



ACADEMY HIGH
CHAMPAIGN URBANA

Student and Family Handbook

2026-2027

Updated July 2026

Welcome Academy High community,

We are excited to begin a new school year at Academy High for 2026-2027. This edition of the handbook reflects two significant milestones from spring 2026: a five-year recognition and review visit coordinated with the Illinois State Board of Education, and a five-year accreditation visit conducted by the Southern Association of Independent Schools. We are proud of the work our community did to prepare for both.

All students and families, both new and returning, are encouraged to read this document carefully. The policies here will shape everyone's experience in the coming academic year, and some have been updated from prior versions. Policies are always subject to revision, and any changes will be communicated to the community as they occur.

Sincerely,



Erin E. Smith
Head of School

Table of Contents

Section I	Academy High Mission and Vision	2
Section II	General School Policies	4
Section III	Academic Program	12
Section IV	Athletics	20
Section V	Student Conduct	21
Section VI	Student Health and Wellness	26
Section VII	Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)	32
Section VIII	Policy Against Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation	37

Section I: Academy High Mission and Vision

MISSION

The mission of Academy High, an independent college-preparatory secondary school, is to inspire students to discover and pursue their passions; to become exceptionally well-educated, academically and personally; and to lead lives of excellence, purpose, and joy.

VISION

We believe that by nurturing students to develop adventurous minds, bold spirits, and compassionate hearts, our students can change the world.

ADVENTUROUS MIND

- Encourage creative and critical thinking.
- Challenge students to engage deeply and meaningfully in learning.
- Cultivate the joy of learning, discovering, and problem-solving.
- Strengthen individual talents, be they academic, athletic, or artistic.
- Teach students to connect, develop, and express complex ideas.

BOLD SPIRIT

- Encourage students to embrace new challenges with curiosity and excitement.
- Help students develop the confidence to venture beyond comfort zones.
- Promote resilience and determination in the face of challenge.
- Provide opportunities to take risks, self-advocate, and collaborate.
- Create experiences that help students discover and follow their passions.
- Entrust students with freedom and responsibility.

COMPASSIONATE HEART

- Foster honesty, integrity, and compassion, the bedrock elements of character.
- Promote a commitment to diversity and an appreciation for different perspectives, cultures, and circumstances.
- Encourage students to be responsible and meaningful citizens in their local, national, and global communities.
- Nurture self-knowledge and empathy for others, near and far.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Academy High does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law.

Academy High is an equal opportunity employer. Academy High complies with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination, including but not limited to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Harassment, intimidation, or retaliation against any member of the school community is strictly prohibited. The school has established procedures for reporting and responding to concerns related to discrimination or harassment. Students and families are encouraged to report concerns to the Head of School. This policy applies to all members of the school community and to all school-related activities.

SCHOOL HISTORY AND ACCREDITATION

Academy High was founded in 2017 by a group of local families who wanted to build an independent high school with excellent academics, a dedicated faculty, coupled with real-world experiences which inspired students to reach their greatest potential. To achieve this vision, the group employed the help of nationally renowned educational consultants with decades of experience in innovative schools. Academy High opened with nine pioneer students, and in a few short years, has grown exponentially.

As a member of NAIS (National Association of Independent schools), Academy High is part of a nationwide consortium of over 1,000 peer schools who regularly share research, models, and best practices as part of our common commitment to students and families. Academy High is accredited by SAIS (Southern Association of Independent schools), Cognia (formerly AdvancedEd), and is recognized by ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education), IHSA (Illinois High School Athletics), the NCAA, and College Board.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND POLICY AUTHORITY

Academy High is an independent school governed by a Board of Directors composed of parents and members of the community. The Board of Directors holds fiduciary and policy-making responsibility for the school, including establishing the school's mission, approving policies, supporting fundraising efforts, and employing and evaluating the Head of School.

The Board delegates day-to-day leadership and operational authority to the Head of School, who serves as the school's chief executive officer. Under the Board's direction, the Head of School is responsible for implementing Board-approved policies; overseeing the academic program, student life, and school operations; and making final decisions related to academic and administrative matters. The Head of School is also responsible for hiring and evaluating all faculty and staff.

Families with questions or concerns about school policies are encouraged to begin by contacting the Head of School. Questions that require further review may be brought to the Board of Directors through established channels. Additional information about Academy High's governance structure and policy-making procedures is available upon request.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

Academy High is proud to maintain strong, collaborative relationships with a wide range of community partners across Champaign-Urbana and beyond. These partnerships enhance our academic program, provide students with access to real-world learning opportunities, and support the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of our students and families. We regularly engage with local universities, research institutions, businesses, arts organizations, and service providers to enrich classroom learning, support internships and independent studies, and extend student impact beyond the school walls. In addition, Academy High maintains connections with trusted mental health professionals, wellness providers, and social service organizations that can be accessed as

needed by students and families. If your family is seeking a particular type of support or resource, we welcome you to reach out to a member of the administrative team.

WHO TO CONTACT

In order to help faculty, staff, and administration keep track of the many communications that crosses their desks, please be sure you are using the correct email address when reaching out to the school:

attendance@academyhigh.org

Excused absences (day of and in advance), doctors appointments, alternative drop off/pick up arrangements, etc.

registrar@academyhigh.org

Transcripts, report cards, questions related to transferring credits, etc.

businessoffice@academyhigh.org

Enrollment contracts, tuition payments, enrollment verification, etc.

admin@academyhigh.org

Questions related to policies.

Section II: General School Policies

All school policies are maintained in written form in the Academy High Student & Family Handbook. This handbook is made available to families annually and is also accessible on the school's website in the Resources section.

In addition to the policies outlined in this handbook, Academy High agrees to comply with all other applicable state and federal laws and regulatory requirements governing nonpublic schools.

ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

At Academy High, regular attendance is crucial for a student's intellectual growth and development. Our academic program is built around daily interactions between faculty and students and the discussions, collaboration, and discoveries that occur among peers in the classroom. These experiences are central to learning and cannot be fully replicated through make-up assignments or independent work.

Students are expected to attend all classes, scheduled events, and school activities on time. While occasional absences due to illness or unavoidable circumstances are expected, absences can disrupt both individual learning and the collective work of the classroom community. Many courses involve group discussions, projects, and team-based learning that depend on consistent participation.

Repeated absences may hinder a student's academic progress and, in some cases, may jeopardize continued enrollment. It is the shared responsibility of students and their parent(s) or guardian(s) to monitor attendance. Chronic absences will prompt a family meeting to develop a plan for the remainder of the quarter and to outline consequences for further absences. In extreme cases, families may be required to meet with Academy High to determine whether a student's attendance record necessitates repeating a grade level.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS & REPORTING PROCEDURES

Daily attendance is required at Academy High during the regular school term. Academy High meets

or exceeds all Illinois requirements for instructional time, including the provision of at least 176 instructional days or 880 instructional hours per academic year. The school calendar is designed to ensure compliance with these requirements while supporting meaningful learning experiences for students.

When a student will be absent, a parent or guardian must notify the school office as soon as possible on the day of the absence, preferably before the start of the school day. Absences may be reported by email (attendance@academyhigh.org) or phone (217-239-6000). Depending on the time of contact, families may be asked to leave a voicemail message.

Prompt communication allows the school to account for student attendance accurately and to support students in making appropriate academic plans following an absence.

2001 FOX DRIVE BUILDING ACCESS

Please note Academy High's school building will be open to students at 8:15am and will be closed at 4:10pm. Students should not be dropped off before 8:15am or picked up after 4:10pm. Exceptions to these times will occur in the event of before and after school activities (only students involved in those activities are allowed to be in the building earlier or later than the building's prescribed open hours). Students arriving before 8:15am will be required to wait outside, and students remaining in the building after 4:10pm will be asked to leave. Many Academy High families will use Harvest Market as an alternative drop off or pick up location, given its proximity to the school.

DAILY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

At Academy High, punctuality sets the tone for a successful day of learning. Our school day officially begins at 8:45 am and concludes at 3:55 pm. Students are expected to be seated in their first-period and ready to begin class promptly at 8:45 am, when attendance is taken. To ensure a smooth start to each day, we encourage students to arrive by 8:30 am. In the event of arriving after 8:45 am, students must sign in at the front office.

Parents play a crucial role in supporting attendance. For any expected tardiness or late arrivals, parents are requested to send an email to attendance@academyhigh.org. In cases of illness or unavoidable lateness, parents should notify the school before the start of the day, either via email or phone call.

LATE ARRIVALS & TARDIES

Late arrivals disrupt not only the individual student's learning but also the learning environment as a whole. Any student arriving after 8:45 am will automatically be marked tardy, except in cases where a student has a medical appointment or external factors such as weather or traffic impede timely arrival. Each student is allowed three tardies per quarter. Upon the fourth tardy, families will be contacted, and the student may face disciplinary action.

EXCUSED vs. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Attendance is fundamental to academic success and the cohesion of our learning community at Academy High. While we acknowledge parents' authority to excuse their child's absence, it is essential to recognize that absences undermine the student's educational progress and the integrity of our academic program.

To maintain the educational continuity and foster responsible attendance habits, Academy High only excuses absences for reasons such as illness, family emergencies, medical appointments, college visits, religious observance, or school-sponsored activities. Parents assuming responsibility for non-essential absences must understand that students are accountable for any missed academic work, and faculty are not obligated to provide assignments or makeup opportunities. Moreover, habitual non-essential absences may negatively impact a student's academic record and attitude towards their educational commitments.

REQUESTING EXCUSED ABSENCES

For planned absences, parents are required to notify the school via attendance@academyhigh.org at least one week in advance. This communication should detail the nature of the absence, including expected dates and times. Following approval, it is the responsibility of the student to proactively engage with faculty to organize assignments or makeup privileges before their departure.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

Unannounced or unexplained absences pose a challenge to maintaining academic continuity and monitoring student well-being. In the absence of a written explanation or phone call, school personnel will reach out to ascertain the nature of the absence. Absences lacking a specific explanation will be recorded as unexcused.

ABSENCES DUE TO FAMILY VACATIONS

To maximize learning opportunities and minimize disruptions, families are encouraged to plan vacations in alignment with the school calendar. While we understand occasional conflicts, we strongly discourage planned absences during the academic year. In instances where vacation during school term is unavoidable, students should initiate dialogue with their instructors well in advance. Students are responsible for completing all missed work, and it is advisable to discuss makeup arrangements with faculty before the absence. Absences due to vacations are considered unexcused.

ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Academy High celebrates diversity and respects the religious practices of its students and families. If a religious holiday or observance coincides with scheduled classes, students and parents are encouraged to communicate with the school in advance. Faculty will work collaboratively to accommodate religious obligations and ensure minimal disruption to the student's academic progress. The school endeavors to avoid scheduling events during religious holidays whenever possible, demonstrating our commitment to inclusivity and cultural awareness within our community.

CONSEQUENCES FOR REPEAT LATE ARRIVALS OR FREQUENT ABSENCES

At Academy High, we prioritize punctuality and consistent attendance as essential components of academic success and community engagement. Recognizing the impact of repeated tardiness or frequent absences on individual learning and the broader educational environment, we implement the following consequences to uphold these expectations:

1. Progressive Intervention:

Upon the fourth tardy within a quarter, or upon repeated unexcused absences, families will be promptly contacted by school administration to discuss the situation. This conversation

aims to understand any underlying issues contributing to the pattern of late arrivals or absences and to collaboratively explore solutions and support mechanisms.

