. must be crafted and written with the student's original thoughts. Students may talk with others about their ideas, but they should be working by themselves on the actual outline and content. If further assistance is needed, ask the teacher. Students are required to cite all sources used in their writing assignment. This includes both direct quotations and cases where someone else's ideas are used. Sources include papers, journals, conversations, anything found on the internet, etc. Basically, if the thought did not originate with the student, the student must provide a source. If a student needs guidance on the mechanics of citing sources, they should ask their teacher. Students may work with others on ungraded homework assignments, provided the name of anyone that helped is listed on the assignment. In addition, the student must write their own solutions to homework problems, based on their own understanding of the material.

## Biting

From time to time young children bite as a result of frustration or lack of verbal skills. If this happens, first aid will be given, and the “biting child” will have their attention redirected. Parents will be contacted and an incident report will go home to both children (the child who bit and the child who was bitten) and a copy will be placed in their files.

When biting occurs, Hope Academy will attend to the following policy:

- First offense: Parent notified and child’s attention redirected.
- Second offense: Parent called and child removed from classroom for that day.
- Third offense: Parent called, and conference scheduled to discuss future prevention.

Suspension from school and termination may ultimately result if a child continues to bite, but will only be used as a last resort. Verbal and written notice will be provided to parents in this event.

## Discipline Procedures

The teachers will enforce the discipline of students consistently and fairly. The Head of School will also have the authority to intercede with the enforcement of the discipline policy as necessary. The classroom teacher will determine the number of warnings allowed before sending a student to the office. After the teacher has attempted to handle minor discipline in the classroom without improvement, the student will be referred to the Head of School. Serious offenses will result in an immediate referral to the Head of School.

All discipline issues, unless deemed a serious offense as outlined in this document, will begin with the following guidelines:

**The First Offense** will result in a parent contact/conference.

**The Second Offense** will result in a parent conference (phone or in person) and a consequence to be determined by the Head of School based on the severity of the offense. Such consequences could be: after-school detention, school beautification, loss of privileges, and/or another appropriate consequence.

**The Third Offense** will result in a parent conference, a consequence to be determined by the Head of School based on the severity of the offense and/or a **1 or 2 day suspension** from school as determined by the Head of School.

**The Fourth Offense** will result in a mandatory parent conference and a **1-3 day suspension** from school as determined by the Head of School.

**The Fifth Offense** will result in **automatic suspension** from school for a period of time as determined by the Head of School. Based on the severity of the offense, a **possible recommendation for expulsion** will be submitted in writing by the Head of School to the Hope Academy Board of Directors.

**A Sixth Offense** will result in **immediate expulsion** from Hope Academy.

Serious Offenses: Examples of serious offenses, which result in suspension or expulsion: fighting, bullying, assault or battery on a Hope faculty member, staff member, student or parent, assault or battery on a faculty member, staff member, student or parent of any other school before, during and/or after any school sponsored event, possession and/or use of a weapon (as determined by the Head of School), possession, use and/or sale of illegal substances, including tobacco related products and e-cigarettes, vapes, immoral conduct (as determined by the Head of School), arson, and any other offense that could be identified as a detriment to the well-being of others, the school and its public image. All students who have committed a serious offense will be disciplined at the discretion of the Head of School, which could result in an immediate expulsion.

## General Code of Conduct for All Students at Hope Academy

Maintaining good discipline is a necessary precondition to establishing a school or a classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Children need discipline so that they can learn to get along with others and to understand that there are limits of acceptable behavior and consequences for unacceptable behavior. The purpose of discipline should

be to guide children toward acceptable behavior and to teach them to make wise decisions when dealing with life's problems. Students should exhibit age-appropriate social and emotional development and behavior enabling them to function effectively in a classroom environment. Each teacher has a defined set of classroom rules, which are written, discussed, and reviewed. The classroom rules reflect the appropriate behavior expected from the children in each classroom.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Students are prohibited from exhibiting inappropriate displays of physical affection on campus and at school-related events. This includes, but is not limited to: kissing, holding hands, sitting on laps, or other physical intimacy-related actions.

