

**ALEXANDER HAMILTON
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK
2012-2013**

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**<http://schools.houstonisd.org/hamiltonms>
Houston Independent School District
HISD Information Center: 713-556-6005
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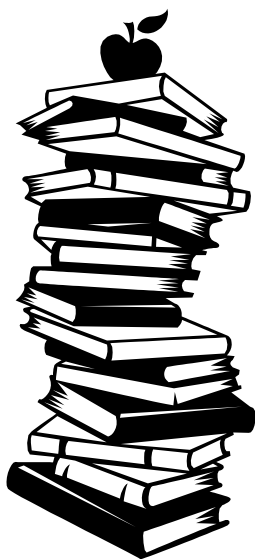


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Welcome to Alexander Hamilton Middle School!



The faculty, administration, and staff extend greetings and best wishes to you for a successful school year. We urge you and your parents to become well acquainted with the school policies contained in this agenda.

The policies and procedures contained herein are the result of the concentrated effort of a committee consisting of students, parents, faculty, and the administration. The information has been carefully prepared and presented so that it will be of great value in helping you to adjust to our school and to become an integral part of it.

Since its founding in 1919, Hamilton has maintained a reputation for excellence. Our school welcomes you and we hope that you will always be conscious of its traditions and requirements. May you always have the spirit to do the things that will make both you and the school outstanding.



**The Mission of Hamilton
Middle School is to
strengthen the knowledge,
strengthen the character,
strengthen the future!!!**

It is the policy of Alexander Hamilton Middle School, part of the Houston Independent School District, not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, race, religion, sex, or political affiliation in its educational programs and activities.



Small Learning Communities

Hamilton is pleased to be organized into small learning communities in order to better meet the needs of individual students. Each Hamilton student will be assigned to a specific learning community. Students within a small learning community share the same group of teachers for most academic areas, and the teachers have a common planning period. Each small learning community will be overseen by an instructional dean. The dean is responsible for handling all instructional and disciplinary issues within the small learning community. This structure allows teachers from all academic areas, along with the dean, to plan together in order to ensure an enriching education for all students. It also allows parents to meet with all of the academic teachers at the same time.

8 Period Block Schedule

Hamilton Middle School operates on a modified block schedule. This means that students attend each of their classes on a rotating basis. Every Monday and Thursday students will attend periods 1-4. Every Tuesday and Friday students will attend periods 5-8. Wednesday students will attend periods 8-1. Also included in this year's schedule is an enrichment/intervention period that students will attend 4 days out of the week. Students will attend homeroom every Monday through Friday. Breakfast will be served in homeroom each morning.

Students Leaving Campus During School Day

Students will only be released to the *parent/guardian/adult* listed on the enrollment card. Identification must be presented. If parents need their child to leave school before the school day is over, a note must be sent to the attendance clerk in the main office (with a phone number where you can be reached for verification) stating the time and reason for the early departure of your student. **NOTE: The latest a student may be released early is 3:30 p.m. After that time, students must remain in class until school dismissal at 3:45 p.m.**

**Hamilton Middle School
2012-2013**

Bell Schedule: Monday – Tuesday, Thursday - Friday

8:10	Students Enter the Building
8:15 - 8:40	Homeroom
8:45 – 10:05*	1 st /5 th Period
10:10 – 11:30	2 nd /6 th Period

***OFFICIAL ADA TIME IS 10:00**

First Lunch

11:35 – 12:05	Lunch
12:10 – 1:30	3 rd /7 th Period

Second Lunch

11:35 – 12:10	3 rd /7 th Period
12:10 – 12:40	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30	3 rd /7 th Period

Third Lunch

11:35 – 12:55	3 rd /7 th Period
1:00 – 1:30	Lunch

1:35 – 2:20	Enrichment/Intervention
2:25 – 3:45	4 th /8 th Period
3:45	Student Dismissal

Bell Schedule: Wednesday

8:10	Students Enter the Building
8:15 - 8:35	Homeroom
8:39 – 9:25	8 th Period
9:29 – 10:15*	7 th Period
10:19 -11:05	6 th Period