2. Development of a Personalized Plan:

For students demonstrating persistent tardiness or absenteeism, Academy High will work with families to develop a personalized attendance improvement plan. This plan may include specific strategies to address barriers to punctuality of attendance, such as transportation challenges, health concerns, or other factors affecting the student's ability to be present.

3. Consequences:

Repeated tardiness or frequent unexcused absences may result in consequences, including but not limited to:

- Ineligibility for certain privileges, extracurricular activities, or leadership roles
- Impact on academic grades or eligibility for academic honors and awards
- Inability to receive credit for classes, which could affect matriculation to the next grade level

4. Parental Partnership:

Academy High values the partnership between school and home in fostering student success. Parents are encouraged to actively support their child's attendance by reinforcing the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and by collaborating with school staff to address any challenges or concerns impacting attendance.

5. Review of Attendance Policy:

In cases where repeated tardiness or frequent absences persist despite interventions and support, Academy High reserves the right to conduct a formal review of the student's attendance status. This review may involve a comprehensive assessment of the student's individual circumstances and may result in further action as deemed necessary by the school administration.

6. Restoration of Privileges:

Students demonstrating sustained improvement in attendance habits may be eligible for the restoration of privileges or the lifting of academic consequences. This recognition reinforces the importance of accountability and positive behavior while providing encouragement for continued growth and progress.

By implementing these consequences with a focus on support, accountability, and collaboration, Academy High aims to foster a culture of responsibility and commitment to attendance, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to thrive academically and contribute meaningfully to our learning community.

MEDICAL LEAVE

Most student illnesses can be managed throughout the school year. However, if an existing or new medical issue results in chronic or prolonged absences or significantly disrupts a student's academic experience, the student may be required to take a medical leave until they can resume regular attendance.

Students on medical leave will follow a modified academic plan with adjusted assignments and will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis for the semester, which will be recorded on their transcript. While Academy High will make every effort to work creatively with families to accommodate their individual situations within our academic program requirements, unusually lengthy absences may require a student to repeat their grade level to meet the necessary promotion requirements.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS WHEN ABSENT

Students are responsible for completing their homework assignments when they are away from school. Homework can be found on Google Classroom (our online academic management system). While our faculty strive to keep this information current, changes may occur. Therefore, students should also contact a classmate or homework buddy after school to confirm the next day's assignments.

If a student is absent for only one day, they are expected to return to school fully prepared for the next day's work, including any tests, unless a note specifies otherwise. For absences longer than one day, students should consult online resources and email their instructors for clarification. Generally, students have the same number of calendar days (including weekends) they were absent to make up any missed work, including daily assignments and assessments.

Upon returning from an absence, it is the student's responsibility to speak with their teachers to ensure all missed assignments are submitted and to schedule make-up quizzes and tests. Due to the complexity of our regular school schedule, make-up arrangements may require staying after school. Students should plan additional afternoon and evening time to complete make-up work. If you have any questions about make-up work following an extended absence, please contact your student's instructor for guidance.

LEAVING SCHOOL FOR APPOINTMENTS

The school requires authorization from a parent or guardian before a student can be released for any reason. An email, written note, or phone call from a parent is required before the start of the school day. Students must wait in the front lobby until the parent or designated person arrives to pick them up.

Students leaving campus for an appointment must sign out at the front desk before departing and sign back in if they return during the school day. Any student who leaves campus during the day without authorization from a parent or staff member will face immediate disciplinary action.

LEAVING CAMPUS—LUNCH

Only junior and senior students in good academic standing are eligible to leave campus during lunch. Parents must sign and submit a written permission form each year before a student can leave campus on their own. Students leaving for lunch must sign out at the front desk and sign back in upon their return. Students with permission to leave campus are not allowed to bring food back for others and must return on time for the next period. While off campus during school hours, students are expected to follow all school rules, expectations, and policies. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the revocation of off-campus privileges and possible disciplinary action.

LEAVING CAMPUS—FREE PERIOD(S)

A free period is a block of time in which a student does not have a prescribed class or responsibility. No student is allowed to leave campus during a free period unless:

- 1) the free period is at the end of their daily schedule and early dismissal has been approved by the Head of School, or
- 2) they are leaving campus for a school-sanctioned reason (off campus class, athletics, internship, etc.).

In the event that students have free periods that are bookended by classes (or lunch), or in the event an instructor allows students to work independently during a prescribed class time, students are expected to remain on campus throughout the day.

In the event that a free period is at the end of a student's daily schedule, all students have the option to depart early, regardless of grade level. However, it is the expectation that students leaving campus during a free period at the end of the day need to communicate clearly with their parents/guardians and they need to sign out at the front desk before they depart. Students are not allowed to transport other students (family excepted) without previous permission from both sets of parents/guardians.

Leaving campus during a free period is a privilege that can be revoked at any time due to a student being on academic warning or probation, or in another disciplinary situation.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event that school facilities need to be closed, Academy High will announce closure via emails to students and families. Every effort will be made to ensure that students and families are given as much advance notice as possible. Regardless of the school's decision to close on a particular day, no student is expected to come to school if, in the judgment of a parent or guardian, conditions are unsafe for travel. Absences under such circumstances will be considered 'excused' by Academy High if supported by appropriate notification and documentation from a parent or guardian.

In the event of a multi-day closure, Academy High will abide by the following schedule:

- Day 1 - No Class and No Asynchronous Work
- Day 2 - Abbreviated, Asynchronous Online Work
- Day 3 and Beyond - Information will be shared as required by the closure event.

EMERGENCY, CRISIS, AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Academy High is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The school maintains a comprehensive Building Emergency Action Plan (BEAP) that outlines procedures for responding to a range of emergency situations, including but not limited to fire, severe weather, lockdowns, medical emergencies, evacuation, and relocation.

Faculty and staff are trained in emergency procedures and regularly review safety protocols.