### **Schoolwide Expectations**

Faculty, staff, and students at Hope Academy are expected to exhibit the following habits: Be Proactive, Put First Things First, Begin with the End in Mind, Seek First to Understand, then to Be Understood, Strive for a Win-Win, Synergize, and Sharpen the Saw. Students are expected to exhibit leadership at all times. Teachers will share additional information regarding these expectations.

### **Search of Personal Property**

Students at Hope Academy have the right to privacy and security against arbitrary invasion of their personal property by school personnel. However, the school must maintain an atmosphere conducive to the pursuit of its educational goals, including a limited right to search students' personal belongings when it is in the best interest of the overall welfare of other students or is necessary to preserve the good order and discipline of the school. **Searches must be conducted by or under the supervision of an administrator.**

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

The Head of School will work collaboratively with the teacher to determine the most appropriate consequence for a child's failure to follow policy. If a suspension is determined to be the most appropriate consequence for the student, the student will have three days upon return to school to turn in all missing schoolwork, homework assignments and/or tests regardless of the length of the suspension. All assignments and tests must be arranged and scheduled by the parent and teacher. A child may be suspended for a partial school day or several days, not to exceed ten, until the parents and the school collaborate on the most appropriate circumstances for the student. If a student is deemed to be a detriment to the school during the school day and/or during Extended Care and is terminated, there is no refund of tuition or fees, and all remaining tuition/fees for the academic year shall be due and payable per the terms of the Enrollment Contract.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **General Information**

Please refer to the Uniform Policy for additional guidelines. The Uniform Policy is available on the website and in the enrollment contract. The goal of the Hope Academy uniform policy is to have our entire student body look neat and well-groomed. Parents should help their child maintain a neat appearance. Uniforms shall be clean and well-maintained. Please replace items that become faded, frayed, torn, or stained. Students are required to dress in a manner that reflects modesty, common sense, and dignity in their appearance. These guidelines apply to students even beyond the school day's end; students must abide by them at events on campus and at HA-related events off-campus (e.g., dances, games, field trips, competitions, performances, etc.).

For assemblies, showcases, field trips, and special programs royal blue collared uniform shirts with the Hope Academy Hawks logo must be worn. No T-shirts may be worn on Showcase Fridays.

Shorts, pants, and skorts must be khaki (tan).

LEGGINGS and OUTERWEAR must be solid, neutral colors. No logos, prints, stripes, screen print, or glitter is allowed on leggings or outerwear. Colors are limited to royal blue, black, white, nude, or gray for leggings and outerwear. Printed leggings are not permitted.

Shoes may be any flat, soft-soled, closed toe, heel-closed shoes. Athletic shoes are most suitable for school because students participate in recess and/or PE daily. Soft-soled, flat boots may also be worn during the winter months, but must be a solid, neutral color.

### **Preschool Shirts**

Preschool students wear light blue or white polo-style shirts with the Hope Academy logo embroidered on the left breast pocket area in royal blue. Peter Pan-collared shirts are also acceptable for girls.

Girls may wear a light blue knit dress. The Hope Academy logo in royal blue must be embroidered on the left breast pocket of white shirts or in white embroidery on blue shirts. Shorts must be worn under dresses and jumpers.

### **Elementary/Middle School Shirts (grades K-8)**

Students wear royal blue collared shirts with the Hope Academy logo embroidered on the left breast pocket area in white. White collared shirts with royal blue logos are permitted.

**Spirit T-shirts** that display the Hope Academy logo are allowed on Fridays, except on Showcase days.

**All students:** The length of walking shorts, skorts (girls), and skirts (girls) must be at least fingertip length, but no shorter than 4 inches above the top of the knee. Students may not have tattoos (temporary or permanent) while enrolled at Hope Academy. Tattoos (temporary or permanent) are never to be displayed. No body piercings are allowed regardless of location (tape coverings are not allowed). Drawings on one's body are not permitted.