***OFFICIAL ADA TIME IS 10:00**

First Lunch

11:05 – 11:35	Lunch
11:39 – 12:25	5 th Period
12:29 – 1:15	4 th Period

Second Lunch

11:09 – 11:55	5 th Period
11:55 – 12:25	Lunch
12:29 - 1:15	4 th Period

Third Lunch

11:09– 11:55	5 th Period
11:59 – 12:45	4 th Period
12:45 – 1:15	Lunch

1:19 – 2:05	3 rd Period
2:09 – 2:55	2 nd Period
2:59 – 3:45	1 st Period
3:45	Student Dismissal

Students will be released at 1:30 p.m. on Early Dismissal Days

Hamilton Vanguard: A Gifted and Talented School

“Where We Turn Gifts into Talents”

Mission Statement: The Vanguard faculty and staff will meet the educational and creative needs of children with exceptional learning potential by making Hamilton Vanguard a great place to learn.

Hamilton’s Vanguard program focuses on in depth research curriculum to enrich and accelerate instruction specifically designed for gifted and talented students. Students are challenged in a variety of stimulating subjects, which promote their natural capacities for critical analysis and creative problem-solving. Teacher-designed individual and interdisciplinary instructional units encourage the creation of products that display complex and abstract thinking as well as creativity.

The Language Arts curriculum is an integrated program with emphasis on award-winning literature as well as opportunities for a variety of creative avenues for self-expression.

Mathematics students receive an accelerated curriculum. More proficient students move on to Algebra in the eighth grade. Mathematics classrooms use the most current materials and manipulatives. Students taking high school courses have access to TI-83 graphing calculators.

Science offers an accelerated state required curriculum using nationally recognized strategies and methodologies. Instruction focuses on real life problem solving and activity-based hands-on laboratories. Students have access to the Internet and other multimedia technology for use in developing authentic products. More proficient students may move on to Integrated Physics and Chemistry in the 8th grade.

Foreign Language students have a choice between taking Spanish or French. A variety of the latest teaching methods are used to enable the students to begin acquiring a second. Students who are successful in both seventh and eighth grade H.S. Foreign Language classes receive one high school credit. AP Spanish students earn both high school and college credit.

Social Studies students follow an in-depth curriculum that promotes critical thinking skills. History students need to be empowered and interested. By using the Internet, multimedia presentations, and film, the teachers motivate students. Each year students have the opportunity to pursue a topic of interest for the History Fair.

As part of Hamilton Vanguard, Vanguard students are expected to complete an independent research project using the Texas Performance Standards Projects guidelines, or TPSP and feature their complete work at our annual TPSP Expo. Students receive research instruction in their sixth grade year so that they are prepared for the challenge of the independent study. For more information on TPSP, visit www.texaspsp.org.

Enrollment Criteria

- ❖ Qualifying score on Vanguard matrix
- ❖ Demonstration of exceptional learning potential
- ❖ Teacher observation inventory and recommendation
- ❖ Superior performance on standardized achievement and abilities test

- ❖ Academic grades

Faculty

The faculty at Hamilton is an enthusiastic and nurturing group. Each teacher is expected to complete the 30 hour state mandate for gifted and talented educators. Additionally, they are expected to have 32 hours of Pre-AP Training in their academic content area. Also, each teacher participates in at least 6 hours of gifted and talented training every year in order to keep current in the strategies designed to meet the needs of gifted students.

☆Creativity ☆Intellectual Ability ☆Leadership ☆Giftedness

Hamilton Vanguard is for the student who

- ❖ is gifted and talented
- ❖ is academically oriented
- ❖ has above average knowledge of basic skills
- ❖ possesses the ability to concentrate and work independently as well as cooperatively
- ❖ demonstrates unusual creative approaches
- ❖ shows interest and asks questions
- ❖ needs accelerated classes
- ❖ displays leadership ability



Beyond the Classroom

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Academic Competition | • No Place for Hate |
| • Duke University Talent Search | • Art Competitions |
| • Band – UIL Concert & Sightreading and Solo & Ensemble competitions | • Multimedia |
| • Competitions/Scientific Research & Field Studies | • National Junior Honor Society |
| • Competitive Sports (football, track, basketball, cross country, baseball, soft ball, karate, swimming, volley ball, soccer) | • Spelling Bee |
| • Creative Writing Competitions | • Science Fair |
| • Foreign Language Competitions | • State History Fair |
| • Guitar | • Speech/Debate |
| • High School and College Credit Spanish | • Theatre Arts Competitions |
| • The Junior National Young Leaders Conference | • UIL competitions |
| | • Veterans of Foreign Wars Award |
| | • Yearbook |
| | • Habitats for Hamilton |
| | • Robotics |
| | • Communities in School (CIS) |
| | And much more... |