Academy High conducts required safety drills, including fire and emergency response drills, in accordance with Illinois law. These drills are designed to help students and staff practice appropriate responses and to support a safe learning environment. Safety drills are documented as required, and the school's emergency and crisis response procedures are reviewed regularly by school leadership.

In the event of a school-wide emergency or crisis, families will be notified as promptly as possible using established communication channels, including email and phone messaging when appropriate. Parents and guardians should not come to campus unless directed to do so, as doing so may interfere with emergency response efforts.

Questions regarding emergency preparedness or safety procedures may be directed to the Head of School.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Academy High complies with all applicable Illinois laws regarding employee background checks. All faculty and staff undergo required criminal background checks and fingerprinting prior to employment. The school employs qualified educators and professionals whose experience and training align with their roles and responsibilities. Ongoing professional development supports faculty growth and instructional quality.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Academy High strongly believes that part of being an active member of our school community is being fully present and engaged with the people around you. As such, the use of cell phones and/or other personal electronic devices is best limited to the following times:

- Prior to the start of classes at 8:45 am or after the end of the school day at 3:55 pm
- During lunch
- Cell phones and other personal devices (laptops, tablets, etc.) are permitted during class or any other school obligation at the discretion of an instructor for legitimate educational purposes.

During all other times, cell phones are to be turned off and out of sight, including passing times between classes, so as not to distract or interrupt class or other communal activities. Faculty may collect cell phones from students who violate this expectation and leave them in the Head of School's office to collect at the end of the school day. Subsequent violations will result in further disciplinary action. When possible, we encourage families to set up location or wifi-network-based app management through Screen Time, Focus, Modes and Routines (depending on operating system) to ensure that distraction apps, including social media, are inaccessible when at school.

STUDENT PROPERTY ON CAMPUS

Students are responsible for their personal property. Valuable personal property should be left at home; Academy High is not responsible for the loss or theft of personal property. Personal items, print media, or electronic media brought to school must never contain nudity, profanity, or sexual or excessively violent content. Breach of this rule may result in confiscation of the item and disciplinary action. Academy High reserves the right to search student's personal belongings if there is suspicion of a student possessing items that are illegal, inappropriate, or do not belong to them.

STUDENT DRIVING AND PARKING

Students who drive to school must have a valid driver's license and properly park their cars in the allotted spaces at Academy High. Academy High students are expected to be aware of all state laws which might apply to them (as a driver or as a passenger) and to obey those laws. Reckless driving and speeding are explicitly forbidden and may result in a suspension of driving privileges. The school

assumes no responsibility for any student who is found to be in violation of the law as a driver or as a passenger. Parents have the final authority on all matters related to student driving and should communicate expectations to their student as appropriate. At no time will Academy High students be asked, nor expected, to transport other students or passengers to school-related events, unless prior permission has been given by the student's parents/guardians.

POLICY REGARDING PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF INTIMATE BEHAVIOR

Public displays of intimate behavior are not allowed at Academy High, including during all school-sponsored events on and off campus. Examples of such behavior include kissing, hugging, cuddling, fondling, petting, sitting on laps, carrying someone around, lying together on the floor or a couch, etc. Such private acts in public spaces violate the school's commitment to maintaining an appropriate social and learning environment for students. Consequences after first notice of violation will include conversations with parents/families, potential revocation of privileges, and removal from environments in which the violations are occurring.

ANIMALS ON CAMPUS

Animals are not permitted on school grounds without prior permission from the Head of School.

HEADPHONE USE

During individual work periods, Academy High recognizes the value of utilizing headphones as tools to enhance concentration and focus. Students are encouraged to responsibly use headphones to aid their productivity during designated independent study sessions or self-directed activities. However, we emphasize the importance of not wearing headphones during class time, lectures, or passing periods, as active participation and engagement with faculty and peers are essential components of the learning process and community building.

FOOD DELIVERY / ORDERING FOOD TO CAMPUS

Academy High students are allowed to have food delivered to the school, but need to abide by the following parameters:

- Deliveries to the school need to be scheduled to arrive between 11:45am and 12:30pm. Deliveries during study halls or other periods are not allowed.
- Deliveries that are received after the end of lunch will be kept in the front office and will be made accessible to students at their next passing period.
- Food that is delivered after lunch is not an acceptable excuse for missing class or arriving late.
- Food items received will need to be consumed in the designated lunch areas in the building and are not allowed to be consumed in class.
- It is essential that any items ordered to the building be paid for ahead of its arrival. In the event that an order arrives that requires payment on site, the student's food delivery privileges will be revoked.
- Students are only allowed to place food orders for themselves. Ordering food for others, while a generous gesture, can get out of hand!

Food delivery access can be revoked if a student is in poor academic or behavioral standing.

Section III: Academic Program

TYPES OF COURSEWORK

Academy High offers three types of courses, each with their different parameters:

- **CORE COURSES** The goal of Academy High's core curriculum of academic courses is to provide every student with a solid foundation in mathematics, science, history, literature, writing, and world languages. These required classes provide students with a well-rounded education and the development of skills that will prepare them for post-secondary education and life outside of school. These classes count toward a student's grade point average (GPA).
- **ACADEMIC ELECTIVES** We encourage all students to take extra classes outside of the core curriculum as their schedule allows. Academic electives are courses in which students can expand their knowledge in specific areas of interest. These classes count toward a student's grade point average (GPA).
- **MODULES** Academy High's modules are an expansive and dynamic set of courses covering topics outside of the core curriculum and ranging in duration from an academic quarter to a full academic year. These shorter classes typically meet once or twice a week and allow students to engage in new topics without making a large time commitment. Modules are typically taught by visiting instructors from our local community. These classes do not count toward a student's grade point average, and can be graded on a letter scale or pass/fail at the discretion of the instructor (in an instructor-led class) or the student (in consultation with faculty in an independent study). Students must be present and actively participate in 85% or more of module class sessions to earn a passing grade.

