**Alexander Hamilton** **Middle School**

**Faculty and Staff Handbook**

**2021-2022**

**Houston Independent School District**

**139 East 20th Street**

**Houston, TX 77008**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

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| **FACEBOOK**  [**www.facebook.com/Hamiltonms1**](http://www.facebook.com/Hamiltonms1) |
| **TWITTER**  [**www.twitter.com/Hamiltonms1**](http://www.twitter.com/Hamiltonms1) |
| **INSTAGRAM**  **@hamilton\_ms** |

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| **SCHOOL VISION** |
| ***Hamilton is a safe, innovative, student-centered Vanguard magnet middle school committed to developing collaborative scholars who are equipped with social and emotional intelligence.*** |

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| **SCHOOL MISSION** |
| ***At Hamilton Middle School we provide rigorous learning experiences that promote student success in academics, athletics, and the arts through innovative, problem-based, and interdisciplinary studies in a safe and nurturing environment.*** |

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| **SCHOOL MOTTO** |
| ***Strengthen the Knowledge. Strengthen the Character. Strengthen the Future.*** |

**ADMINISTRATION**

***Robert R. Michaels-Johnson***

***Principal***

***Lakenya Scott, Assistant Principal – 8th Grade***

***Ina Knight, Assistant Principal – 7th Grade***

***Darlene Thomas, Assistant Principal – 6th Grade***

***Terrance Eveline, Campus Instructional Technologist***

***Tricia M. N. Aguas, Teacher Specialist – Science and Summative Assessment***

***Jayna K. Hawkins, Teacher Specialist – Community Coordinator, and Parent Support***

***Jewel S. Jobson, Teacher Specialist – Mathematics and Formative Assessment***

***Erica M. Garza, Counselor – 8th Grade and 7th Grade A-L***

***Destiny E. Bernal, Counselor – 6th Grade and 7th Grade M-Z***

***Thaddeus Ledet, Wraparound Services Specialist***

***Mia Agnew (nee Charlton) – Magnet Coordinator and Sheltered Instruction Coach***

***Cynthia Elliott - Vanguard and Makerspace Coordinator***

**SUPPORT STAFF**

***Juanita Sada, School Secretary and Budget Manager***

***Griselda Casas, Principal’s Secretary and Student Information Representative***

***Cordell Holloman, Plant Operator***

***Monica Lewis, Campus Nurse***

***Rosalinda P. Holliday, Library Services & Intervention Assistance Team***

***Heather Mariscal, Campus Resource Officer***

***William Jaudon, Technology Customer Service Representative***

***Cherina Minor, Cafeteria Manager***

**CLERICAL STAFF**

***Ines Pulido, Payroll and Activity Funds Clerk***

***Victor Torres, Attendance and Records Clerk***

***Vanessa Rivas, 8th Grade Clerk***

***Carlos Charles, 7th Grade Clerk***

***Sonia Ruiz, 6th Grade Clerk***

***Jose Sada, Special Education Clerk***

***Margarita Garcia, Receptionist***

**TEACHER LEADERS**

***Montre’ Johnson, Special Education Department Chair***

***Daniel Breslau, Mathematics Department Chair***

***Anika Guerrero, English Language Arts Department Chair***

***Ernest Johnson, Social Studies Department Chair***

***Juan Jimenez, Science Department Chair***

***Gary Roberts, Physical Education Department Chair***

***Gloria Perez, Unified Arts Department Chair***

***Michael Jacob, Technology Department Chair***

***Barry Matherne, Campus Induction Coach***

***Gloria Perez, Dual Language Coach***

***Ernest Johnson, Social Media Coordinator***

***Andrew Holley, Student Activities Coordinator***

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| **PERIOD** | Logo  Description automatically generated | **START TIME** | **END TIME** |
| **Advocacy** | **8:30** | **9:00** |
| **One & Six** | **9:05** | **10:15** |
| **Two & Seven** | **10:20** | **11:30** |
| **Three & Eight** | **11:35** | **1:25** |
| ***A Lunch*** | *6th Grade to Lunch* | *11:35* | *12:05* |
|  | *6th Grade to Class* | *12:10* | *1:25* |
| ***B Lunch*** | *7th Grade to Lunch* | *12:15* | *12:45* |
|  | *7th Grade to Class* | *12:50* | *1:25* |
| ***C Lunch*** | *8th Grade to Lunch* | *12:55* | *1:25* |
| **Four & Nine** |  | **1:30** | **2:40** |
| **Five & Ten** |  | **2:45** | **3:55** |
|  | *Release 6th Grade* | *3:57* | |
|  | *Release 7th Grade* | *3:58* | |
|  | *Release 8th Grade* | *3:59* | |
| **Final Dismissal** |  | **4:00** | |

**BELL SCHEDULE**

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES**

* We teach for learning and mastery.
* We assess for learning and instructional planning.
* We utilize a criterion-referenced approach in our assessment.
* We grade to assess mastery.
* We assign homework as practice.
* We use projects to determine skill and knowledge application.
* We assess projects for process over product by use of a pre-established rubric.
* We teach every student what they need to learn; we determine if they have learned it; and we respond appropriately if it was not learned.

