

## STUDENT HANDBOOK POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE

School attendance is essential for student success. Texas law requires students to attend 90 percent of the days in a semester. Truancy will be handled as a discipline problem or forwarded to the Justice of the Peace in accordance with Texas statutes. **Students who attend less than 90 percent of the days in a semester will lose credit**, regardless of the grade unless extenuating circumstances exist. **When a student is in violation of the 90% attendance rule and is absent from school three consecutive days without a successful home contact, the school will refer the student to the H.I.S.D. truancy officer and/or court referral for excessive absences.**

**To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class meets and have no more than 4 unexcused absences per semester and 8 unexcused absences for whole course credit. When a student has accumulated the fifth unexcused absence in a semester course, or a ninth unexcused absence in a whole course credit class, credit is denied for that course;** however, students with passing grades in that course may appeal to the school Attendance Committee by completing an Attendance Appeal Credit Form. The students will have an opportunity at the beginning of each semester to complete the Attendance Appeal Credit Form by attending the appropriate learning/tutorial hours. **An appeal does not automatically ensure that credit will be awarded.**

The counting of absences, excused and unexcused, begins with the first day the student is enrolled in an HISD school for that school year. Should the student transfer from one HISD school to another during the school year, all absences will be transferred and will apply to that class at the new school. A student may not enroll in a school or a new course for credit after the first fifteen (15) days of a semester unless he/she receives a special exemption from the administration.

Personal calls, as well as an automated dialing system are activated daily, thus reporting to the parent any student who misses a class during the day. It is important to note that vacations are not considered as extenuating circumstances and are not excused absences. The principal or dean must address special situations.

**All students are required to bring a note from the parent/guardian the first day they return to school from an absence. The note must be clearly written and include the following:**

1. Student's first and last name;
2. Parent's/Guardian's signature;
3. Phone number where a parent/guardian can be reached between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Students must supply work numbers;
4. Reason for absence; and
5. Exact dates of absence(s) (A doctor's statement is required for extended illnesses.)

The note should be taken to the Office (attendance clerk) before school begins. Parents may be contacted for note verification. **If the student fails to bring a note from the parent to excuse the absence within three (3) school days after he/she returns to school, the absence is unexcused.** All absence notes are filed in the Attendance Office. Regular attendance and punctuality are required of every student at Sharpstown International School.

**The only acceptable excuses for absences are as follows:**

1. Illness of student;
2. Illness or death in the student's family;
3. Participation in school activities (with approval of administration);
4. Hospital confinement;
5. Medical/dental appointments; or
6. Emergencies or extenuating circumstances recognized by the administration.

On a daily basis, if a student is absent, the Attendance Office will attempt to notify the parent/guardian.

### LEAVING CAMPUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

**Parents/guardians are to come in and check students out.** Identification will be required of all persons checking out students. Students will not be dismissed from class to leave campus without a permit from the Office. Students must follow the steps below:

1. Bring a note from the parent/guardian to the Office, and give it to the secretary prior to the morning entry bell on the day of the request to leave campus.
2. The note must include student's name, phone number at which a parent can be reached, specific reason for early dismissal, and time at which student must leave campus.
3. The office will verify permission for a student to leave by speaking directly with the parent/guardian.
4. If a permit to leave campus at the requested time is granted, the student will take it to his/her class prior to the designated time to leave.
5. Student will show the permit to leave to their teacher, and proceed to the office to sign out.
6. If returning to school that day, the student must report back to the office and sign in.

**FAILURE TO FOLLOW PROCEDURES WILL RESULT IN AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE AND/OR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.**

### TARDY POLICY

Teachers will not admit students to class without a tardy pass after the tardy bell has rung. Those students will report directly to the office and receive a tardy pass to allow them entry into their classroom. Students will be assigned discipline consequences according to the Campus Code of Conduct for tardies such as After School Detention and/or Saturday School.

### AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION

Students may be assigned after school detention as a consequence for multiple tardies or other discipline issues as determined by the administration. After school detention is normally held for an hour, but may be extended by the detention coordinator due to discipline issues. Failure to attend required detention will lead to additional time and/or referral to the administration, which may lead to greater consequences such as suspension.

### ASSIGNMENTS FOR ABSENCES

Any student absent from any class for an excused reason, including suspension, is required to make up all missed work missed. A student will be given one day for every day absent for make up work without academic penalty. Additional time may be granted at the discretion of the teacher. **It is the responsibility of the student to see his/her teachers to obtain the work and additional help, if needed, to make up the work. Students with unexcused absences will be allowed to make up work; however credit may be reduced at the teacher's discretion.**

Make-up work or tests will be permitted for all absences within reasonable timelines. Students who are absent for school-related reasons must arrange with their teacher(s) for their assignment(s) before the absence. **It is the teacher's responsibility to set a time for a make up test.** All students will be provided with opportunities to make-up assignments, quizzes, and tests. If a student will be absent for more than three (3) days, the parent/guardian should contact the office and ask that the "Homework Assignment Request" form be sent to the student's teachers requesting work for the days the student will be absent.

### ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE

The Attendance Committee will meet to hear non-truancy appeals as needed. The committee may require students and parents to appear in person to explain excessive absences regardless of the reason.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary consequences such as "50" for the assignment. Students will also be required to redo the assignment and be subjected to further consequences as determined by teacher.

### LUNCH/CAFETERIA USE

Students will exhibit pride in our school by helping to maintain the beauty and cleanliness of the cafeteria area. The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers free and reduced price lunches to qualified students. **Forms are available in the main office.**

1. All lunches/food will only be permitted in the cafeteria, patio, and deck areas determined by the principal. The only exception
2. to this policy will be attendance at tutorial or club

meetings. This policy will be strictly enforced.

3. Paper and waste must be disposed of in trash cans.
4. Students are responsible for the cleanup of their own spills and messes.
5. Students must remain in designated areas after eating until the bell which signals the end of their lunch period.
6. All plate lunches must be eaten in the cafeteria.

### NO FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

Students are not permitted to bring food into any instructional areas. Items will be confiscated and not returned for violating this policy. Food for special occasions must have prior approval from the principal. Students are **only** allowed to have bottle water in the classroom. Gum and candy are not allowed in the classroom.

### NO GUM POLICY

Students are not permitted to chew gum on campus.

### FEDERAL BREAKFAST/LUNCH APPLICATIONS

Free/Reduced Breakfast/Lunch Application Forms are available in the office. The application must be completely filled out and signed by a parent/guardian. Students who qualify will be notified. Students may apply at the beginning of the school year or at any time as the need arises. **Students and parents are reminded that enrollment in the Free/Reduced Program also entitles the student to reduced rates for college entrance exams (ACT, SAT) and college application fees.** Eligible students and families are encouraged to apply as early in the school year as possible.

Students must have their student picture ID in order to receive free breakfast or lunch. Students must scan their ID cards on a scan pad in the cafeteria. Students found guilty of using another student's ID card to receive a free or reduced breakfast or lunch will be disciplined.

### COMPUTER USE

Computers are available to all students for class projects and online research for general knowledge. Because the computers and computer systems in our building represent a sizable investment, any misuse of either hardware or software will be considered a serious offense and could result in criminal charges being filed. Texas State Law addresses computer misuse under felony statutes. In addition, accessing of lewd or inappropriate information will result in severe disciplinary action as per the Student Code of Conduct. If it is determined that the student willfully and purposefully damaged and/or misplaced any computer or its parts, the student must pay for all damages and/or placement of the original parts.

### GANG RELATED INFORMATION

Students in HISD are not permitted to demonstrate participation in any gang-related activities by wearing any specific clothing, or items, which might be considered evidence of gang membership. HISD has implemented the G.E.A.R. (Gang Education Awareness and Resistance) Intervention Procedure on all school campuses to discourage participation in gang-related activities.

Students suspected of gang membership will be subject to investigation and appropriate referrals will be made to the Houston Police Department if membership is confirmed. Additionally, the student's parents will be requested to meet with the principal regarding prescriptive student modification.

#### **CELLULAR PHONE/MP3/ CD & DVD PLAYERS**

Students are prohibited from possessing and using electronic communication, electronic equipments, and entertainment devices during regular school hours. If a student is found in possession of a paging device or cellular phone in violation school policy, the student is subject to discipline as provided by HISD Code of Student Conduct. Electronic devices will be confiscated during regular school hours. **Cellular phones** are returned to the parent/guardian after a payment of a **fee of \$15** (with proper ID).

#### **PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION (PDA)**

The public display of affection, including kissing, intimate embraces, and any other behaviors deemed inappropriate, is not permitted in any area of school. Students who persist in this behavior will be subject to disciplinary action. Consistent pattern of PDA will result in suspension.

#### **LOITERING AFTER SCHOOL**

Students are not permitted to wander around after school unsupervised. Only students involved in an after school tutorial, extracurricular, middle school after school program, or an athletic program(s) are permitted to be on campus.

#### **NOTE:**

In order to reduce the number of unattended students after school, appropriate arrangements and/or pick-up must be made to ensure the safety/security of our students.

#### **VANDALISM**

Students are prohibited from defacing and/or engaging in the destruction of school property, or using graffiti on school grounds. Consequences can include a placement at a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program (DAEP) as per the Student Code of Conduct and/or may be referred to law enforcement.

#### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/FIELD TRIPS POLICY**

All students are suspended from participation in any extra-curricular activities/field trips or sanctioned activity by the school district during the grade reporting period in which the student received a grade lower than the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100 in any academic class or a "P" for conduct.