Oversized clothes, such as pants, shirts, skirts, skorts, coats, etc. are not allowed. All pants and shorts should be purchased with the appropriate waist size to eliminate sagging and must be worn at the waist. Clothing that is torn, ripped, frayed, pinned, not hemmed, and/or has holes in them is prohibited. All items of clothing must be worn in a modest fashion so as not to expose any undergarments, bare shoulders, back or midriff areas, or cleavage. No hats, caps, sunglasses, bandanas, excessive headbands, etc. may be worn in the school building.

**Boys:** Khaki shorts or pants are to be worn by boys. Hair should be kept neat and clean. Hairstyles/hair-colorings that are extreme or designed in any unusual manner, in the opinion of the administration, to distract or draw attention will not be permitted. Artificial hair color is not permitted. There must be no designs, names, or lines cut into the hair.

**Girls:** All tops that are not tucked in must fall below the waistline when sitting or standing. Girls may wear khaki shorts, pants, skirts, skorts, or jumpers. Jumpers must have the Hope Academy logo monogrammed on the left breast. Foundation garments should be worn when deemed necessary and should be visible under clothing. Modesty shorts are suggested but not required under skirts, skorts, and jumpers. Earrings for girls will not be worn attached to any part of the body other than the ear lobe. Earrings or other jewelry that is designed, in the opinion of the administration, to distract or inappropriately draw attention will be prohibited. Artificial hair color is not permitted, including clipped-in hair extensions.

## **Dress for a Cause**

Several times a year, the PTO schedules a Dress for a Cause day. On these days, students who make a monetary or in-kind donation to the selected "cause" or organization may dress out of uniform.

### **Out of Uniform Day/Events Guidelines**

On special occasions when students are permitted to dress out of uniform the following guidelines are required: Boys may wear pants or shorts that must be fingertip length or no more than 4 inches above the knee. Spaghetti straps, halter tops, low-cut tops are not permitted. Leggings may only be worn with tops that are fingertip length or with

shorts over them. Girls may wear pants, dresses, skirts, shorts, or skorts. Dresses, skirts, and skorts must be no more than 4 inches above the knee or fingertip length. Any clothing that exhibits offensive or inappropriate language or images is prohibited. Hope Academy administration reserves the exclusive right to deem clothing inappropriate.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Animals/Pets on Campus**

Animals are not permitted on school grounds unless pre-arranged with a teacher and the Head of School. This is for the safety and well-being of our students. Do not take your pet out of the car or walk your pet on a leash when you come to pick up or drop off your child.

### **Birthdays**

Your child's teacher will provide you with information on his or her class party policy. All student "school birthday celebrations" are limited to providing a small snack or cupcake for each class member. The school is not the place for elaborate and costly birthday parties. No decorations, balloons, visitors, etc. should be included in school birthday celebrations. The parent must coordinate directly with the classroom teacher to determine the best day and time to provide the snack/cupcakes.

### **Deliveries to Students**

Hope Academy will not accept student deliveries, do not send flowers, candy, balloons, or gifts of any kind to students at school. These items will not be delivered to a student's classroom.

### **Field Trips**

All field trips require the Head of School's prior approval. A parent or guardian must sign the permission slip and return it to school by the date indicated on the permission slip. The teacher will arrange all transportation for the field trip, which often requires parental support. In most situations, teachers and assistants will serve as chaperones. The teacher has the option of asking parents to join the class for some trips, if space is available. The teacher has the authority to govern the field trip including students, chaperones and other family members.

As a general rule, all individuals who attend field trips should be connected to Hope Academy as a teacher, student family member, or teacher's family member.

Adults attending field trips shall not be permitted to consume alcoholic beverages, use foul language or to smoke/vape during the trip. Violation of this policy will result in action by the Board of Directors of Hope Academy.