**Curriculum Planning**

Curriculum can be found on HISD's HUB at [https:\\itslearning.com](https://itslearning.com). It is the source for effective instructional planning and teaching resources. Teachers will construct curriculum pacing calendars to guide the pacing of instruction and to ensure the curriculum is completely covered by the end of the academic year and prior to summative assessment.

**Emergency Lesson Plans**

When a teacher expects to be off campus, appropriate lesson plans are to be left for the associate teacher. All necessary instructional materials and an up-to-date class roster for every period should be clearly visible on the teacher’s desk. Department chairs and/or teacher specialists are to check-in with any associate teacher to make sure they have everything needed. This contact should occur, daily.

Occasionally emergencies will arise, and a teacher will be out without enough notice to provide lesson plans. Teachers are to create emergency lesson plans to be held in the grade level office for such occasions. Emergency lesson plans should be replaced every 6-week period to provide students with relevant instruction. If emergency plans are utilized, it is the responsibility of the teacher to replace those upon returning to campus.

**Growth Plans**

Vanguard students who are not showing mastery of material, i.e. a grade below 80% in a core subject, may be placed on a growth plan by the Vanguard (GT) Coordinator. Growth plans are created collaboratively between the student, the student’s parent or guardian, and the classroom teachers. In addition to the Vanguard office, students will receive a copy of their growth plan.

**Intervention Assistance Team**

The Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) serves to provide oversight and support for students struggling with academics, or showing concerns related to social and emotional development. Teachers should make referrals to IAT when traditional classroom supports are not helping to improve the performance of a struggling student. It is important to involve parents early when a student begins to struggle. Parent contact should be made before an IAT referral is considered. IAT meetings are scheduled every two weeks to review a student’s progress.

**Instructional Levels**

Curriculum is differentiated at AHMS to provide instruction to two academic placement levels, HISD Advanced/GT and on grade-level. However, we maintain high expectations for all students regardless of the academic level. All instruction should be appropriately challenging and rigorous without being frustrating. Teachers are required to differentiate their instruction as appropriate for all students, including accommodations and modifications for identified special needs students and Emerging Bilingual students.

**Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans are to be created each week and turned in via the HUB by 4:00 p.m. the Thursday prior to the week of instruction. The formatting for the lesson plan post is to be (*Lastname\_Subject\_CY1\_WK1\_8.23-8.27*).

Lesson plans are to include TEKS to be covered, a brief description of the lesson, materials to be used, an explanation of how the teacher will assess the objective, and all modifications (Special Education, 504, EB, GT). They are to show evidence of differentiation and rigor. Teachers are encouraged to use the HUB Lesson Planner, but some departments may opt for an enhanced template. Whatever the format, lesson plans are to include all pertinent instructional information. Plans will be regularly reviewed by content area leaders and appraisers.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLC)**

AHMS supports the concept and practice of the Professional Learning Community. Grade level and content teams can function as a PLC, as do encore department teams. PLC’s use the following guiding principles:

* They are collaborative;
* They are data driven;
* They are action oriented;
* They are commitment to continuous improvement; and
* They are results focused.

PLC meetings take place on Tuesdays during common planning times. Instructional specialists or department chairs will create an agenda including a record of attendance. These items should be saved and placed a HUB created folder.

**Cohorts**

AHMS embraces the value of small interdisciplinary learning communities sometimes called cohorts. Cohort teams are comprised of teachers who share the same, or almost the same, groupings of students. The benefit of meeting in cohorts is to review student academic and behavioral concerns. Often these types of discussions will be facilitated through the Intervention Assistance Team coordinator. Interdisciplinary meetings also provide an opportunity for STEAM-based planning.

**Special Education Students**

Special Education students are served in both self-contained and sheltered instruction environments. Every special education student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and instructional modifications and/or accommodations that are required by law to be implemented in the classroom. Some teachers may be paired with a special education co-teacher, others may have a teaching assistant available to offer students content support. When possible, co-teachers and teaching assistants should be part of the lesson planning process. The preferred modality of special education instruction in the sheltered classroom is co-teach. Special education teachers and content teachers are provided periodic training on implementing this instructional model. Questions regarding supports for special education students may be directed to Ms. M. Johnson in the special education office.

**504 Students**

Every identified Section 504 student has a 504 Accommodation Plan. Teachers must include these instructional accommodations in daily lesson plans and on assessments. Questions regarding supports for 504 students may be directed to Ms. M. Johnson in the special education office.

**Emerging Bilingual Students**

For many Emerging Bilingual (EB) students, formerly English Learners or ELs, accommodations are also prescribed. Some EB students are part of the Dual Language Program and receive instruction in Spanish in their Science and Spanish language classes. Other EB students may be scheduled for English as Second Language for pull-out instruction. Still others may receive instruction as a transitional EB in a regular classroom. EB services are coordinated by the Language Proficiency Language Committee (LPAC). Questions regarding supports for EBs may be directed to Ms. Knight in the seventh-grade office.

**STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

**Classroom Procedures**

Teachers are expected to have routines in their classroom that support a positive and productive learning environment. All students are to be actively engaged and academically challenged every instructional period. Clear objectives, posted expectations, warm-up activities, formative assessments, exit tickets, and students tracking their own learning, all contribute to positive student behaviors.