#### **GRADESPEED REPORT**

Students must provide the most current Gradespeed report of their academic grade to verify that s(he) is in good standing (passing) all classes to be eligible for any co-curricular or extra-curricular activities and/or events.

Students are NOT allowed to ask their corresponding teachers to edit or alter their Gradespeed report due to any failures.

#### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

If passing all courses, students will be allowed to miss a maximum of 6 days a year for participation in extra-curricular activities, 3 days during the fall semester and 3 days during the spring semester. Included are all approved extra-curricular activities that are combined for the total number of 6 permitted days.

#### **NOTE:**

Given the fact that all extra school activities are a privilege and not a right as per state law and board policy, students who are absent from school are not permitted to attend extra-activities on the same day they were absent.

#### **STAAR/TAKS PERFORMANCE/TUTORIALS**

**Students who are eligible to take and have not passed all parts of the TAKS exit exam or STAAR exams/EOC will be excluded from participation in all extra-curricular activities unless they successfully participate in all assigned tutorials.** Assigned tutorials are determined by agreement between the teachers and administrator of the student in question.

#### **UIL ELIGIBILITY**

As a member of the University Interscholastic League, Sharpstown International School is governed by its regulations. Refer to the coach or sponsor for rules governing the activity. For further details regarding interscholastic eligibility, refer to "Constitution and Rules of the University Interscholastic League." A minimum grade of 70% is required in all classes to participate as mandated by the HISD Board of Trustees.

#### **HALL PASSES/VISITOR'S BADGE**

Hall monitoring system (pass processes)

1) No individual will be permitted on the school campus without one of the following forms of identification:

A) Student Identification Badge **NOTE:** Students are required to pay for a temporary ID (\$1.00) if they do have their student ID. Replacement student ID is \$5.00.

B) Visitor's Badge (after registering at the office)

2. NO student will be permitted outside of a classroom during instructional time unless he/she is in possession of a hall pass folder.

#### **LOCKERS**

Lockers can be issued to students at the beginning of the school year. Locks are built into each locker, and combinations are secured with administration. Students must use the locker assigned to them by their advocacy teacher. Security is breached when students share lockers or let others know their combinations. Students are responsible for all books, supplies, or equipment checked out to them. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. It is strongly suggested that money or valuables not be left in lockers at any time. All items not permitted to be in a student's possession during instructional time must be placed in the locker.

## **POSTING OF FLYERS**

Flyers, posters, or student information/advertisement are only allowed to be posted on the designated Student Announcement boards with an administrator's approval. Posting of materials and/or flyers are NOT permitted on painted walls, doors, or columns.

## **LITERATURE, SIGNS, POSTERS, AND DISPLAYS**

Duplicated, written, or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials shall not be sold, circulated or distributed on or near the premises of any school in HISD without explicit approval of the administration of the school. No person shall enter on any school campus to distribute such materials without explicit permission of the school administration. In addition, there will be no signs, posters, or displays in the building without permission of the administration. Posters, signs, and advertising must be placed on bulletin boards and/or in approved areas. Signs will be disposed of if they are posted on windows or unapproved areas.

## **MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS**

In case of an emergency message, parents must contact the office. Parents will be required to state the nature of the emergency. Student messages will NOT be delivered during academic learning time. Note: Please make arrangements for appointments as per the **LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL HOURS** section of this handbook.

## **OFF-SITE COURSES**

Students taking "off-site" courses such as summer school, night school, correspondence, etc., must have prior approval from the principal or counselor for credit to be accepted. This is to ensure that the student has not previously taken and been awarded credit for the courses in which they are enrolled during the regular school term. This provision applies to Credit by Exam courses taken through the University of Texas at Austin or Texas Tech University but is not applicable to Credit by Exam courses taken through the HISD Student Assessment Department. If a student does take one of these types of courses without prior approval, the principal has the option of accepting the credit or refusing to accept the credit. If credit is accepted for a course in which the student is concurrently enrolled in the home school, both courses and grades must be recorded on the transcript, and the grades of both courses are used in determining the student's Grade Point Average (GPA) and class rank.

## **POLICE OFFICER**

Sharpstown International School employs an HISD Officer for the safety of all students and all other school employees. If you have any concern for your own safety or the safety of others, please contact the office, and you will be put in immediate contact with one of our campus officers.

## **LIBRARY**

The library is available each school day from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All students, except for those students escorted by a teacher, must have an official library permit signed by the appropriate teacher. The librarian maintains a sign-in/sign-out log. Students may use the library before school, during lunch, and after school without a permit. Proper library conduct will be expected at all times. Computers are available in the library for use. Students are responsible for all fines for overdue books. Students must present their ID to enter the library.

## **NURSE**

The nurse evaluates and provides nursing care for pupils with emergency illness and trauma, as well as hearing, vision, and scoliosis screening for all new students. The nurse serves as a liaison between the school, home, and community services and as a health education resource person.