### **Fundraising Activities**

Each year, the Hope Academy PTO conducts special events to generate funds for the school. These fundraisers help to minimize tuition increases and provide financial support for many of our unique programs. Moreover, these projects provide an opportunity for our Hope Academy family to work together for the benefit of the school. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in fundraiser activities by making a financial contribution and/or volunteering. All fundraisers require the Head of School's approval. Fundraising activities rely on the support of all Hope Academy families. A high level of commitment is expected and necessary from all stakeholders for the fundraisers to be successful.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

While Hope Academy generally follows the Harrison County School District with regard to school closure due to inclement weather, decisions regarding the closing of school will be made on a case-by-case basis. Hope Academy will post school closings on Facebook and send notifications via Remind messaging. Please be patient and wait for announcements to be communicated by Facebook and Remind, rather than calling the office to ask if school is canceled. We will let you know as soon as the decision is made. If you do not receive notification, then assume that school is open. It is very important to ensure that you are following us on Facebook and that you are actively enrolled and monitoring the Remind group messages. (Please note: There is a difference between the Gulfport School District and the Harrison County School District.)

In case of inclement weather, the safety of the students is of utmost importance to Hope Academy. Ultimately the decision to remain at home or report to school in bad weather is best determined by the parent/guardian. Our families travel from a variety of neighboring cities, and it is not uncommon for the weather to be different from one area to another. When necessary, decisions regarding school cancellations will be announced no later than 6:30am on the morning of school.

Additionally, if inclement weather poses a risk later in the day, we will make a call no later than 12:30pm to cancel after school activities, including the provision of extended care. In rare circumstances, we may call upon parents to pick up their children earlier than the scheduled dismissal time in order to ensure that all students and faculty have time to travel safely home ahead of dangerous weather. In all of these cases, information will be communicated through Remind text and Facebook.

## **Non-discrimination Policy**

Hope Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

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

PTO gives parents and teachers the opportunity to work together to enrich and supplement the educational experience. PTO is a strong ally to HA's Faculty by supporting the school's goals to nurture creativity, shape scholars, and inspire leaders. PTO is led by an elected board and depends fully on volunteers from our students' families and our community. All family members-moms, dad, grandparents, etc. are encouraged to get involved in PTO. PTO plans and executes annual events and fundraisers, such as Garden Gala, Fall Festival, Boo Hoo, Yahoo Kindergarten Parent Breakfast, Veterans' Day Breakfast, Grandparents' Day Breakfast, and so much more! Room parents are also part of the PTO. PTO funding is separate from the operating budget of Hope Academy, so it is important to work directly with PTO if there are PTO fundraising opportunities or concerns. PTO can be reached via email at [PTOuser@hopeacademyfg.org](mailto:PTOuser@hopeacademyfg.org).

### **Payments for PTO**

All parents turning in money for PTO fundraisers should do so by check (not cash) to Hope Academy PTO. Hope Academy is not responsible for lost money directed to PTO, if cash is sent instead of a check. Payments made to Hope Academy PTO, must be made separately from payments made to Hope Academy for tuition and fees.

## **Potty Training**

Potty training is an integral part of our Prek-2 program. The caregivers will work hard to help children achieve this goal. With consistency at home and school, children will be more likely to learn this life skill quickly. Children are not allowed to move out of the PK2 class until they are fully potty trained.

## **Private Parties**

Birthday invitations may be distributed at the school only if the entire class is invited to the party, or if all the girls or all the boys are invited to the party. The school copier may not be used for party invitations. Students may not pass out invitations/fliers for parties of students that do not attend Hope Academy.

## **Room Representative/Parent**

The classroom teacher will identify and ask a parent to serve as Room Representative. The teacher will provide the Room Representative/Parent with contact information of all classroom parents. The teacher will communicate with the Room Representative/Parent regularly. The Room Representative/Parent will help coordinate class events, chaperone field trips, and attend PTO meetings.

## **School-wide/Class-Wide Messages**

Parents or students may not distribute notes, invitations, letters, announcements, business solicitations, fundraising solicitation, etc. without the approval of the teacher and Head of School.

## **Teacher Requests**

Hope Academy will consider parent requests for a particular teacher in grades where more than one teacher is available. However, the request is not guaranteed. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Head of School with the student's name and the reason for the request.

## **Toys/Electronics at School**

Students should not bring toys, electronic games, or other such items unless instructed to do so by a teacher. These items are a distraction and could get lost or broken during the school day. Hope Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken items. Smart devices, including phones and watches, are not permitted in the classroom. Headphones, earbuds, Airpods, etc. are not allowed to be worn, except when teachers direct students to do so. They may not be worn between classes. These items will be held by the teacher or in the office until pick up time each time they are brought to school.

