

# Parent/Student Handbook

*Last amended 2022*



## ***Houston Christian School***

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*A school with  
“trees planted by streams of water,  
yielding fruit in season.”  
Psalm 1:3*



## Mission Statement:

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

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

## Code of Conduct

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

## Walking in Grace & Truth

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

# Good Schooling—Four Routines

## 1. Make School Attendance a top priority

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

## 2. Bring the Right Things

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

## 3. Do the Right Activities

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

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

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

## 4. Develop the Right Attitude

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

## Elementary School: Kindergarten – Grade Six

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

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

### **Entering the School**

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

### **On the Playground**

Recess and noon-hours are enjoyable times for most students. It is essential for all to be familiar with the behavioral expectations laid out in the HCS Code of Conduct so that delight may be experienced by all during these times of play and interaction outdoors.

Once at school, students must not leave the school grounds until it is time to go home. Elementary students are not permitted to go to nearby stores at recess, noon-hour or while waiting for the bus or ride home.

### **Supervision**

A minimum of one adult staff member will be present on the playground during all outdoor breaks. Additional supervision will be provided as needed.

Behavioral expectations follow the HCS Code of Conduct. It should be noted that official playground supervision begins at 8:10 and there is no one on duty before that time.

## **Lunch Break**

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

## **Reporting to Parents**

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

## **Telephone**

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

## **Medications**

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

## **Field Trips**

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

## **Electronic Devices**

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



## Communication

School news is shared weekly through “The Pulse.” Once a month, this office newsletter is a longer edition called “The Connector,” which often includes a school theme-related editorial from a staff member.

The school also has a “Parents in Partnership” (PIP) Facebook page used to share information and to communicate reminders.

Teachers may communicate with parents through newsletters or text memos describing classroom routines, units the class is studying and upcoming projects. This serves as a way for teachers to inform parents of special events, needs, or concerns.

## Shoes

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

## Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures

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

## Parking Lot Safety

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

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

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

## Bus Safety

When a school bus is present with the STOP sign out and/or red lights flashing, anyone driving in either direction **must stop**, regardless of which direction the students are assumed to be heading. This is required by BC law.

An assigned staff member will be on bus duty each day. Students must be checked off on the list as they exit the school grounds and board their bus. As a general rule, students who are not on the bus route list will not be permitted to ride the bus, as per School District 54 rules.

# High School: Grade Seven – Grade Twelve

## Admission to Building

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

## Attendance

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

## Student Vehicles

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

## Student Visitors

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

## Lunch Break

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

## Courses and Course Selection

Students in grades 7-10 must take the classes presented in the course schedule. Students in Gr. 7 and 8 are required to take French and Fine Arts by provincial policy unless an Individual Education Plan is on file in the Admin. office.

Gr. 11 & 12 students will be asked to make course selections for the following school year from a list of choices presented in the spring. The course list will vary from year to year as student interests and teacher expertise change. Of the courses offered, only those with sufficient student enrolment for the following year will be taught.

It is possible for a student to enroll in a trades program while in school. A student accepted to that program is able to have his or her hours at work count for both credit towards high school graduation and credit towards the completion of apprenticeship requirements. To gain the benefit of the program, the student needs a job under the supervision of a journeyman apprentice. Ask the Admin. Team for further information.

## Graduation Requirements

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

### Required Courses:

Credits must be earned in the following subject areas:

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

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

## **Distance Education Courses**

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

## **Instructional Services**

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

## **Preparedness**

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

## **Supplies**

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

## **Lateness**

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

## **Lockers/Locks**

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

## **Textbooks**

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

## **Microwave**

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

### **Gym Use**

Only indoor/athletic shoes are allowed in the gym. Students must have specific permission to be in the gym. All equipment must be put away. There is to be no rough play, forceful contact, or other dangerous activity.

### **Medications**

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

### **School Functions**

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

## Shoes

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

## Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures

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

## Weapons

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

## Lateness

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

## Sexual Harassment

All students and all school employees are expected to conduct themselves with respect for the dignity of others.

Sexual harassment includes making unwelcome sexual advances, engaging in improper physical contact, making improper sexual comments or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment.

Students should report inappropriate student conduct or contact to a staff member, principal or parent.

If there are concerns about the conduct or physical contact of an adult employed by the school or by a member of the public, students should immediately report this concern to a trusted staff adult.