Level I and Level II infractions of the district’s *Code of Student Conduct* are to be handled in the classroom. If a student continues to cause classroom disruptions that warrant a level III infraction, an electronic discipline referral may be submitted to the appropriate grade level principal. Students should not be sent out of class with the referral, nor should teachers leave the class to walk a student to the grade level principal’s office. The grade level principal will handle the discipline referral, generally within a 24-hour period. In an extreme emergency, where there is the fear of imminent harm, teachers are to use the emergency button to call the main office for an administrator.

**Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited by district policy. Teachers are to never use corporal punishment or any punishment that requires physical exertion or labor, such as performing calisthenics or cleaning a classroom or cafeteria area. *This policy applies to all employees, in all situations, with all students*.

**Keeping Students After School**

If it is necessary to keep a student after school, parents must have a one-day notice so arrangements for transportation may be made. Contact the parents or guardian stating the reason for the action and the exact time the student will be released from the after-school assignment.

**Student Support Center (SSC)**

The Student Support Center (SSC) is designed as a disciplinary consequence which allows the student to continue progress in the instructional program. Teachers can help to maintain an instructional atmosphere in the SSC by adhering to the following guidelines:

* SSC assignments should be no longer than classroom assignments.
* Students in SSC have an equal amount of time to complete an assignment.
* Assignment should be available for students in the HUB.
* SSC assignments are to be very specific.
* Expect student completed work to be submitted through the HUB.
* Remember that when students are in SSC, they are still your students.

**Students in the Hallways**

Any student sent out of class must have a pass. When sending students to the clinic, students should have a signed clinic pass from the teacher. Students are not to be sent out of class to run errands for the teacher. Instructional time should always be honored. Remember the 10-minute rule. Students should not be permitted to leave the classroom within the first or last ten minutes of an instructional period.

Do not keep students in your class after the dismissal bell, even if it is to finish an assignment or assessment. When students are held in your class, they are missing important instruction in another class. Please honor your colleagues’ instructional time.

**GRADING PRACTICES**

**Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)**

Teachers teach the instructional knowledge and skills as established by the state of Texas. For a complete and up-to-date listing of the TEKS, for any grade or subject, access the Texas Education Agency (TEA) website.

**Teacher Grade Books**

Teachers are to use the district’s online grade book, *Power Teacher Pro*. Grade books should be updated regularly, with an average of 2 grades by the end of each week of instruction. Parents are encouraged to sign up for *HISD Connect* so they can be up to date on grades and assignments. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers enter grades in a timely manner. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to remain mindful of the distribution and types of grades entered. A single assignment or assessment should not be the prime factor in determining a student’s grade.

**Graded Work**

Teachers should return graded work in a timely manner, being mindful that each grading period is no longer than six weeks. It is imperative to realize that students cannot be held accountable for academic progress if they are unable to determine their current academic standing.

All grade books should be organized to reflect a 60/40 distribution. Content specialists and appraisers can assist in constructing the appropriate grade distribution.

* 60% - Formative Assessment/Work (with 10% included for homework).
* 40% - Summative Assessment/Work

**Incompletes**

Although it appears to benefits students, assigning an *incomplete* (*INC*) grade generates a false impression of a student’s academic standing. The electronic gradebook does not calculate the *INC* as a missing assignment but as an ungraded assignment. A best practice is to temporarily assign a *zero* (0) for incomplete work and then change the grade once the work is submitted and graded. Teachers may assign an *incomplete* for a grading cycle, under extenuating circumstances. However, it is required that the *INC* is rectified before the end of the following grading cycle.

To change a cycle grade, a grade change form should be filled out with a valid reason for the grade change. This form will be reviewed and signed by the principal*. Keep in mind that an* *INC counts the same as a failing average for the purposes of UIL.* Teachers are to ensure the parent/guardian is aware the student is receiving an *INC*, and why, before a report card goes home. Grade change forms are available from Ms. Casas, SIR, and are to be submitted to the principal’s office for review.

**Progress Reports and Report Cards**

Progress reports and report cards are issued to students in accordance with district policy and timelines. An academic calendar is available on the district’s website.

Teachers may not issue a failing grade on a report card to a student who was passing at the midpoint progress report, without contacting the parent or sending another progress report home. Additionally, there needs to be an opportunity for the student to improve the grade.

Consistent with HISD School Guidelines, if no notice of failure was given, the student should receive a 70 on the report card. Students should have enough graded assignments each six-week period so that no single grade is weighted heavily enough to cause a student to fail.

Students who receive a failing grade at the end of a grading period become ineligible to participate in UIL activities. The student remains ineligible, even if a grade change form is submitted, for the grading period, unless that student is passing all classes at the time the next progress report’s grades are due.

Academic grades should only be issued for academic work. According to HISD School Guidelines, conduct or behavior may not impact a student’s academic grade.

**Conduct**

Student conduct grades should reflect student behavior during the class period for which the grade is being assigned. Teacher and student interactions outside the classroom should not be considered when assigning a classroom conduct mark. Sufficient documentation should be available to support a conduct grade. Administrative approval is required before the issuance of *U* or *Unsatisfactory* as a conduct grade. Consistent with HISD School Guidelines, conduct may not influence or be considered as part of the academic grade.