# **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

## **Collecting Money from Students**

The classroom teacher, club sponsor, or office manager will write a receipt for all cash collected for school related purposes for more than \$5.00 (field trips, school pictures, programs etc.) with the exception of funds for PTO purposes, such as Dress for a Cause Donations, Kona Ice, raffles, etc. All requests for funds must be pre-approved by the Head of School.

## Collections

Please adhere to payment due dates. Delinquent accounts are reviewed by the Hope Academy Board of Directors. Should a tuition payment not be received within 15 days from its due date, Hope Academy has the right to assess parents a service charge of \$20 for each delinquent payment. Should a tuition payment not be received within 20 days from its due date, the parents shall be in default of the Enrollment Contract. Parents that are in default of the Enrollment Contract will be subject to notification from Hope Academy stating their child will not be permitted to return to school until said amount is paid. If a parent becomes delinquent on extended care payments, the use of Extended Care services may be suspended until all past due balances are paid. All tuition and fees, including fees for Extended Care services and other incidentals must be paid before a student will receive a final year-end report card. Grades will not be posted on a student's cumulative record until all fees and tuition are paid in full.

## Contract

An Enrollment Contract must be completed and electronically signed by the financially responsible person (typically a parent/guardian) of each student. A copy of this contract is available through FACTS or will be provided upon request. For more information concerning tuition and fees, available payment plans, and other financial policies please refer to the Student Enrollment Contract in FACTS. Any requests for contract cancellations must be submitted through the finance office via email at [financeoffice@hopeacademyfg.org](mailto:financeoffice@hopeacademyfg.org). The finance office will submit the request to the Hope Academy Board for consideration. Requests for contract cancellations could take up to 30 days to process. If the contract cancellation is approved, a contract cancellation fee of \$400 per student will be due immediately.

## Extended Care Services

Extended care services are charged to the parent/guardian at a rate of \$7.00 per hour or \$10 for non-potty trained children. Family rates are available upon request. For purposes of calculating extended care charges, time is collected from our online RenWeb student clock app. Sign in/out sheets are used as back up when deemed necessary. Time is accrued daily and is rounded up to the nearest 15 minute increment. Time collection records will be kept, and can be reviewed by parents/guardians upon request. Parents will be charged \$1 per minute after 5:30pm.

## Finance Office

Hope Academy's Finance Office is located off campus and can best be reached through email at [financeoffice@hopeacademyfg.org](mailto:financeoffice@hopeacademyfg.org). The Director of Operations/Preschool Director and the Head of School are not able to answer billing questions, process requests for cancellations, payment plans, etc. All such questions and requests must be submitted to the Finance Office. The Director of Operations/Preschool Director nor the Head of School have access to billing information, nor do they have ability to stop payment, change payment dates, cancel contracts, refund money, adjust accounts, etc. The Finance Office staff is also available for on campus meetings by appointment. Parents/Guardians should email the Finance Office to make an appointment.

## Lunch

Lunch money may be added to your student's lunch account using FACTS or by paying by check in the office. A lunch count will be taken by school staff and the charge will be deducted from the student's lunch account for each meal. Students who have delinquent lunch accounts or no money in their prepaid lunch account, must bring their lunch. All lunches are \$5 each. Lunch fees **shall be paid ahead of time**, preferably using FACTS or by check. Menu options vary from time to time and will be sent home on monthly pre-order forms. Students are required to bring their



lunch on days that they have not prepaid or pre-ordered lunch. Microwaves are available for student use in the cafeteria for grades 3-8 only. Refrigerators are not for student use.

## **Prohibited Food/Drinks**

Students are not allowed to have Energy drinks, including coffee, loaded teas, and canned sodas on campus. Do not send your child to school with these. They will be taken and disposed of immediately. Some classes may have prohibited food items due to severe allergies. Your child's teacher will inform the parents, if that is the case. If your child has a severe allergy, such as those to peanuts or shellfish, notify the office and your child's teachers before school begins.