Academic

Grading System: The criteria for grading academic subjects are as follows:

90-100	Excellent quality of work. Thorough mastery of subject matter.
80-89	Good quality of work. Above average with consistent effort.
70-79	Satisfactory quality of work, average achievement.
Below 70	Unsatisfactory quality of work, failing

Report Cards and Progress Reports:

Report cards to parents will be distributed shortly after the close of the six-week grading period. Progress reports are sent to all parents. These reports will be sent to parents about the middle of each nine-week period and at such other times as necessary.

Pre-AP Courses: PreAP course are offered to engage students intellectually for the rigor of higher level learning. Participation in these courses develops student's skills and provides opportunities to acquire knowledge while simultaneously challenging students to expand their thinking.

Homework: Home study is a necessary part of each pupil's educational program. Each student is expected to spend some time in addition to scheduled class instruction to support academic excellence. Some assignments are long-range in nature and require planned study time for their completion. Planned study eliminates the necessity of spending too much time completing an assignment the day before it is due.

Late Work: Will be recorded 1 *grade letter below* what is earned and is due the following class day unless the student has

an excused absence which allows for 3 days. (*See Attendance Procedures*).

The TALE of My Agenda: In an effort to strengthen the home-school connection and teach students to be responsible for their assignments, all students will be required to record the following information in their agenda for every academic class they attend each day:

T-today: What did I do in class today?

A-assignments: What is my homework?

L-late Work: What am I missing?

E-extra: Any additional information, upcoming quiz, project, etc.

Agenda checks will be done randomly by teachers and administrators. Failure to consistently and adequately record the above-mentioned information in the student agenda will result in disciplinary action, such as cafeteria duty, detention, or more serious consequences if the problem persists. If a student loses his/her agenda, replacements are available in the dean's office for \$5.00. A Xerox copy is available for \$2.00. Teachers will write the TALE information on the board each day. It is the students' responsibility to accurately record all necessary information. Parents should review their student's agenda daily to ensure that they are recording all relevant information.

Parent Conferences: Parents may make appointments with teachers, deans, or the principal by calling the school office at 713-802-4725. It is necessary that teachers confirm the date and time of the parent conference. Teachers have designated conference periods so that instruction is not interrupted. **For security reasons, all visitors must sign in at the receptionist's station upon entering the building and receive a visitor's badge.**

Tutorials: The staff at Hamilton is dedicated to helping students be successful. Teachers may set up tutorials to work with students. Letters will be sent home to inform parents of dates and times for tutorials. We feel that tutorials are an important component in helping your child succeed, and recommend students attend tutorials whenever possible

Physical Education Classes: For reasons of health and safety, each student is required to dress appropriately in regulation gym clothing for physical education class. Required dress for physical education class includes the following items of clothing:

1. The Hamilton Middle School PE uniform
 2. Rubber-soled sport or tennis shoes
 3. Appropriate undergarments
- All parts of the gym suit must be marked with the student's name for identification. Students should have a combination lock for their gym locker. Any valuables should be kept inside the locker. Students are not allowed to share lockers.

Attendance

Attendance Guidelines: Students must attend classes at least **86 days** each semester and have **no more than two unexcused absences** for a **semester course** or attend at least **172 days** each year and have **no more than four unexcused absences** for a **year-long course**. Students who exceed the absence limit are in a position to be denied credit in a course and may petition the School Attendance Committee.

Absence from school: When a student is absent, he/she must give a written excuse from his/her parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence to the attendance clerk in room 212. Excused absences are only allowed for the following:

1. Illness of the student.
2. Illness or death in the student's immediate family.
3. Participation in legitimate school activities with the permission of the principal.
4. Emergencies or extenuating circumstances as recognized by the principal or his/her designee.

The student will be given three days to bring a written excuse from the parent/guardian for an absence.