## **Additional Educational Support Services**

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

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

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



## Dress Code

### *Background*

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

### **Guidelines**

#### **A Biblically Based Approach**

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

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

#### 1. Principle: Dignity

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

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

#### 2. Principle: Modesty

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

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

### 3. Principle: Humility

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

***“Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this, not to put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother’s way.”***

**Romans 14:13**

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

#### Specific Guidelines

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

#### Consequences

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

# **Technology Use Policy**

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

## **Background**

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

## **Guidelines**

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

**Online safety:***Realities and Responsibilities: Online Etiquette and Dangers*

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

# **Substance Use Policy for Students**

## *Background*

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

## **Policy**

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

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

## *Special Situations*

### **Medication**

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

- the student or their parent/guardian must notify a school administrator, prior to the student using the medication and attending school impaired, or using the medication at school, to permit a determination of whether the use of that medication can be accommodated; and
- the student or their parent/guardian must provide medical confirmation authorizing the student's use of the medication in order for the school to consider a request for accommodation. Any medical license or prescription relied on for the use of medical cannabis must be issued in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.

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

### **Addiction or Substance Use Disorder**

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

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

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

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

### **Accommodation**

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

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

## **Harrassment and Bullying Prevention Policy**

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

In our attempt to provide a safe, secure and caring school environment it is important to be able to clarify what we mean when we use the word bullying. Bullying is usually defined as

- (1) verbal or physical aggression that is
- (2) repeated over time,
- (3) involves a power difference - where one individual has more power than another and
- (4) discrimination against race, colour, disabilities, gender, gender identity and expression, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ancestry, or national origin

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

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

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

Jesus recognized the bullies in his culture: those who had physical and social and spiritual power and how they used it to put down and keep others down. Jesus resisted the temptations of Satan and even of his disciples to use his power to accomplish his purposes. Jesus is God and yet laid aside power to bring redemption: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!" Phil. 2:5-8

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

Bullies can be categorized into five categories:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



### ***What can students do?***

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

### ***What can parents do?***

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

***What can staff do?***

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

***What can administration do?***

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

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

## **Physical Education and Athletic Program**

The Physical Education program aims to have students develop and maintain physical fitness and good health. As well, students will be taught to learn and enjoy a variety of games and sports. Physical Education courses focus on physical health and fitness; skill development; and understanding, participating in and enjoying games.

The largest part of a student's mark is derived from attitude, effort and understanding the activities. (A few written tests are involved in measuring the level of understanding in older grades.) A small portion of the mark is derived from individual skill levels.

Students must have proper clothes for active participation: good athletic shoes for indoor use, athletic style shorts (no cutoffs) or sweat pants/tear always and a t-shirt/sweat shirt (not sleeveless).

Failure to have these clothes for class will result in a "U" for being unprepared. Students must change before and after PE classes-the same clothes may not be worn for both PE class and other classes. HCS athletic uniforms are not to be worn except for games.

Students unable to participate in a specific class due to injury or illness need to bring a note from a parent *prior* to class. Alternate activities or a written assignment will be given.

### **Gym Use**

Student activities in the gym require teacher permission and supervision. Proper footwear is required at all times. The four emergency exit doors are for emergencies, not for cooling the gym or for leaving the building. An alarm will go off if they are opened.

Both elementary and secondary students use the gymnasium during regular school time, during noon-hours and after school. Schedules are made to ensure a reasonable equity. Students must not assume any rights for using the gym, especially during noon hours and after school. Common courtesy, respectfulness and generous spirits help maintain a good atmosphere for everyone.

## ***Athletic Participation Policy***

The goals and guidelines of the inter-school athletic program are

- to provide opportunities to develop and practice athletic skills in competitive situations.
- to provide opportunities for advanced skill development.
- to provide opportunities to develop as “team players.”
- to provide opportunities to develop and practice Christian witnessing in competitive situations.

### ***To participate in our athletic program a student must:***

- Be registered and attend Houston Christian School. Players must join teams at the beginning of the season and be committed to practicing and playing the entire season. (Quitting requires parental consent and may result in the loss of future athletic privileges.
- Respect the referees and officials... even if calls are wrong.
- Respect the coach. (He or she volunteers a lot of time and intensity.)
- Respect team-mates during practices and games.
- Attend all practices and games and participate fully in all parts of practice, both exercise and skill building.
- To participate in games and practices, students must be in school for at least the afternoon, unless excused by the coach.
- Wear a complete school uniform to all games. Lost or damaged uniforms will be replaced at the student's expense.
- Practice and play with enthusiasm, earnestness and intensity.
- Maintain an adequate academic standing.
- Accept playing time assignment with grace. (cf., Playing Time Policy)