## **Sending Money to School**

When sending lunch money or any other money to school with your child, place the money in an envelope labeled with your child's name, the amount of money, and the purpose of the money (lunch, field trip, ice cream, etc.). Remember that money for PTO fundraisers must be separated from money for school purposes.

## **Solicitation/Money**

As a general rule, neither students nor parents are allowed to solicit funds or sell fundraising items for groups such as ball teams, scout troops, church groups, etc. on school grounds. Students should not bring money to school unless a parent or teacher establishes the purpose.

## **Tuition and Fee Payment**

Please make all tuition and fee payments through FACTS or by checks payable to Hope Academy. Financial responsible parties who complete the enrollment contract online must also complete the FACTS billing portion of the enrollment process, even if they plan to pay by cash or check. All fees, tuition, etc. may be combined on one check. Tuition (all payment plans), extended care, lunch, extracurricular activity fees, and field trip payments may be made through FACTS, an online tuition payment processing program. Hope Academy encourages the use of FACTS for making payments. A FACTS account will provide you with easy access to view account details, such as, payment history, balances due, due dates, lunch account balances, annual statements for tax purposes, etc. (NOTE: an annual fee is charged by FACTS to the parent to use this service). Hope Academy cannot process credit or debit card payments on campus. Card payments may only be processed through your FACTS account.

## **ACCESS TO INTERNET**

### **Hope Academy Technology Basics and One:One Device Agreement**

This agreement must be reviewed and signed by the parent/guardian prior to the student being given a HA device or access to HA WiFi/Internet services.

#### **Purpose and Scope**

The availability of technology as a resource, and the convenience it affords to those who depend on accurate information that is readily available, have obvious benefits to everyone. From the standpoint of instruction in the educational arena, the availability of technology as a school resource has the potential for tremendous benefits to students and staff in terms of its use as an instructional tool within and outside of the classroom as well as an educational resource for study, exploration and research. At the same time, however, the availability of technology in

the school environment also presents certain challenges. One major challenge is the ability to restrict school provided access to the internet to only those who facilitate obtaining information for research and instruction in support of and consistent with the educational goals and objectives of the school. The purpose of this policy is to provide standards and establish guidelines for the acceptable use of this school resource by students and staff within Hope Academy.

### **Responsibilities of Parents, Students and Staff**

Use of school access to the internet in Hope Academy will be regarded as a privilege and not a right. Students interested in accessing the internet through the school must first obtain permission to use the equipment from a Hope Academy instructional staff member such as the student's teacher, support staff members or another member of the school's administrative or teaching staff. It is expected that student access to the internet will be structured in ways which point students to those resources which have been evaluated prior to use. However, parents must recognize and understand that students will be capable of moving beyond the known resources to others that have not been previewed by the staff, and which may not be educationally related or otherwise appropriate in the school environment. The teaching staff will endeavor to monitor access to and use of these resources, but it must remain clearly understood by parents, guardians, and the community at large that there can be no absolute assurance that students will restrict their use to only educationally related, school appropriate sources.

All student users of the school internet access are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior, while engaged on-line, consistent with the standards established in Hope Academy's policy on student discipline. All users, whether student or staff, who will use the school provided access to the internet and who engage in conduct in violation of the acceptable use standard established by Hope Academy will be subject to having their access privileges suspended and/or revoked consistent with the school's authority and responsibility to maintain discipline in the school. With the use of school owned computers, computer users shall not have or claim to have any expectation of privacy with regard to the storage of files or information. In that regard, the use of memory and storage in connection with school provided access to the internet will be treated like backpacks. The professional staff may review all files and messages exchanged on the systems in order to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are acting responsibly and consistently with acceptable use standards.

Regarding the acceptable use standards, the following uses of the school provided internet access are not permitted:

- a. Transmitting, uploading, downloading or otherwise accessing abusive, hateful, degrading, demeaning, derogatory or defamatory materials, information or communications;
- b. Transmitting, uploading, downloading or otherwise accessing pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, indecent or vulgar materials, information or communications;
- c. Vandalizing, damaging, disabling or gaining unauthorized access to another person's property files, data or material;
- d. Engaging in commercial or business activity;
- e. Transmitting, uploading or downloading any material in violation of copyright protections;
- f. Engaging in any other activity contrary to any local, state or federal laws, rules or regulations.

