

# Alexander Hamilton Middle School

## Student & Parent Handbook, 2018-2019

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[www.houstonisd.org/hamiltonms](http://www.houstonisd.org/hamiltonms)

AHMS Social Media	
	Facebook: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/Hamiltonms1">www.facebook.com/Hamiltonms1</a>
	Twitter: <a href="http://www.twitter.com/Hamiltonms1">www.twitter.com/Hamiltonms1</a>
	Instagram: @hamilton_ms

School Vision
Alexander Hamilton Middle School will ensure that all students perform at their highest potential through the formation of positive relationships in a safe learning community. All educators provide rigorous learning opportunities that challenge students to work cooperatively on issues relevant to their own community and a global society.

School Mission
Strengthen the knowledge. Strengthen the character. Strengthen the future.

Employees of the District shall not discriminate on the basis of or engage in harassment motivated by age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, marital status, religion, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. A substantiated charge of discrimination and/or harassment against a student or employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Welcome to Alexander Hamilton Middle School!**

The faculty, administration, and staff extend greetings to you for a successful school year. We urge students and parents to become well acquainted with the school policies and procedures outlined in our Student & Parent Handbook, as well as the Code of Student Conduct.

These policies and procedures are the result of a concerted effort of a committee of students, parents, faculty and administration. The information has been carefully prepared and presented to that it will be of great value in helping you to become an integral member of the Alexander Hamilton Middle School Community.

Since its founding in 1919, Hamilton has maintained a reputation for excellence. Our school welcomes you, and we hope that you will join us this year in continuing our legacy of excellence.

## **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Official Report Cards & Progress Reports will be distributed in accordance to the HISD Academic Calendar. Students are delivered their Report Card or Progress Report during their final class of the day, and are instructed to share it with their parent or guardian. Report Card dates have been set by the district and are as follows:

Cycle 1 (28 days) October 12, 2018

Cycle 4 (29 days) February 22, 2019

Cycle 2 (25 days) November 16, 2018

Cycle 5 (30 days) April 12, 2019

Cycle 3 (24 days) January 11, 2019

Cycle 6 (38 days) May 31, 2019

## **Gradespeed**

Gradespeed is an effective electronic tool that has assists students and parents in tracking grades during the grading cycles. By accessing Gradespeed, students and parents are able to actively see progress and intervene early before grades are submitted for Report Cards. Students and parents are highly encouraged to create a Gradespeed account ([www.houstonisd.org/domain/11001](http://www.houstonisd.org/domain/11001)) and check it frequently to keep up with their assignments in each class.

## **Vanguard Gifted and Talented Program**

Hamilton's Vanguard Program is a thriving learning community which offers enriched curriculum specifically differentiated for Gifted and Talented (G/T) students. Vanguard students will be challenged in a variety of ways that promote their natural capacity for critical analysis and problem-solving. These components of Vanguard are balanced with our outstanding STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) courses offered at Hamilton. The analytical and problem-solving thinking processes that students engage in culminate in the Texas Performance Standards Project during the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. If you would like to have your child tested to determine if they qualify for the Vanguard Program, please contact our Magnet Coordinator, Cindy Elliott. Vanguard classes are labeled with *VG/PAP* on the student's schedule.

## **Pre-AP Academics**

Pre-AP (Pre-Advanced Placement) coursework is offered to engage Hamilton students intellectually with the rigor of higher level learning. Taking Pre-AP courses in middle school prepares students to handle Pre-AP and AP courses in high school, which can help students earn college credit before high school graduation.

## **Homework / Independent Studying / Independent Reading**

Each student is expected to invest time at home for studying, homework, and independent reading. While different courses will require varying degrees of homework, students should review material or concepts independently at home in order to better build on presented academic concepts. Some at-home assignments are long-term in nature and require planning. Others assignments may be shorter, intended to review concepts taught in class.

## **Tutorials**

A Tutorial Schedule will be provided to all students near the beginning of the semester. It is intended to provide students with assistance they may need to work toward mastery of certain concepts and skills taught in classroom. Teachers may also send a notice home, requesting a student's presence at tutorials based upon the student's academic performance in the class.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS)**

The TEKS are the objectives that each teacher is required to teach in their subject area. Teachers have the TEKS posted for each day's instruction, along with related class and homework assignments. Instruction is tied directly to the TEKS which provide a way for teachers to later assess students' mastery of the objectives on assessments. Students are encouraged to track the objectives they are covering along with their level of mastery.