Any student who requires the assistance of the nurse should bring a permit from the teacher to the Nurse's Office. It is against School Board Policy for HISD personnel to give medication of any kind, including aspirin, similar preparations, or any other drugs, except with the written permission of the student's doctor and parent. Under these circumstances, only the nurse or, in her absence, an authorized person may administer the medication.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

All students are required to have current and updated immunizations 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 attend school without documentation of state required immunizations. Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical and religious conflicts. Students falling into these categories must submit affidavits as specified by law.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress Reports are issued to all students each 3rd week of each 9-week grading period. The Progress Reports provide information to parents and students concerning academic progress and allow the parents the opportunity to communicate with teachers. Additionally, teachers may send home Progress Reports any time that unsatisfactory progress is being made. Parents are encouraged to email or call to make an appointment with teachers to discuss concerns. Please call the office to assist with scheduling a Parent/Teacher Conference during the teacher's conference period.

## **REPORT CARDS**

The Advisory (homeroom) teacher issues computer report cards at the end of the grading period. At the end of each grading period, report cards are mailed to the address the school has on file. If a grade is missing from the student's report card, it is imperative that the student notifies the teacher immediately.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT

The development and operation of student government organizations are encouraged in the school system. All organizations shall be under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the administrator in charge. Student government and organizations will not set rules and regulations for operation of the school, but may submit recommendations to the administrator in charge in the appropriate manner. There will be no secret societies in the Houston Schools, no organizations that are social or fraternal in nature, and none that are discriminatory in membership selections. Student contracts must be on file with the sponsor. A minimum grade of 70% in all classes is required to participate.

## STUDENT USE OF FACILITIES

Clubs, organizations, or groups of students shall meet at Sharpstown International School or at any school facility only with a sponsor present. If the sponsor has to leave, the meeting must be terminated. All activities must be listed on the master event calendar. (See the principal)

## TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are checked out to students based on teacher and class requirements. If a student loses a textbook, the student must pay for the book. If a lost book that was paid for by a student is found, the financial clerk, upon presentation of a receipt, will give a refund for the price paid. Each student is responsible for all textbooks issued to him/her. **Books must be covered according to Texas law.**

Students should write their name in the appropriate place on the inside front cover. **All textbooks that are found should be immediately turned in to the office.** Students are instructed not to deface or alter either the bar code number on the front of the book or any numbers on the front or back inside covers. Students are expected to pay for lost books before being issued any additional ones. Students are instructed to keep payment receipts issued for lost books.

Textbooks are the property of the State of Texas and are issued to students at no cost. As required by law, students are responsible for the proper care of these textbooks during the year. All textbooks must be returned at the close of the school year or upon withdrawal from school during the year. Students must pay for all lost, stolen, or damaged textbooks. Money collected for lost textbooks is sent to the Textbook Division in Austin, Texas, to pay for a replacement text. All grades and records for students will be withheld until the textbook record is clear.

## TUTORIALS

Tutorials are available during the school day as well as before and after school. Students that are struggling or have been identified by teachers for intervention **MUST** attend our after school intervention/tutorial program and/or Saturday School. Failure to attend mandatory tutorials could result in after school detention.

## STUDENT PARKING

Student **MUST** purchase the required parking permit and only park in the designated student parking lot/area. Only students with valid current drivers license and current insurance are allowed to purchase student parking permits. Students who fail to follow this policy will be towed at their expense.

## VISITORS TO CAMPUS

School policy is to accept only those visitors who have legitimate business at school. **Visitors and guests must register at office and must receive and wear a visitor's pass.**

**Note to parents:** You are always welcome to visit. We require that all parents register when they enter. We ask for 24 hour notice to visit teachers during instructional and conference times. Please call ahead for an appointment with a teacher or anyone with whom you want to meet.

## BUS RIDER POLICY

As a bus rider at Sharpstown International School, I agree to:

- Always be at my stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time;
- Go directly to my bus after school;
- Be respectful to all members of the school staff on bus duty.
- Be courteous to the driver and other students;
- Approach the bus entrance only after the bus comes to a complete stop;
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion;
- Keep all parts of my body as well as all objects inside the bus;
- Never engage in horseplay or fighting on the bus;
- Never tamper with the bus or its equipment;
- Keep the bus litter free (No food or beverages are to be consumed on the bus); and
- Never attempt to ride another bus without prior approval.

The following disciplinary actions will be used:

- 1st Offense – Student conference and parental notification.
- 2nd Offense – 2-3 day suspension from bus.
- 3rd Offense – 5-7 days suspension from riding the bus and bus probation.
- 4th Offense – Exclusion from riding the bus.

If incident is severe in nature, stronger disciplinary action may occur.

**HISD Transportation Services may utilize cameras to record student activity.**