GRADING SYSTEM

A Advanced	Students demonstrate mastery of content/practices. Students can independently apply the content/skills to new pieces of work.
B Proficient	Students consistently demonstrate complete understanding/application of content and skills.
C Developing	Students have completed the required work for the class. Students demonstrate an "emerging" understanding of knowledge and skills.
D Beginning	Students are missing substantial work for the class and/or have not yet demonstrated understanding of content and skills.
F No Evidence	Students have not completed enough work to be assessed for learning of content and practices or the work completed did not satisfy the minimum requirements of the class.

An "I" indicates that the student has not completed enough work to be appropriately evaluated. All appeals for reconsideration of any grade received should be directed to the faculty member.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation requirements were established to exceed those of the University of Illinois System for freshman undergraduate admissions:

ENGLISH: 4 units required

MATH: 3.5 units required

SOCIAL SCIENCE: 3 units required

SCIENCE: 3 units required

WORLD LANGUAGE: 2 units required (through Level 2 of the same language required)

WRITING: 1 unit required (.25 units/year)

ALL OTHER: 6 units required

GRADING PERIODS, REPORTS TO PARENTS, AND CONFERENCES

The school year is roughly divided into four nine (9) week quarters. At the end of each quarter, faculty in all grade levels will prepare grade reports on each student, consisting of a letter grade and/or a narrative comment. Faculty may also send out periodic grade reports if there is a significant decline in performance. Student-led Parent instructor Conferences are scheduled twice annually to discuss each student's academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and organizational progress in depth. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of the parent, student, or instructor.

Please note that only semester grades for Academic Core and Academic Elective courses taken at Academy High are used to compute the grade point average (quarter grades are not factored in grade point averages.) Academy High uses a 4-point scale (A=4.0, B=3.0, C= 2.0, D=1.0, F=0) with no weighting of any kind.

LATE AND INCOMPLETE WORK

In the event that a student needs additional time to complete course related assignments beyond a prescribed due date, they have the ability to turn in assignments up to seven calendar days late for partial credit (partial credit is determined by the corresponding faculty member as stated in the class syllabus). Assignments submitted beyond seven days after the original deadline will not be accepted for partial credit. If a student has an extended absence or extenuating circumstances, they need to communicate with the corresponding faculty member so a revised deadline can be established that honors the school's **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS WHEN ABSENT** policy (see above).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academy High greatly values academic integrity as an essential part of our learning community. If a student is found guilty of cheating, copying, or plagiarizing either from a written or online source and/or another student, they may receive an automatic zero for their work in addition to other appropriate penalties outlined in Academy High's Code of Conduct. This includes tests, quizzes, papers, projects, or any other type of assessment or assignment for which students receive a grade. Plagiarism is the act of intentionally or unintentionally using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as one's own. In essence, plagiarism is a form of stealing. Students are to do their own work. They should neither give nor receive assistance during quizzes, tests or exams unless authorized by their instructors. This policy does not preclude students from working together to understand the procedures of their work or parents from helping students understand the intent of directions or the meaning of a concept. We encourage such cooperation when it is helpful to the

learning process. Students are encouraged to consult with their faculty if they are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism. Students will receive guidance from faculty during the course of the school year on how to meet general expectations for honest scholarship and research.

CHALLENGED MATERIALS REVIEW AND RECONSIDERATION POLICY

Academy High values academic freedom, critical inquiry, and diverse perspectives. We also recognize that students, parents, and other stakeholders may occasionally have concerns about specific instructional materials used in the classroom—whether in print or nonprint formats. Stakeholders wishing to request reconsideration of an instructional material should contact the Head of School. The Head of School will then meet with the individual to discuss the concern. If further consideration is warranted, the Head of School may consult with faculty and/or members of the Board of Directors to evaluate the issue in light of Academy High's mission and educational goals. The Head of School will determine the appropriate response and communicate the outcome to the individual who submitted the request, as well as to the Board Chair and any relevant faculty. Any necessary follow-up will be managed by the Head of School.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Academy High celebrates and encourages the thoughtful integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into our educational environment. We believe that AI can enhance learning experiences, foster creativity, and prepare students for a technologically advanced future. While we encourage the exploration of AI tools and applications, we also emphasize the importance of responsible and ethical usage. Students are encouraged to use AI as a supplement to their learning process, maintaining a balance between AI-assisted tasks and traditional problem-solving methods. Through mindful guidance and thoughtful engagement, we aim to empower our students to harness the potential of AI while fostering critical thinking and responsible digital citizenship. Students who submit material developed by artificial intelligence as their own will be subject to our academic dishonesty and plagiarism policies above.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Academy High faculty do not teach to any specific tests, including Advanced Placement tests. However, a student on their own initiative may elect to take an Advanced Placement test, with or without having taken an AP-specific class (they are, of course, encouraged to prepare for the exam!). A student interested in taking an AP exam should share their intention at the beginning of the fall semester and should communicate directly with Academy High administration regarding registration procedures, testing locations and so forth. Schedules permitting, Academy High faculty are available to discuss preparations for AP examinations with students and offer resources as they have them available.

VOLUNTEERING AND INTERNSHIPS

Academy High students have opportunities to gain real world experience in our community through volunteering and internships. If a student is interested in pursuing an external volunteering or internship experience, they should reach out to faculty and administrators for assistance.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

We strive to address the concerns of all students and parents to the best of our ability and to your satisfaction. To maintain your trust, we establish clear communication expectations to meet everyone's needs. Parents and students are encouraged to contact faculty directly for any issues

that can be resolved at that level. Non-urgent communications will receive a response within 36 hours. If an issue is not resolved with faculty or pertains to matters outside the classroom, parents and students should contact administrative staff or the Head of School. Non-urgent communications to administrative staff will receive an initial response within 36 hours. For urgent matters, please label or note the communication as urgent and clearly convey your desired expectations for a response. This helps ensure that we can meet your needs promptly.