## **High School Credit Courses**

At Hamilton, eight grade students have the opportunity to take courses in which they can earn high school credit. These credits transfer with them to high school, after leaving AHMS. It is crucial that students and parents understand that the grades earned in these courses will be recorded on a student's high school transcript. Additionally, it is important that students master the instructional TEKS in these courses so they can successfully move to the next sequenced class in high school. High school credit classes offered at AHMS are:

Algebra I	Art I
Concepts of Applied Engineering	Integrated Physics & Chemistry
Principles of Information Technology	Spanish I, Spanish II & Advance Placement Spanish

## Physical Education and Dance Classes

For health and safety purposes, students are required to dress appropriately in regulation athletic clothing for Physical Education, Karate, Yoga, and Dance classes. Required dress for each class will be presented to students at the beginning of the school year.

PE	Karate	Yoga & Dance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Official AHMS PE Shirt and Shorts</li> <li>• Rubber-soled sport or tennis shoes</li> <li>• Appropriate undergarments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kickstart Karate Uniform and Belt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Official AHMS PE Shirt</li> <li>• Black Yoga Pants or Black Athletic Bottoms</li> </ul>

All elements of a student's athletic attire should be marked with the student's name for identification purposes. Students should also have a combination lock for their gym locker. Students are not allowed to share lockers.

## Attendance Expectation

Regular attendance is essential for a student to be academically successful. Attendance is taken and recorded for each class period. Students must attend at least 90% of classes each semester. Students who exceed the absence limit will be required to attend summer school, and may be denied course credit if they are taking courses for high school credit. Students may petition the School Attendance Committee for consideration in cases of extreme circumstances.

When a student is absent, a written excuse from a parent or guardian stating the reason for the absence must be given to the Attendance Clerk in the Main Office. **Per district policy, only three (3) handwritten notes will be accepted. After three handwritten notes have been submitted, a doctor's note must be submitted for an absence to be excused.** Excused absences are only for the following reasons:

- Illness of the student.
- Illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- Participation in an approved school activity with the permission of the Principal.
- Emergencies or extenuating circumstances as recognized by the Principal.

Students have **three days** to bring a written excuse. **After three days, the absence becomes unexcused. Students with 3 or more unexcused absences will be required to make up instruction through attendance appeals. Failure to make up instructional time missed can lead to further disciplinary consequences as well as retention in the same grade level the following year.**

### **Students Leaving Campus During Day**

Students will **only** be released to the parent, guardian, or adult listed in the student's enrollment information. Official Identification (such as a state ID or driver's license) must be presented in order to release a student to any adult. Please ensure that your enrollment information is updated regularly with the proper contacts, phone numbers, and addresses. Please note that when a child leaves school, they are missing valuable instructional time, so any efforts to schedule appointments outside of school time are appreciated. **Please note:** The latest a student may be released is 3:30PM. After that time, students must remain in class until dismissal at 3:50PM.

### **Make-up Work due to Absences**

Students who have any absences will be given three school days to make up any missed work. Students, parents, and teachers are encouraged to work together to ensure that students master any missed instruction and to ensure work is turned into respective teachers within the three days. Under extenuating circumstance additional time to complete missed work may be coordinated between the parent and the teacher.

### **Tardies**

Students who arrive to school tardy (during or after Homeroom), are to obtain a tardy slip from the reception clerk. This pass will allow the student to report directly to the appropriate classroom.

A student is counted tardy if not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings for any class period. Students who continue to arrive late to class will be subject to discipline as outlined in the HISD Student Code of Conduct.

### **Withdrawals**

Students who are withdrawing from AHMS to attend another school must report to their Grade Level Principal's office. The student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who enrolled them at Hamilton. All withdrawing students must provide information about the school in which they will be enrolling after they leave Hamilton.

### **Cluster Learning Communities**

Hamilton is organized into clusters within each grade level. Clusters provide a learning community that helps foster relationships and teamwork both among students and with faculty. Students within each cluster share the same group of teachers for their core academic subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Teachers in each cluster have a common planning period which allows for conferences with parents or guardians.