After three days, the absence becomes unexcused. Four or more unexcused absences in a yearlong course will cause the student to fail that course. Two or more unexcused absences will cause the student to fail in a semester-long course.

Make up work: Students who have excused or unexcused absences will be given an opportunity to make up work missed within five school days after returning to school. **It is the student's responsibility to see that the work is made up.**

Absenteeism and Tardiness: Regular attendance is essential for a student to be academically successful. Studies prove there is a definite correlation between a student making good grades and regular attendance.

Truancy: Any student who is absent from class without the consent of his/her parent or school officials is considered truant. Students may be assigned to In-School Suspension or suspended from school for this offense. Charges may also be filed for students that are truant.

Tardiness to class: A student is counted tardy if he/she is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. The teacher keeps an accurate record of tardiness. Students will be assigned to after school detention when tardy without an excuse. Chronic tardiness **may** result in more serious consequences, including suspension.

Student Code of Conduct: It is impossible for teaching or learning to take place in a classroom unless good order is maintained. Students are reminded that they must adhere to the HISD Code of Student Conduct, not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well. All major and minor offenses and their consequences are fully described in the Code of Student Conduct. **Receipt of the signature page from the Code of Student Conduct indicates it has been read and will be followed.** The signature forms will be kept on file. If you have any questions regarding the Student Code of Conduct, please feel free to call the dean's office.

Secondary Conduct Average:
Teachers assess student conduct as follows:

E	Excellent citizenship
S	Satisfactory behavior, cooperates readily
P	Poor behavior, below average
U	Unsatisfactory behavior, needs drastic improvement

Field Trips during the school day:

Written permission is needed from the parent before a student can leave campus for a field trip or school sponsored trip. Students must submit a properly signed field trip permission slip at least forty-eight hours prior to the field trip.

Withdrawals: Students who are withdrawing from Hamilton Middle School to go to another school need to report to the appropriate dean's office. The student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All withdrawing students must provide information as to what school they will be enrolling in once they leave Hamilton.

Discipline

Detention: School-wide Detention is held from **3:45 PM to 4:30 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 8-12 on assigned Saturdays.** The student must bring paper, a pencil, and something to study. Students causing problems or not following instructions in detention will be sent home and referred to the dean's office for disciplinary action. Students must arrive to detention on time, or they will not be allowed to enter. **Failure to attend an assigned detention without a legitimate excuse from the parent/guardian will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension from school.** Students may be assigned **school-wide detention** by any teacher for tardiness. A teacher may also assign **detention in his/her classroom** as a disciplinary consequence on any given day as long as they give the parent 24-hour notice. It is the student's responsibility to give this notice to his/her parent or guardian.

Suspension from School: It is the philosophy of the Houston Independent School District that every student, kindergarten through twelfth grade, should have the privilege to attend school every day during the school year in order to be given thorough instruction in all subject areas. Under certain circumstances, however, it may

become necessary to suspend a student from school or assign him/her to an alternative program for misconduct when other means of correction fail, or if the student is a disruptive force to the school environment.

Cafeteria: Students may choose to eat from the cafeteria or bring a sack lunch. Students needing to use the restroom during their assigned lunch period should use only the first floor restrooms. The second and third floors are off limits during lunch periods. The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the school. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced breakfast and lunch are offered at a reasonable price. The lunchroom management and your fellow students will appreciate your cooperation in the following:

- Deposit all lunch litter in wastebaskets immediately after you are finished eating.
- Leave the tables and floors in a clean condition for others.
- Food or drink must not be taken from the cafeteria. Eating in the building or on the school grounds anywhere except the cafeteria is strictly prohibited.
- While in the lunch line, do not cut in front of others or allow others to cut in front of you.
- Running to or from lunch is prohibited and violators will be disciplined.

Cafeteria Duty: Students who fail to abide by the cafeteria guidelines or commit other minor discipline infractions are subject to being assigned cafeteria duty. This involves sitting at the cafeteria duty table to silently eat your lunch and helping the custodians clean the cafeteria after students have left the lunchroom.

Halls: Students are not permitted in the halls during classes without a signed agenda/office permit that includes the time. During passing times, always stay to the right to facilitate the flow of traffic. Passing time is only five minutes and tardiness to class will result in the assignment of detention. Students may go to their locker and use the restroom during the passing period.