PARENT AND STUDENT COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Academy High encourages open and respectful communication to resolve concerns in a timely and constructive manner. Concerns related to classroom instruction or academic matters should first be addressed directly with the faculty member involved. If the concern is not resolved, parents or students may contact the Head of School for further review. Concerns related to school-wide policies, procedures, or administration should be directed to the Head of School. The school will review the concern, gather relevant information, and respond within a reasonable timeframe.

ACADEMIC WARNING AND ACADEMIC PROBATION

Academic Warning is a signal that the student is not meeting the academic expectations of Academy High. A student who earns a D or an F in any course is placed on Academic Warning and receives a letter from the Head of School, inviting the student and their parents to meet to discuss ways to improve their performance in that class. A student whose performance meets the criteria for Academic Warning for a second consecutive semester will be placed on Academic Probation.

Academic Probation is an indication that the student is having serious academic difficulty, and that unless significant and measurable improvement is demonstrated, they may be asked to leave Academy High. If a student is placed on Academic Probation, the Head of School and the student's faculty will meet with the student and their family to explain the terms of the probation and the basis on which Academy High will proceed to determine whether the student's enrollment should be continued. The Re-enrollment Contracts of students who are on Academic Probation will be reviewed at the end of the year on the basis of that student's performance to determine whether continued enrollment is warranted and/or if the student should continue to the next grade.

DENIAL OF RE-ENROLLMENT/DISMISSAL

Faculty and the Head of School will work with the parents to specify the academic progress that is required for the student to be able to remain at Academy High. A record of the student's progress will be maintained and shared with the parents at parent-instructor conferences. If it is determined by the faculty and the Head of School that continuation at Academy High is not in the best interest of the student or Academy High, or if the student's progress is not satisfactory, parents/guardians will be informed in writing by the Head of School about the possibility of academic separation and the steps that will be taken.

STUDENT LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

At Academy High, we actively seek to accommodate a wide variety of learning profiles. We recognize that students capable of being successful in a rigorous college preparation program may also experience specific learning challenges that require additional support in areas of organization and/or the development of a specific academic skill. Parents/guardians are required to share any concerns or knowledge they have about their students' learning profile before the start of each academic year. Within the first two weeks of the school year, faculty will share any concerns they

have about struggles an individual student may be experiencing so that home and school can partner together to better support that student's progress.

For students who experience more persistent struggles, Academy High may recommend or require an outside evaluation in order to better determine appropriate interventions. Students who have been diagnosed with educational disabilities (including but not limited to learning disabilities, language impairments, ADHD, physical impairments, and/or emotional impairments--hereafter referred to as educational disabilities) may receive reasonable accommodations if the diagnosis has a significant impact on a student's ability to learn as determined by an assessment of grades, comments, and other indicators of student performance. A diagnosis, in and of itself, does not necessitate accommodations without evidence that the disabling condition leads to functional impairment(s) that would limit the student's progress without accommodations.

While Academy High is committed to differentiating to meet the needs of various learners and appreciates parents sharing outside evaluation information, we acknowledge that our learning environment may not be optimal for every student. As an independent school which lacks the full resources of a public school system, we may not be in the position to provide all accommodations recommended by outside evaluators to adequately address the needs of individual students whose complex learning profiles require intensive remediation or support. In the case of more complex learning needs, conversations regarding school fit and the ability of Academy High to meet the educational needs of the student may be warranted.

For students to receive accommodations, the school requires the following:

- A formal diagnosis of the specific learning issue by a qualified professional with appropriate credentials to diagnose the condition (i.e. psychologist, licensed counselor, neuropsychologist, etc.) via a full cognitive-educational evaluation; a letter from a family physician does not qualify.
- The evaluation report must be current (defined as one that has taken place within the past 3 years), and submitted to the Head of School, who should be contacted to issue the family the appropriate 'Permission to Release Confidential Information.'
- The school will then review the evaluation report to determine if an appropriate action plan and reasonable accommodations can be provided. Parents/guardians of students currently receiving accommodations will be required to submit an updated evaluation upon request; if a student's evaluation is outdated, the school will request the student be reevaluated.

For students with mild physical or social-emotional impairments:

- The diagnosis must be made by a qualified professional (medical physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed counselor, or social worker, etc.) who documents the current condition and the impact on learning and life function.
- Documentation must be provided to the Head School personnel, who will then make an appropriate determination of Academy High's ability to accommodate the student's needs.

ACCOMMODATION PLANS

Following receipt of a report, Academy High will review the information and, at its sole discretion, determine whether the evaluation is adequate. When an outside diagnosis of an educational, physical, or emotional impairment that requires strategies in the classroom or services outside of the classroom has been approved, a formalized Accommodation Plan will be developed through

collaboration between the faculty, the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and Head of School. The student's tutor/outside service provider, when appropriate, may also be invited to assist in developing appropriate outside interventions to be included as part of the Accommodation Plan. As with all students, Academy High will periodically assess the student's progress to ensure that it is able to continue adequately serving the educational needs of that student. In the case of more complex learning needs, conversations regarding school fit may be warranted.

In order to continue providing appropriate scaffolding and support for students as they progress through Academy High, current evaluation information is imperative. A current evaluation is defined as one that has taken place within the last three years. Current information allows school personnel to best implement and modify the student's Accommodation Plan to meet that student's needs. If a student's evaluation is outdated, the student's Accommodation Plan and academic accommodations may be suspended until re-evaluation is complete.

THE COLLEGE BOARD AND THE ACT

Families should be aware that the College Board and ACT have separate processes to apply for accommodations on their tests (i.e., AP, ACT, SAT, PSAT). Parents are encouraged to contact these organizations directly before choosing test dates to ensure the accommodation approval process is completed for that particular test. In addition, parents are responsible for following up on all steps involved with appeal processes for ACT or College Board decisions.