### **School Organization: Principals & Counselors**

Each grade level has a designated Principal and Counselor who work with students to manage students' schedules and concerns, as well as help organize grade level matters. Each grade level office also has a clerk.

Are as follows:

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Justin Vogt, Principal and Erica Garza, Counselor
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Brandon Pigeon, Principal and Dr. Marcia Smith, Counselor
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Kevin Clark, Associate Principal and Darlene Thomas, Principal

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Occasionally, parents may request a meeting with a teacher, or a teacher may request a meeting with a parent. This may be done via e-mail or by calling Hamilton and asking to set up a parent-teacher conference through the grade level clerk to set a time. The clerk will relay the information to the teacher or cluster leader so that a time and date may be finalized.

At a conference, parents are encouraged to bring concerns related to their child's current standing in any class, as well as work with teachers to determine ways to better serve the child's needs in the classroom and at home.

### **Hallway Safety & Success Plan**

At Hamilton, students have a five-minute period to report to their following class. In this time, students are to handle their personal needs, as well as ensure that they are prepared for their next class. In order to ensure safe and successful passing periods, students are taught to uphold the following expectations:

- Right & Ready (Keep traffic flow on the right side)
- Walk with Purpose (Maintaining a safe and purposeful speed to get to class on time)
- Mind Your Bubble (Respect others' personal space at all times)
- Wear It Right (Abide by the dress code, even during passing periods)
- 10 in, 10 out (A reminder that students are to be in class during the first or last ten minutes of class)

### **Lunch Procedures**

Students may choose to eat from the cafeteria or bring their own sack lunch. Students needing to use the restroom during lunch must ask a lunch monitor for permission, and may only use the first-floor restrooms. To maintain a safe and orderly lunch period, student cooperation is asked in the following ways:

- Deposit all litter in designated wastebaskets.
- Keep tables and nearby floor clean.
- Walk to and from tables.
- Do not take food or drinks from the cafeteria.

### **Lunch Detention**

Students who fail to abide by cafeteria guidelines or who commit other discipline infractions are subject to being assigned lunch detention. Detention entails students sitting at a designated location during lunch and eating their lunch silently.

### **HISD Student Code of Conduct**

At Hamilton, we uphold the behavior expectations outlined in the HISD Student Code of Conduct. Students are to adhere to this Code of Conduct to ensure a safe and productive learning environment. At the beginning of the year, students receive a copy of the Code of Conduct and must sign for it, ensuring that they understand what behavior is expected of them at all times.

### **Detention**

School-wide detention is held after school until 4:50 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It may also be held on assigned Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM. During detention, students are asked to study current course work or write behavior reflections. If a student is disruptive, they may be referred to the Grade Level Principal's Office for further disciplinary action.

### **Laptops/Cellphones / Electronic Devices**

Students will be provided technology in all core classes for instructional purposes. Student's cellphones and electronic devices must remain turned off and in a student's locker at all times. This is to prevent distractions and potential behavior issues related to cellphones. If a cellphone is confiscated by any adult on campus, it will be delivered to the student's Grade Level Office. A parent or guardian will be responsible for a \$15 fee for picking up the cellphone or device, per HISD policy. AHMS does not assume responsibility for the damage or loss of any student's cellphone or electronic device.

### **Student Support Center**

Hamilton is committed to the concept of Restorative Justice, sometimes referred to as Restorative Discipline. With its emphasis on keeping students actively engaged in learning during times requiring disciplinary action, Restorative Justice is an accepted means of reducing the impact and frequency of more severe disciplinary measures such as school suspensions. Consequently, Hamilton will maintain a Student Success Center monitored by an accredited teacher and established to quickly and efficiently return students to the regular academic setting following minor violations of school policy or the district Code of Student Conduct.

## Bell Schedule

This year, Hamilton will follow the following bell schedule.