Smoking: Students are not permitted to smoke at any time in the school building or on the school grounds. This applies to all school-sponsored activities as well as the regular school day.

Selling: Any sales or fund raising at Hamilton Middle School must have written administrative approval. Selling initiated by individual students is prohibited.

Gum Chewing: Careless disposal of gum in drinking fountains, furniture, and floors causes sanitation and cleaning problems and costly repair. Therefore, gum chewing is not permitted. The eating of candy and chewing of toothpicks, paper, etc. is also prohibited.

Personal Property: Portable radios, CD players, iPods, MP3's, cameras, beepers, electronic games, markers, large sums of money, and other such personal property are not to be brought to school. Many problems arise concerning articles of this nature and **the school will not assume responsibility for them.** If such personal property is brought to the school, the property will be taken from the student and held in the dean's office until the parent comes to collect the item. Also note that in the Student Code of Conduct it states, "Possession of iPods, MP3 players, personal radios, or music devices at school" is a level II act of misconduct, and the decisions regarding such items are left up to the campus level. **Teachers and administrators will no longer conduct investigations with regard to these items, if lost or stolen.**

Cell Phones: Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school for emergency purposes only. All cell phones must be **turned off** and kept **out of sight** from the time they arrive on campus till the end of the school day. If a student fails to abide by these guidelines, the cell phone will be confiscated and held until a parent comes to collect the phone. **As per HISD policy, a fee of \$15 will be charged prior to the return of a cell phone that has been confiscated.**

Student Dress Code 2012-2013

The Hamilton Middle School dress code for students is a result of the efforts of a committee composed of students, parents, teachers, counselors and the administrative staff. It is our belief that school pride is developed

not only by attaining honor in extracurricular activities and in scholastic accomplishments, but also by the way students maintain high standards of behavior, as reflected in dress and grooming.

Dress Code Violation Procedures

- 1st Violation Written Warning by school personnel if it can be corrected.
- 2nd Violation Lunch Detention
- 3rd Violation Failure to comply-ISS or Suspension

If the violation is one that can be corrected, such as tucking one's shirt in, it is to be done so immediately. If a student is not wearing the appropriate shirt or pants a phone call will be made home in an attempt to correct the problem. If arrangements cannot be made for the student to wear the appropriate garments, the student will be placed in In-School-Suspension for the remainder of the day. Frequent violations of the Student Dress Code could lead to more serious consequences up to and including suspension from school.

An acknowledgement of receipt and willingness to comply with the dress code will be sent home to be signed by both the student and the parent and returned to the homeroom teacher. (The homeroom teacher will provide copies of the dress code policies and the acknowledgement form for each student.)

The administration of Hamilton Middle School reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of clothing and/or accessories.

Backpacks: Only clear, see-through or mesh backpacks are permissible to ensure campus safety. Backpacks must be placed in a locker before school begins. Backpacks are not permitted in classrooms during the school day. Students may go to their lockers during the passing period.

Outerwear:

The following outerwear may be worn anywhere on campus:

- Solid (**no pattern**) navy blue, gray, or white sweatshirts or sweaters - hoods are not allowed. Exception - Hamilton sweatshirt with hood, but may not be worn on top of the student's head in the building.
- School sweatshirts with the Hamilton logo or any Hamilton affiliated club or organization's logo
- Any other outerwear may be worn to and from school, but must remain in the student's locker during the school day.

ID Badges

In order to help ensure a safe learning environment for students and staff, all students are required to wear ID badges. The following policies apply:

- Students who lose their badge must pay \$5.00 for a replacement badge.
- Lanyards may be replaced for a fee of 50 cents.
- Students who forget their badge at home must purchase a temporary badge in the cafeteria before school for \$1.00.
- After 2 temporary badges, students will be required to replace lost ID badge for a fee of \$5.00.
- Students who are repeatedly in violation of the school ID Badge policy may face more severe disciplinary action up to a suspension.
- ID Badges are used to purchase lunches and to check out library books.
- ID Badges must be worn around neck, outside of shirt and visible at all times.