**Late Work Policy**

All teachers responsible for issuing student grades must accept late work. Students turning in assignments past their due date may have points deducted, according to a pre-published policy in the teacher’s syllabus. The policy should stipulate no more than a letter grade reduction for each week an assignment is late. As a regular best practice, it should be easier for a student to complete the work, than it is for the student to receive a zero.

**Make-up Work**

Due to the campus’ new block schedule, students who have any absences, upon the return to school, will be given three school days to make up any missed work. Additional time will be extended for multiple missed days. Teachers are encouraged to work with students and parents to ensure that students master any missed instruction and to ensure work is turned in within the three days. Under extenuating circumstances, additional time to complete missed work may be coordinated between the parent and the teacher. Communication with a grade level principal or counselor can assist in making these arrangements.

**FIELD TRIPS**

**NOTE –** As of this publication, per district policy, no field trips are permitted for 2021-2022 school year

Field trips are an opportunity for students to meet learning objectives outside of the classroom. Teachers should identify the specific learning objectives related to the field experience. Per campus guidelines, no student should be excluded from the learning opportunity without prior approval from the appropriate administrator.

All field trips must be pre-approved by the grade level principal, followed by the school principal. Verbal or email consent does not mean a field trip is approved.

Field trip requests are to be submitted no less than 30 days in advance to Ms. Sada, who will arrange buses and payment. Signed permission slips and medical information must be collected for each student attending the field trip and must be submitted for administrative review no later than three (3) days prior to the trip.

Teachers must take signed permission slips with them on the field trip in case of emergency and leave a copy with their grade level administrator. Teachers are also required to check with the school nurse about any students who may need medicine administered on the field trip. If students with special needs are to attend a field trip, it is important the trip is coordinated with the Special Education Chairperson and the school nurse.

All field trips require one adult chaperone for every twelve students. Non-district personnel chaperones must be approved through Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS).

A list of students, participating in a fieldtrip, alphabetized by grade level, must be shared with the entire faculty no less than 48 hours before the fieldtrip. On the day of the trip, a final list of students attending the trip should be given to the grade level principal and the attendance clerk. Before students depart, attendance should be taken and any absent students should be reported to the attendance office.

It is the responsibility of the grade level office to make adequate plans for students remaining on campus during a field trip. Students should have enough work and should have an opportunity to work on the same learning objectives as their peers on the field trip. Generally, one teacher team member should stay to supervise those students. Teachers are to be mindful to find coverage for classes that have students who are, for whatever reason, ineligible for the field trip.

Clerks may not serve as chaperones. It is important that all offices remain staffed. Encore and physical education teachers should not be used as chaperones if they have multiple grade level classes and would require additional coverage.

**CAMPUS PROCEDURES**

**Faculty Parking**

Faculty should park in the lot near the back of the campus, accessible from 21st Street off Yale. On regular school days, the lot gate will be secured at 8:30 and unlocked at 3:30. Any exit of the lot during the school day will need to be cleared through the main office. This helps ensure the lot remains secured.

The lot accessible from 20th Street is intended for leadership and for support staff who frequently need to leave and return to the campus on the same day. This lot is not secured during the day as it also provides a parking area for campus visitors and student families. As with all district property, the district does not assume liability for personal vehicles or property. Staff should ensure their vehicle is locked each morning.

**Student Attendance**

All faculty members are required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance in *Power Teacher Pro.*  Official ADA attendance should be taken at 10:00 a.m., each day. During the ADA period, students MAY NOT be counted tardy to class. Teachers may keep a separate record for tardiness, if needed. For all other class periods, the attendance should be taken during the first 15 minutes of class. If a student is marked absent, and the student arrives to class after submitting attendance, a change of attendance form is to be submitted to the attendance clerk in the main office. Forms are located in Power Teacher Pro. When a student is in an office for a legitimate reason, and is marked absent, an attendance correction form needs to be submitted. The proper code for this is OSP (Other School Personnel). Forms should be signed by the teacher of record and submitted to the attendance office.

**Teacher Attendance**

Consistent faculty and staff attendance are vital to the educational process. No one can do the job of a faculty or staff member as effectively as the assigned individual. Therefore, it is imperative everyone be present and on time each day. If anyone is absent it affects us all. To ensure arrangements can be made to cover classes and special duties, all members of the faculty and staff are responsible for notifying their appraiser of an absence or anticipated late arrival.

The teacher workday is from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Other personnel may have differing arrival times. All employees are expected to sign in and to be in position no later than their assigned start time. This year AHMS will pilot an automated system using an attendance fob. The fob reader will be in the teacher’s lounge. If you arrive after 8:15 a.m. you may need to see the payroll clerk in the main office to complete an employee late notice.

Students will begin entering the building at 8:20 a.m. Advocacy teachers should be in the hall, outside their classroom door no later than 8:20 a.m. to greet and to supervise the safe movement of students in the hallways. Teachers without an advocacy period may be assigned a specified location to assist with the transition of students to class. The daily dismissal bell is staggered, by building floor, with the final dismissal at 4:00 p.m.

Teachers should be in the hallway, outside their doors, or in their assigned duty spot during all transition times, regardless of planning period. Select teachers will be recruited to assist with early morning and dismissal or late afternoon procedures.