Before being permitted use of the system, students, parents, school personnel and other users, will be required to sign a statement agreeing to abide by the above guidelines. A violation of the above guidelines for acceptable use of internet access will result in disciplinary action including possible loss of internet privileges.

By providing means to access the internet using school owned and school based equipment, it must be clearly understood that Hope Academy makes absolutely no warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the internet or Hope Academy will not be responsible for any loss occasioned as a result of nature or quality of information stored on hard drives or servers. Further, Hope Academy will not be responsible for any unauthorized, personal expenses or financial obligations incurred as a result of using the school provided access to the internet.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

### Course Credits and Absences

To receive credit in a course, Mississippi Law requires not only a passing grade in the course, but also a minimum amount of seat time. To receive credit, a student must attend each class a minimum of 82 class days during a half credit course and 164 class days during a one credit course. On this basis, any student who has more than 7 absences in a one-half credit course and more than 15 absences in a one credit course will be denied course credit, and the student will receive a grade, but no credit (NC). Eighth grade students may earn a credit in STEM, Math 8 or Algebra I, and Spanish. They may earn a half credit in World Geography and Mississippi Studies. Missing more than 15 minutes in a class will count as an absence.

### Grading Scale for Grades 5-8

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description of Progress/Work
A	90-100	Outstanding
B	80-89	Good
C	70-79	Satisfactory
D	65-69	Poor
F	0-64	Not Passing

### GRADED WORK POLICY FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### After an Absence:

To receive full credit for assignments missed during an absence, students must turn in the assignments by the 5th day after returning to school. Example: If a student returns from an absence on Thursday assignments are due by Monday at the beginning of the class period. If the student is returning from an extended leave of absence (more than 3 days), then the student must communicate the need for additional time directly with the teacher before the due date. 5 points will be deducted for each day beyond the due date.

#### Unfinished In-Class Assignments:

When sufficient time has been provided in class, yet a student does not complete the work in the class period, the assignment will be due at the beginning of the class the next day. A ten-point deduction per day will be applied to late in-class assignments, including the first day.

#### Homework and Projects

A 10 point deduction per day for up to 5 days. After 5 days, the most a student could receive is a 50.

#### Test Corrections:

At the teacher's discretion, students who have scored less than a 70 on a quiz or test may be eligible to receive partial credit for test corrections.

## GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM AND CREDIT BEARING COURSES

### General Requirements

- (a) Students shall not be allowed to earn more than ten (10) credits during a school session (defined as the regular school year and summer school).
- (b) Schools may issue a half (0.5) credit for any course successfully completed at the end of one semester (or the equivalent classroom hours).

(c) Schools may issue credits to eighth graders provided the courses (e.g., Algebra I, PreAlgebra, Entry Level Computer, and Foreign Language) are successfully completed, carry the same rigor and content as the high school course, and meet state requirements.

(d) The total number of required credits earned by correspondence, summer school, or approved on-line courses for repeat or new coursework, shall not exceed two (2) credits earned during one summer.

(e) Coursework taken on-line or by correspondence may be credited toward graduation provided that permission is granted by the school of record and the course provider is regionally or state accredited.

### **Requirements for Awarding Credit in Summer School**

(a) Credit may be given for coursework done in summer school that is equal in quality and quantity to the course requirement of the regular school year.

(b) An “extended term” is summer school enrollment for remediation or completion of course objectives not met by participating students at the same school during the regular school year.

(c) The qualifications of summer school teachers shall be the same as those of teachers in the regular school year.