PHILOSOPHY ON OUTSIDE TUTORING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

When possible, Academy High will help to connect families with outside resources that can provide more specialized academic support to address their learning needs. It is important for service providers, faculty, students, and parents/guardians to understand the type of outside academic support Academy High views as beneficial. The school strongly supports outside academic assistance that provides skills and strategies for students rather than support that focuses exclusively on homework completion. Homework that is assigned may be used as a vehicle to teach the needed skills and strategies and may, in fact, be completed during a support session. However, skill and strategy acquisition as well as independent strategy usage are the goal, not completion of an assignment. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that a student's first line of support is always the classroom instructor. Outside academic support should not be considered a substitute for meeting with an instructor or attending help sessions.

VIRTUAL AND EXTERNAL COURSEWORK POLICY

Academy High supports students in accessing virtual and/or external coursework only when it serves a specific academic purpose. Because Academy High does not design or teach its own online courses, students take virtual classes solely through approved external providers such as Illinois Virtual Schools and Academy (IVSA) or university or community college partners.

Purpose of Virtual and External Coursework

Students may request enrollment in an online or external course for the following reasons:

- To study a subject not currently offered at Academy High
- To pursue an advanced or specialized topic that extends beyond the existing curriculum
- To explore enrichment opportunities that align with individual academic goals

Students may not take an online or external version of any course offered in person at Academy High.

Request and Approval Process

All virtual and external course requests must be submitted by email to the Head of School. The request must include:

1. The specific course name
2. The semester or term in which the student wishes to enroll
3. The academic reason for the request

Approval is not guaranteed and will be based on alignment with academic goals, graduation requirements, and overall course load. Approved courses must contribute meaningfully to a student's program of study.

Academic Expectations

Students engaging in virtual and external learning are held to the same expectations for academic integrity, responsible technology use, and personal conduct that apply to all Academy High coursework. Violations of academic integrity or technology use guidelines in a virtual class carry the same consequences as violations in on-campus courses.

Virtual and external courses do not factor into the Academy High grade point average. Successful completion may be noted in school records when appropriate, but grades from external providers are not included in GPA calculations.

Transcript Requests for Virtual and External Courses

When a student takes a course outside of Academy High, the student is responsible for requesting official transcripts directly from the university whenever they need them for college applications, scholarships, or other purposes. Academy High does not manage or maintain official transcripts for external coursework.

Advising and Support

Students enrolled in virtual or external coursework maintain regular contact with an Academy High faculty advisor who monitors progress and helps ensure that learning remains aligned with the student's academic plan. Although Academy High does not control the design or delivery of virtual or external courses, the school reviews student and family feedback each year to determine which external providers continue to meet Academy High standards.

Technology Use and Cyber Safety

Students must follow Academy High's acceptable use guidelines when participating in any virtual learning environment. This includes responsible use of technology, appropriate communication, and safeguarding personal information. Concerns related to cyber safety or student well-being should be reported promptly to a trusted adult at school.

Student Wellness in Virtual Learning

Students are expected to manage their time responsibly and communicate proactively if challenges arise related to workload, wellness, or the virtual format. Academy High's counseling and referral procedures apply to all students, including those completing online coursework. The school may adjust or discontinue virtual enrollment if it poses a risk to student well-being.

Assessment and Credit

Students must complete all assignments, assessments, and participation requirements established by the external provider. Credit will be granted only when the provider confirms successful completion and when Academy High determines that the course fulfills approved academic purposes.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Unless individual parents/guardians or students object in writing to the Head, the following information concerning the student may be released:

- Honors and awards.
- Participation in school activities.
- Television coverage and pictures of students involved in school activities.
- Photos or articles on the school website – see Photo Consent Form.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED WITHIN ACADEMY HIGH

The Head of School reviews any requests by academic researchers who propose research involving Academy High. If a research request is approved by the Head, families and students shall have the right to decline participation by their student. Permission forms will be sent home for signatures; no student will be part of a study without written authorization from parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT INFORMATION

All information regarding each student in Academy High will be handled in a professional manner. This information includes testing results, school records (including applications and supporting data), evaluation reports, and disciplinary actions. Additionally, all assessments of placement, achievement, behavior, and performance are to be carried out only by the professionals hired by the Head of Academy High and are to remain confidential.

STUDENT RECORDS: ACCESS AND REVIEW

Academy High maintains student educational records in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Parents/guardians of minor students and eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records maintained by the school.

Requests to review student records should be submitted in writing to the Head of School. The school will arrange access within a reasonable timeframe and may require supervision during record review to protect confidentiality.

Parents/guardians may request corrections or amendments to student records they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. Such requests should be submitted in writing and will be reviewed by the Head of School, who will determine whether the request is warranted and communicate the decision to the family.

REQUESTING RECOMMENDATIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Academy High supports students as they pursue opportunities beyond our school, including college admissions, scholarship applications, and other programs where recommendations and transcripts are required. To ensure this process is respectful, organized, and successful, students and families should follow these guidelines:

Student-Led Requests

Students are expected to approach potential recommenders directly, in person, to request a recommendation. This personal contact is an important learning experience that demonstrates maturity and responsibility.

Teacher Workload Considerations

Teachers often receive multiple recommendation requests and may need to set limits to ensure the quality of their letters. Students and families should identify several possible recommenders and plan ahead to meet all requirements.

Waiver of Rights

At Academy High, it is our standard policy—and a best practice in college admissions—that when faculty or administrators submit letters of recommendation, we ask families to waive their right to access the record. This ensures that letters are viewed as candid and independent by reviewers, avoiding any perception of collaboration. Our college counselor advises that letters submitted under these conditions are often more impactful and better received.