### Bell Schedule: Monday & Thursday (Period 1-4) Tuesday & Friday (Period 5-8)

8:22	Students Enter the Building
8:30 - 8:45	Homeroom
8:50 - 10:10	1 <sup>st</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Period
10:15 - 11:35	2 <sup>nd</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup> Period
11:40 - 1:40	3 <sup>rd</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> Period

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

6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
11:40 - 12:10 Lunch	11:40 - 12:20 3 <sup>rd</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> Period	11:40 - 1:05 3 <sup>rd</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> Period
12:15 - 1:40 3 <sup>rd</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> Period	12:25 - 12:55 Lunch	1:10 - 1:40 Lunch
	1:00 - 1:40 3 <sup>rd</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> Period	

1:45 - 2:25	Advocacy
2:30 - 3:50	4 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Period

### Bell Schedule: Wednesday

8:22	Students Enter the Building
8:30 - 8:45	Homeroom
8:49 - 9:34	1st Period
9:38 - 10:23*	2 <sup>nd</sup> Period
10:27 - 11:13	3 <sup>rd</sup> Period

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

First Lunch	Second Lunch	Third Lunch
11:13 - 11:43 Lunch	11:17 - 12:02 4 <sup>th</sup> Period	11:17- 12:02 4 <sup>th</sup> Period
11:47 - 12:34 4 <sup>th</sup> Period	12:06 - 12:36 Lunch	12:06 - 12:51 5 <sup>th</sup> Period
12:38 - 1:25 5 <sup>th</sup> Period	12:40 - 1:25 5 <sup>th</sup> Period	12:55 - 1:25 Lunch
	1:29 - 2:14 6 <sup>th</sup> Period	
	2:18 - 3:03 7 <sup>th</sup> Period	

3:07 – 3:50 8<sup>th</sup> Period

**Dress Code: Uniform / Clothing**

**Shirts**

- Must be suitably sized short or long sleeved polo styled (with collar).
- Must be solid colored white/grey/dark blue. Patterns, graphics or, oversized large logo are not permitted.
- Shirts with the Hamilton logo may be worn any day of the week.
- Club or organization shirts may be work any day of the week.
- Shirts or sweatshirts with a college or university logo may be worn any day of the week.

**Pants, Shorts, & Skirts**

- Must be solid (tan/khaki or dark blue). Patterns, graphics, oversized, or large logos are not permitted.
- Pants must be worn appropriately (at the waist). *Sagging* is not permitted.
- Skirt and short length must be no further than four fingers above the knee.
- Oversized, undersized, torn, or ripped pants / shorts are not permitted.

**Shoes**

- Must have a back.
- Open-toed shoes, house shoes, slippers, slides, flip-fops, sandals, high heels and platforms are a safety concern and are not permitted.

**Jackets/Outerwear/Sweaters**

- Must be solid colored white/grey/dark blue. Patterns, graphics, oversized, large logos that are larger than an ID badge are not permitted.
- Jackets and sweaters may be worn during the school day. Hoods should not be worn inside the building.
- Jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts that do not meet these criteria are to be stored in the student's locker during the day.

**Jeans**

- Jeans will be permitted only on specified days as a reward or incentive. They may also be permitted at the principal's discretion in celebration of Hamilton teams, student organizations, and community spirit.
- Jeans may not be ripped or torn.

**Hats**

- Hats, caps, bandanas, hair wraps, combs, picks, costume wear, sunglasses, sweat or athletic bands, etc. are not permitted on campus unless approved by the principal.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Students may not draw words, symbols, designs, or the like on exposed skin or clothing.
- Any exposed tattoos that are deemed inappropriate by administration must be covered.
- Earrings are the only piercings permitted. no spikes, loops over ½ inch or gauges are not permitted.
- Teeth grills are not permitted.
- Hair must be neat with no shaved words/symbols or designs; mohawks/faux-hawks are not permitted.

### **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:

- All students must wear ID badges on a lanyard around their neck at all times. No exceptions.
- Students who lose their badge must pay for a replacement badge at the cost of \$2.00.
- Students who forget their badge must purchase a temporary badge in the grade level office before school for \$1.00 and will be assigned a lunch detention or afterschool detention.
- Students who are repeatedly in violation of the school ID badge policy may face more severe disciplinary action in accordance with the HISD Code of Student Conduct.
- ID badges are used to purchase lunches and to check out library books.

### **Backpacks**

- Only clear, see-through, or mesh backpacks are permitted to ensure campus safety. Backpacks must be placed in a locker before homeroom and retrieve from locker after the last period of the school day.

### **Dress Code Violation Procedures**

- A simple correction such as removing a hood, is to be done immediately. If a student is not wearing the appropriate shirt or pants, the school may call the student's home and a parent or guardian may need to bring appropriate clothing. Frequent violations of the Student Dress Code may lead to more serious disciplinary consequences.