(d) A student may earn a maximum of two (2) credits during a summer

### **Secondary Subjects Approved for Credit**

The following courses have been approved for either one half (0.5) or one (1) Carnegie Unit of academic credit:

- 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math (1 credit)
- Algebra (1 credit)
- World Geography (.5 credit)
- Mississippi Studies (.5 credit)
- Foreign Language (1 credit)
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)\*\* (1 credit)

\*\*In order to meet all of the requirements of the 8th grade STEM course and receive credit for the course, the students must compete in at least one Robotics Competition. Mrs. Dedual will spend class time with the 8th graders building robots, but they will have to attend meetings and a competition outside of school hours. Parents are responsible for the cost of the robot, competition fees, and transportation to and from the competition(s). Mrs. Dedual will communicate with you about that when the time comes, but this is not an extracurricular or optional activity. Students who do not participate in at least one competition will not receive high school credit for the course.

### **Pre-requisite Courses**

Students are eligible to take Spanish I for a high school credit in 8th grade, if they meet the following prerequisites:

1. Recommendation of the Spanish Instructor
2. Earned a final grade in Intermediate Spanish (7th grade course) of 80 or higher.
3. Students new to HA may request Spanish I and a review of their academic and discipline record will be used in consideration of this request.

### **STEM Credit**

In order to meet all of the requirements of the 8th grade STEM course and receive credit for the course, the students must compete in at least one Robotics Competition. CLasstime will be spent building robots, but they will have to attend a competition outside of school hours. Entry fees to the competition must be paid by the parents. Students who do not participate in at least one competition will not receive high school credit for the course.

## **Student Retention**

The faculty of Hope Academy work diligently to ensure the success of all students. However, there may be instances when a student needs to be retained for academic reasons. Retention may occur for a student in grades 6-8 if the student's end of course average in any course is less than 65%. The final decision to retain a student will be made by the Head of School, under the recommendation of the classroom teacher. If a middle school student fails a course, the school may offer summer courses at the full expense of the parent/guardian. Tuition for summer courses must be prepaid, and completion of summer courses does not guarantee promotion. The student must complete all course requirements in order to receive credit and/or a passing grade.

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy**

Academic honesty is exemplified by demonstrating and upholding the highest integrity and honesty in all academic work and assessments you complete by using your own knowledge, resources, and skills. Your work must be based on your own efforts and original ideas.

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. In academic writing, plagiarizing involves using words, phrases, ideas, or information from a source without citing it fully or properly. Ideas and words have value and failing to cite a source properly is intellectual theft.

## **Athletic Eligibility**

1. First Semester Eligibility-To be academically eligible for the first semester of the school year, a student must have accumulated four (4) major units (credits) the previous academic year. The previous academic year is interpreted to be a complete year or any part of a school year in which a student is enrolled at either a member school, non-member school or home school.
2. Students Eligible At Beginning of School Year-Any student athlete academically eligible at the beginning of a new school year, shall be academically eligible for the entire school year.
3. Gaining Second Semester Eligibility-A student-athlete who is academically ineligible for the first semester can become academically eligible for the second semester if he/she passes four (4) major subjects during the first semester of that same academic year.

## **Physical Examinations**

Before participating in MAIS athletics, a student must present a physician's certification stating that he or she is physically fit for competition.

# HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

**Note: This form was signed as part of your online enrollment application.**

Parent/Guardian:

I have had the opportunity to review the material contained in the Hope Academy Student-Parent Handbook through the school website. I understand that I may request a printed copy from the office. I also understand and agree that my child and I will be held accountable for the policies, procedures, behaviors, and consequences outlined in this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Terms and Conditions for use of Hope Academy internet services included in the handbook. I understand that these privileges are designed for educational purposes. I will not hold Hope Academy responsible for material acquired or problems related to the use of the material required on the internet.

I hereby give my permission for my child to utilize Hope Academy internet services information that will be obtained by the teacher and certify that the information contained on this is correct. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision of and when my child's use is not in a school setting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RELEASE FORM

In order to promote student achievement and Hope Academy, we may use photos and videos of our students on our website, our Facebook page, in the newspaper, and/or other media outlets. Please complete the form below to indicate whether you give permission for us to use your child's photo.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I give permission for my child's photo or video to be used on the Hope Academy website, Facebook page, in the newspaper, and/or other media outlets.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not give permission for my child's photo or video to be used on the Hope Academy website, Facebook page, in the newspaper, and/or other media outlets.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_