**Teacher Absence Reporting**

In the case of personal illness, family illness or emergency, off-campus duty, or other situations that result in faculty or staff absence, it is the responsibility of the employee to input the absence in AESOP, and to notify the payroll clerk to secure coverage. As soon as you know you will be absent, contact your grade level principal and your appraiser. Waiting to submit the absence until the morning of the absence will often result in no coverage. Either prior to the absence, or immediately upon return, all absences should be recorded in AESOP and in OneSource. When no associate teacher is available for a vacancy, colleagues may be asked to cover, or your classes may be split.

With changing district policies and guidelines, due to the current health crisis, teachers are required to stay up to date by periodically reviewing the district’s *Ready-Set-Go* guidelines. Although changes to attendance procedures will be communicated as they occur, this document may not fully reflect current district expectations.

**NOTE –** Until further notice the district’s CheckIn2Work app is fully operational. All faculty and staff members are to complete the questions on the app each morning, prior to arrival on campus. If there are COVID-19-related concerns, the employee will be contacted by the monitors of the app and provided instructions on next steps.

**Payroll Reporting**

An *absence from duty report is* made through OneSource. Please ensure that you complete and submit them promptly. If an absence is due to illness of a relative or death of a relative, include the relationship. A physician's authorization to return to work is required for all absences of more than seven consecutive days and may be required if frequent absences indicate a chronic health problem.

If you must arrive late or leave early, please notify your appraiser ahead of time. Please record the time appropriately by use of the electronic fob or in the main office on the paper time sheet. The *Absence from Duty Form* in OneSource must also be completed. Chronic late arrival or early departure will be addressed by administration or your appraiser.

Late arrival and early departure due to personal appointments will be coded for payroll purposes. Attendance reporting will be reflected as personal time taken during the duty day.

Extra Duty Pay must be approved in advance. *Extra Duty Pay Forms* for work completed should be turned in to the payroll clerk, Ms. Pulido, each week. If you work on a Saturday prior to the Monday that payroll closes, it is your responsibility to make sure your forms are signed and submitted to the payroll clerk by 8:30 a.m. Monday morning. Any extra duty pay submitted after this time may be reflected on the following pay period. You should check your online payroll information prior to 10:00 a.m. on the Monday payroll closes to ensure your time has been recorded correctly. Please speak with Ms. Pulido regarding any questions or discrepancies surrounding payroll and time recording. Please note that extra duty pay is not available for participation in a fund-raising activity.

**Signing In and Out**

Teacher's duty schedule is from 8:15 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is required that every employee clock in each morning and clock out each afternoon. Employees are responsible for keeping their attendance records up to date and for following OneSource guidelines for absences.

Please sign out in the main office if you leave the campus during the school day and sign in when you return. This is a security and safety issue, as well as a work-related responsibility. Remember that your conference and planning time is duty time on campus. It is not personal time to be off campus. These policies apply to short trips to area businesses, if the trip is during school hours.

An extended leave from campus during the day requires prior approval of your appraiser. If you need to make appointments during your conference or planning time, the principal’s approval is required in advance. Time away from your duty may be deducted from your personal leave bank.

**Family Medical Leave**

Should a personal emergency occur necessitating an absence from duty for a period of more than three (3) days, or on a recurring basis, by law, your job can be secured by applying and being approved for *Family Medical Leave*. Any questions regarding leave application or approval should be directed to Hamilton’s Human Resources Business Partner at the Hattie Mae White Administration Building. See Ms. Sada for the direct dial phone number or email.

**Funeral Leave**

Per district policy, teachers may receive a three-day funeral leave and be absent without loss of pay and without deduction from their accrued leave in the case of death of a spouse, child, parent, current parent-in-law, sibling, or any person residing in the employee’s home at the time of death.

**Jury Duty**

Faculty and staff members who are called to serve jury duty must follow the same procedure as that for a regular absence from work. Prior to the absence, present a copy of the jury summons indicating the dates of jury service to the payroll clerk so that the absence may be properly coded and processed and an associate teacher secured, if possible. After jury duty, a *Juror’s Release Form*, provided by the court, must be given to the school secretary. If the jury summons is not presented prior to the absence, the absence may be taken from a personal leave bank.

**Lunch**

Teachers are provided a 30-minute duty-free lunch period each school day. Any employee who leaves campus during the 30-minute duty free lunch is required to sign out in the main office and to return to campus in a timely manner to sign back in.

**Personal Business**

Faculty and staff are encouraged to schedule personal business outside of school hours. When you must take a personal business day, it is preferred that approval is received from the appropriate administrator. Upon approval, you should immediately put the absence in AESOP so that an associate teacher may be assigned to cover your class. Submitting the request does not constitute approval. Please follow up prior to the date to ensure an associate teacher has been requested.

HISD Policy states that employees may use local leave with full pay when unable to report to work due to personal illness, illness of an immediate family member, or for a death in the immediate family. Up to three days of paid local leave may be used for excused personal business. Personal business days may not be used to extend vacations or scheduled school holidays and will not be approved for that purpose. Board Policy does not allow use of the absence code *Personal Leave* immediately preceding or following a school holiday. If this should occur, the only allowable codes are Personal Illness, Family Illness, or Funeral Leave. The other alternative is Unpaid Personal Leave.