Miscellaneous

Student Dismissal: Students are dismissed from school at 3:45. Parents are to pick up students either in the front or the back of the school. Students are supervised until 4:15 p.m. **It is important that all students are picked up by 4:15 p.m.** Neighboring businesses **do not allow** students to wait for their parents at their businesses. In addition, other customers may create problems for students. **The safest place for students to be picked up is in the front or the back of the school.**

Homeroom: You will meet with your homeroom teacher each morning. Important information will be passed out through homeroom. Breakfast is served daily in homeroom.

School Bus Transportation: At the beginning of school, the transportation department furnishes Hamilton Middle School with copies of bus routes. The school will post copies of all schedules on a bulletin board on the second floor, near offices 210 and 216. It is the responsibility of the parents to look up the route number, bus number, pick-up point, and time schedule for their child. School bus transportation is not mandatory by law. Transportation is rendered as an auxiliary service by the local board and **a student's ride may be discontinued at any time due to disciplinary reasons.** Good student behavior

on the school bus is important for the safety and wellbeing of the entire passenger load. Riding the school bus is a privilege that may be enjoyed as long as established rules and regulations are followed. The school schedules all buses to games or fieldtrips and each bus is under the direction of a faculty member.

Lockers: Each student is required to bring one quality combination lock for the PE locker. Your physical education teacher will assign a gym locker. You are assigned a combination for your regular school locker. Keyed locks are not permitted. Be sure to lock up all valuables. **Lockers are never to be shared with another student.** It is very important for security purposes that you not give your combination to any other student.

Bicycles: Bicycles are to be parked immediately upon arrival at school. If a student rides the bicycle in an unsafe manner, that student will be prohibited from riding the bike to school. All bicycles should be secured with a lock. The school is not responsible for theft or vandalism.

Skateboards: Students are not allowed to ride their skateboards on campus.

Textbooks: Students will be issued textbooks at beginning of the year. In each book, write in ink your name, your teacher's name, and the semester and year issued. All books must be covered as required by state law. Textbooks are the property of the State of Texas and if lost, must be paid for by the student to whom the book is issued. Students are required to bring their textbooks to class on a daily basis unless otherwise directed by the classroom teacher. Failure to bring your textbook to class will result in disciplinary action.

Lost and Found: Frequent checks on lost articles should be made in the attendance office. Articles not claimed by the last day of school will be donated to a charitable organization.

Health Care at School: The goal of the Hamilton Health Clinic is to keep students healthy and IN CLASS. Parents can help by making sure students go to bed at a decent time, eat a healthy breakfast, and by providing current phone numbers for emergency situations. The nurse will contact parents when a student has a fever, is vomiting, or if after being assessed, the nurse thinks it is necessary for the student to return home or see a physician. The nurse maintains a list of free or low-cost clinics.

Immunizations: All students must have current and updated immunizations on file in the nurse's office, as required by law. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to provide the school with an accurate immunization record. **A student may not be allowed to attend school without these STATE MANDATED immunizations.** Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications or religious conflicts. Students falling into any of these two categories MUST submit affidavits as specified by law.

Delinquent Immunization Notices: Throughout the school year, you may receive notices of delinquent immunizations. These will need to be updated as soon as possible and reported to the school nurse. Students will receive 2 notices in homeroom and a 3rd notice will be sent by US mail. A recommendation will be given to the principal that the student not be allowed to return to school until the information is updated. If parents are not able to take time from work to have immunizations, please contact the nurse for possible options for obtaining the immunizations during the school day.

Medication at School: All students bringing medication MUST take it directly to the School Nurse in the school clinic. Medication can only be given if the HISD Medication Policy form is filled out by a physician and signed by a parent. This **MUST** be on file before any medication can be given at school. This includes ALL prescription medication, including inhalers for asthma and ALL non-prescription medication including, but not limited to cough medicine and pain relievers. Medication shall be administered only by employees designated by the principal. Please see the nurse for any questions or to receive the HISD Medication Policy form.

School Organizations and Activities: Hamilton offers a wide variety of organizations and activities for students outside of academics. Some organizations may have academic or behavioral requirements. All athletics are "no pass=no play". Athletic activities include basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, baseball, softball, swimming, track, and volleyball. Other extracurricular activities include speech/debate, robotics, science fair, karate, band, and yearbook.