**Off-Campus Duty**

Attendance at required or elective school-related workshops, seminars, conferences and in- services during the school day is referred to as off-campus duty (OCD). Associate Teacher coverage requires utilization of AHMS budgeted funds. Requests for absences due to professional development should be made as soon as possible but must be requested at least 48 hours in advance and must receive approval by the principal. A request does not constitute approval. Once approved, the teacher should request associate teacher coverage in AESOP. If, within 24 hours of your requested absence, you have not received notification of approval, please check with Ms. Casas, the principal secretary. Additionally, please let Ms. Pulido know that you will be out for OCD.

In the event of a field trip, the lead organizer of the trip should work with the grade level principal to determine an approved list of teacher-chaperones. Once approved, this list should be given to the payroll clerk. Each chaperone should immediately put their absence in AESOP so that an associate teacher can be assigned.

**Benefits**

Each year employees may sign up for medical, dental, optical, legal, income replacement and other benefits during the open enrollment period which usually begins in November. Specifics regarding benefits options will be communicated by the district. The campus nurse, Ms. Lewis, generally acts as the campus benefits coordinator and is a best resource for questions. Any changes in marital or family status should be reported immediately to the district to ensure that employee benefits continue without interruption. Employees may learn more about these benefits through the district portal.

**Employee Assistance Program**

The district provides the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees, dependents, family members and members of their household at no cost through a confidential third- party vendor. The EAP is a confidential resource that can help you resolve personal problems before they harm your health, relationships, or your work performance. Struggles with depression and anxiety, legal matters, marital and family concerns, substance abuse, student and elder care issues, health issues, workplace concerns and life planning may be addressed through the EAP.

**Announcements**

Announcements are made during the advocacy period each day. Teachers and students should give announcements their full attention. Announcements should be approved by a grade level principal or the principal. Teachers may submit approved announcements to the main office. Please do not email announcements. Special or emergency announcements, e.g. game cancellations, will be made in a manner least disruptive to instructional time. No one should make announcements unless they have been approved by the principal or principal designee.

**Building Maintenance**

Hamilton’s plant operator, Mr. Holloman, together with the principal, are responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the school building and grounds. All maintenance requests should be made via email to Mr. Holloman and Dr. Michaels. Emails should contain the subject line *Maintenance Request* and should contain a detailed description of the request in the body of the email.

The building will be open on some Saturdays for limited hours. On occasion, teachers like to come in on Saturdays to work in their classrooms or to prepare for future lessons. Please check in advance with the school secretary for specific hours.

**Communication**

Communication takes many forms. However, all communication should maintain the highest level of professionalism. All school-based communication is subject to the Public Open Records Act.

Parents are our primary partner in providing an education for students. Parents are, therefore, our first line of support. Regular communication with parents is an expected part of teacher duties. Campus and district expectations are that emails be returned within a 24 hour time frame and that parent phone calls are returned within 48 hours.

In addition to progress reports and report cards, many parents welcome contact regarding attendance, discipline, conduct, field trips, after-school activities, volunteer opportunities, fundraisers, athletics, and other school-related events. You are also encouraged to use apps such as Remind, the school’s social media platforms, the School Messenger call-out system to help communicate with parents or students.

If you use social media for communication purposes, it is highly recommended that you create a professional account that is separate from your personal accounts. You are strongly discouraged from befriending students on personal social media. Remember that you are walking a fine line when you give students your personal cell phone or contact them outside of school hours. Please ensure all communications are clear, concise and error free.

**Calendars**

The principal and grade level principals will use the Microsoft Outlook Calendar to invite you to and remind you of meetings. If you are not familiar with how to use this, please work with your colleagues to learn about its various features.

**Documentation**

It is professional practice to document all contact with parents. Confirmed parent contact is required for all conduct and grading issues. Each teacher may generate a personalized system for recording parent and guardian communication, or PLCs may collaborate on a design. Any parent calls should be returned within 48 hours and documented. Emails should be returned within 24 hours.

**Email Communication**

Email will be used as a frequent means of communication between teachers, parents, and administrators. Email should be checked and read daily by all staff members. It is a good practice to check email in the morning before school starts, in the middle of the day when possible, and at the end of the day before leaving. Not reading an email, or a full inbox, does not constitute a valid reason for not following the directions of a communication.

It is important that you create personal folders to save emails so that your inbox does not become too full. Refer to HISD Board Policy and HISD School Guidelines for the acceptable use policy for email and technology. Teachers should refrain from sending emails during instructional time, however, unless there is an emergency. Although email communication is often your best source of parent communication documentation, the text of an email should be short and succinct, often requesting a personal conversation and always professional worded.

**Written Communication**

Teachers should regularly check their mailboxes in the Teacher Workroom. Written communication and announcements may be placed there.

**CAMPUS ADVISORY AND LEADERSHIP GROUPS**

**Department Chairs**

Core subject department chairs meet regularly with the content specialists. Department chairs serve as liaisons between leadership and teachers and have the duty to set the direction for each content team. Department chairs are expected to work with the content specialists regarding curriculum decisions.

**Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

The purpose of the PTO is to consolidate efforts of parents and teachers to contribute to the improvement of AHMS. Parents and teachers work together to address school and student needs through planned student and family activities, fundraising, and volunteer support.

As the PTO at AHMS is rebuilt, this dedicated group of parents will work to provide –

* school improvement,
* classroom resources,
* beautification efforts, and
* school and community outreach.

Teacher involvement and membership in the organization is encouraged and is required for eligibility for PTO teacher grants.

**Shared Decision-Making Committee**

The Shared Decision-Making Committee is comprised of the following members: The Principal, who serves as chairperson, parent representatives, community representatives, teachers, professional staff members and non-instructional staff. Each SDMC member serves a two-year staggered term. The SDMC addresses issues related to planning, budgeting, curriculum, staffing, staff development, school procedures, and school organization. SDMC meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the campus website. Meetings are afterschool on the last Tuesday of the month, throughout the school year.

**Teacher Cellphone Use**

Teachers’ use of personal cell phones during instructional time is strictly prohibited. This includes sending and receiving text messages. Cell phones may be used before or after school, during planning time, or lunchtime. Please make sure that anyone who might need to reach you during the workday, has the school’s main number. In the event of an emergency, someone in the main office will come to your classroom to deliver a message. Students should never be allowed to make a phone call using your personal cell phone during instructional time. Additional policies may apply during state mandated testing.

**Copies**

Given the advent of campus wide technology, the need for copious paper documents has been drastically reduced. However, on those occasions where class sets of documents are needed, Mr. Charles, the 7th grade clerk is available to assist with your copy needs. Please communicate, as far in advance as possible, your copy request with the documents you wish to have copied. Emailed electronic copies are generally preferred, although not always practical. Your request will typically be completed within 48 hours. Larger jobs should be submitted further in advance of the need-by date. Teacher access to copiers is limited but may be coordinated through Mr. Charles or Ms. Sada.

**Event Scheduling**

The school secretary and the community coordinator maintain the campus-based calendar. When events have been approved, you may e-mail either to place the event on the calendar. Building use is recorded for cafeteria commons, auditorium, gym, conference room (200), and teaching classroom (328).

District personnel occasionally use our building, so it is advisable to reserve your area as soon as your event has been approved. The librarian, Ms. Holliday, will maintain a separate schedule for library use.

**Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings will be held virtually the first Tuesday of each month, except in months with multiple community evening events. Meetings begin at 4:10 pm. Additional faculty meetings may be held on teacher service days. All faculty members are required to attend the monthly faculty meetings. If you cannot attend a meeting, you must receive approval from your appraiser or the principal. Faculty meeting agendas and minutes will be available on the campus website. Meetings include a variety of announcements, updates, and trainings.

**Inventory**

Items such as furniture, computers and other school equipment must be formally tagged and catalogued as school inventory. At the end of each school year, classroom and building inventories are updated and obsolete equipment is removed from the campus by authorized personnel. Ms. Scott, the administrative lead for this task, will provide directions on the system for assigning, checking out, and reserving library and classroom technologies.

**Laminating**

Use of the laminating machine for classroom needs is restricted to the librarian and makerspace coordinator. Teachers should complete a request, attach it to the item requiring lamination, and personally deliver the item to Ms. Holliday.

**Lost and Found**

Unidentifiable items such as jackets, purses, etc. should be sent each day to the *Lost and Found* located in each grade level office. It is the responsibility of the grade level clerk to return any identifiable items to the owner. This should be done on a regular basis so that students are not missing items needed for instruction. Planners, notebooks, Chromebooks, and instructional materials should be returned daily.

**Posters and Signs**

All posters and signs to be displayed in or around campus should have the prior approval of an administrator or the principal. Please ensure that an administrator’s initials are in the bottom right-hand corner of the displayed item. Posters may be printed by the librarian or Makerspace Coordinator. Please submit your item electronically in an e- mail, and the appropriate contact will notify you via email that it is ready. Posters that have not been approved by an administrator will be removed.

Items are not to be taped or stappled directly to building walls. Items should be secured to the strips that are placed throughout the building or attached to existing bulletin boards.

**Professional Development**

**Note –** For the foreseeable future, the district has suspended all out of district travel.

Teachers are given the opportunity to attend professional development workshops, seminars, conferences, and in-service activities. Often, registration fees are required for training sessions. The school secretary will need to be made aware of these fees so that they may be paid in a timely manner. Generally, the campus will not assume responsibility for teacher travel, food, or accommodation at conferences or workshops. There are, however, excepts. The principal will make those determinations.

If travel outside the immediate area is approved, completion of a *Pre-Travel Authorization Form* will need to be completed. The school secretary will help you navigate the procedures necessary to ensure a smooth trip and reimbursement of approved expenses. Some travel may allow for hotel expenses to be paid in advance of the trip. Please notify the school secretary of your approval and intent to attend an out-of-town training. Failure to follow these directions may result in non-reimbursement for funds paid out of pocket.

**Professional Dress**

Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate for the job assignment and which reflects positively on AHMS. Neatness, cleanliness, and good grooming are important factors in creating and maintaining a professional, productive learning environment. There is no *Friday Jeans Day*. Blue jeans are allowed as announced by the principal. Jeans or slacks should not be ripped or have holes. We should model the appropriate attire for students. Body art is to be covered, when possible. Head coverings, other than those related to religious practices, a not to be worn inside the school building.

**Supplies and Materials**

Many standard office supplies are available from your grade level clerk. If you need materials or supplies not available at the grade level office, you may request those materials from your grade level clerk via email. Anything that needs to be special ordered may take a matter of weeks to receive. Please plan in advance.

For supplies not available in the grade level office but available locally, please coordinate with the school secretary. Never purchase items with your own money assuming you will be reimbursed. Such requests are handled on an individua basis, as approved by the principal. The district maintains strict guidelines regarding approved vendors for supplies.

**Purchases**

All purchases from the school budget are processed through the school secretary, Ms. Sada. Activity fund purchases are processed through the finance clerk, Ms. Pulido. If a purchase is made without written approval of the principal, payment will become the responsibility of the person who initiated the order. Such orders include, but are not limited to, periodicals, books, promotional items, and classroom supplies. To ensure orders are handled properly, always work with the school secretary.

**Accounts Payable**

Only certain approved vendors may be utilized for purchases. If a vendor is not on the *Approved Vendor List* the responsibility for payment of the invoice falls to the individual who placed the order. If the purchase is for the purpose of raising funds, preapproval remains imperative to ensure there are sufficient funds to cover the total amount of the invoice, the appropriate sales tax, and that the intended profit is realized.

Though district purchases are tax exempt, sales tax is collected on all items, other than food, with only a few specific exceptions. When collecting money from students or the community, sales tax must be included in the amount collected. The finance clerk will be able to assist you in determining how much money should be collected to cover your invoice and sales tax. If sales tax is not included in the amount collected, sales tax will be deducted and remitted to the state based on the amount raised.

**Activity Fund Purchases**

All purchases from *Activity Funds* must be approved in writing by the principal before the purchase may be made. Please plan your purchases in advance. Revised district guidelines restrict reimbursements from activity funds made after the fact.

**Budgets**

At the start of each year, teacher specialists or department chairs are to meet with their members to develop a budget request. In this process, requests by individual teachers should be submitted to the department chair. Departments requests should include:

* what is needed to maintain the department’s programs at the current levels of operation;
* what is needed to enhance or expand the department’s programs for the coming year; and
* what is needed to take the department to the next level, i.e., a departmental wish list.

Administration will consider each level of request, along with the total requests from all departments and balance these with other budget needs. The principal is ultimately responsible for the final decision on the budget. As related funds are limited, please note that not all requests may be granted.

**Classroom Expenses**

The Houston Independent School District allows reimbursement of up to $50.00 per school year for instructional supplies for classroom teachers. Original receipts are required by the district for reimbursement. It is always advisable to make a copy of all receipts before remitting your originals. All receipts for the $50.00 *Teacher Supply Reimbursement* must be submitted to the school secretary for reimbursement no later than October 31st.

**Collecting Money**

A faculty or staff member may collect money for a variety of reasons. However, all money collected must be receipted in person and with the oversight of the finance clerk, Ms. Pulido. The remitter will immediately receive a yellow copy of the cash receipt. Money cannot be left with the finance clerk for later collection of a receipt.

Money collected must be turned in daily to the finance clerk. No money should be kept overnight in individual classrooms or offices, nor should school monies leave the campus. Collected, non-receipted money is to be placed in a campus safe for overnight safekeeping. The money must be reclaimed the next morning and receipted according to policy. Until receipted, collected money is the responsibility of the individual collecting the money.

All checks are to be made payable to AHMS. All money must be remitted in the form it was collected. A personal check may not be written by the collector and remitted in place of the initially collected funds. Nor may the collector cash a check from the collected funds. School funds may never be comingled with personal funds.

**Field Trips**

Money collected for field trip expenses must be deposited and credited to the activity fund account prior to a request for a check to be drawn against the funds. The accounting process employed by the district can take up to 10 working days for funds to be credited. Advanced planning is necessary, and money should be collected early enough to ensure it is available when needed.

**Fundraising**

All fundraisers must be approved in writing *prior* to the activity. The form requires the fundraising idea, purpose, account name, account number which will ultimately receive the proceeds, a start date, and an end date. Involvement of the finance clerk is necessary to assure all policies are followed. The sponsor’s signature is required to transfer funds from the money-raiser account to the main account. At that time the money is available to use for the purpose specified on the request. If the fundraiser was not profitable, the principal will consult with the sponsor.

**Commercial Videos in the Classroom**

Please refer to district training and policy on copyrights and intellectual property. When in doubt, please confirm activities with the principal.

Teachers must obtain prior approval from the district and/or content creator before entertainment media is used for instruction. Teachers must be aware of the movie rating system because entertainment videos often contain language, violence, and sexual activity not suited for young people or for the classroom.

**2021-2022 FACULTY HANDBOOK**

**Alexander Hamilton Middle School**

***I have read, the 2021-2022 Faculty Handbook for Alexander Hamilton Middle School.***

**Employee’s Printed Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**The 2021-2022 Faculty Handbook is always made available for reference**

**on the Hamilton website.**

***FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DELINEATED IN THIS HANDBOOK MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT WITH THE HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT***.