College Admissions Recommendations Deadline

For college admissions specifically, we kindly ask students to request letters of recommendation from faculty at least four weeks before their earliest deadline, or by September 30th at the latest, whichever comes first. When making these requests, students should provide teachers with: an updated resume and a brief description of their academic and extracurricular interests. A copy of their college essay can also be beneficial.

It is best practice to communicate actual deadlines rather than preferred ones. Asking in person and following up via email is greatly appreciated. Teachers will complete recommendation letters well by the prescribed deadlines and will submit them directly to the institution or through the Common App. As a general rule, these letters will not be shared with students.

Transcript and Documentation Requests

Families are responsible for requesting transcripts and any required documentation directly from the Academy High office. Requests should be made well in advance of application deadlines to ensure timely processing.

Section IV: Athletics

ATHLETICS PHILOSOPHY

Academy High strives to expose students to the skills and qualities needed to succeed with excellence, purpose, and joy in sports and in life. The Athletics Department contributes to that endeavor by creating a positive environment where students learn the importance of hard work, dedication, time management, cooperation, competition, and sportsmanship.

SPORTS OFFERINGS

Academy High offers junior varsity and varsity sports as well as recreational sport offerings, each driven by student interest (which varies from year to year). All of Academy High's sports programs have a "no cut" policy; Everyone has the opportunity to participate in Academy High athletics, no

matter their experience level.

COST TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

The cost of athletic programs at Academy High is shared by the schools and families. Details are communicated to families at the beginning of each season for each sport. Consistent with our mission and vision, no student will be denied participation because of financial hardship.

AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS & EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION POLICY

Attendance at school is the single most important piece of our athletics program. Therefore, students who arrive at school after 10:45 AM without prior authorization (i.e. doctor's appointment) may not be eligible to participate that particular day in afterschool sports and/or extracurricular activities.

RECRUITMENT OF STUDENT ATHLETES

The IHSA by-laws prohibit recruiting high school students for athletics. Academy High athletes will lose eligibility if they enroll in or transfer to a school due to recruiting efforts by any person or group, connected or not with the school, related to athletic participation. Receiving special benefits or privileges, including "athletic scholarships," as a prospective student-athlete that are not uniformly available to all students at Academy High, is prohibited. You may not be offered or receive any benefit, service, privilege, or opportunity not available to all prospective students.

CONCUSSION AWARENESS AND ATHLETIC SAFETY

Academy High is committed to student health and safety in athletics. Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion will be removed immediately from practice or competition. The school maintains return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols consistent with current medical guidance. Students may not resume athletic participation until all required steps in these protocols have been completed. Students are permitted to modify athletic or team uniforms for reasons of religious observance, cultural values, or personal modesty preferences. Families participating in athletics will receive additional information and required forms prior to athletic participation.

DEFERENCE TO IHSA AND NCAA REGULATIONS

In the event that either IHSA or NCAA regulations are impressed upon students, it is the policy of the school to defer to those regulations.

****PLEASE SEE MORE INFORMATION IN THE ACADEMY HIGH ATHLETICS HANDBOOK****

Section V: Student Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT

At Academy High, our foremost responsibility is to safeguard the educational environment and ensure the physical and emotional well-being of our community. Reflecting these core values, our Code of Conduct outlines fundamental rules and expectations for all members of our community.

These rules are designed to maintain a healthy social and educational climate, fostering the smooth operation of day-to-day activities at Academy High.

We firmly believe that discipline should serve as a tool for teaching rather than merely punishment. Our aim is to instill self-discipline in our students—a process that varies across grade levels and individuals. Therefore, all disciplinary measures are coupled with instruction to address specific concerns and guide students in their journey through our school community.

Students learn their role and responsibility within the larger community, understanding that privilege and freedom come with accountability. Balancing individual needs with the collective interests of the group is a central aspect of our discussions on these matters.

Disciplinary actions may be taken for conduct both on and off campus or at any school-sponsored activity that jeopardizes individuals or property, disrupts the educational process, or violates Academy High policies. Such actions may result in disciplinary measures, including suspension or dismissal. This conduct encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

POLICIES TO SUPPORT STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

The following rules are extremely important for the safety and well-being of Academy High and all its students:

- **Integrity:** Lying, cheating, and stealing violate the core principles of our school community and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be forthright and honest in their words and actions at all times.
- **Respect:** Students must treat all members of the Academy High community with respect. Acts of physical aggression, threatening behavior, hazing, or intimidation—as well as the use of obscene, profane, disrespectful, or harassing language or actions—are strictly prohibited. This includes slurs or derogatory remarks targeting an individual's gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, physical or mental disability, national origin, or ancestry. Negative comments about physical appearance and any form of body shaming are also not tolerated. (Refer to the 'Harassment Policy' for more details.)
- **Substance Abuse:** Unauthorized possession, sale, distribution, use, or consumption of tobacco, drugs, narcotics, or alcoholic beverages, as well as possession of any substance purported to be such, is strictly prohibited. This also includes possession of paraphernalia used or designed for the consumption, sale, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- **Weapons and Dangerous Objects:** Possession of knives, weapons (functional or not), weapon facsimiles, fireworks, explosive devices, or any other dangerous object, as well as any threat or act that jeopardizes the safety of students, staff, or any other persons, is prohibited. Note: Students who are aware of the presence of knives, weapons, or dangerous objects on campus are obligated to report this information to an adult immediately.
- **Property Damage:** Defacing, damaging, or destroying school property or the property of others is strictly prohibited.
- **Unauthorized Departure:** Students are not permitted to leave school grounds, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity without proper authorization.
- **Tobacco and THC Use:** The use of tobacco or THC products, including vaping, is prohibited at all times and in all places on school property.
- **Attendance and Punctuality:** Students must not be chronically late or absent from school, class, study hall, homeroom period, or other required meetings without proper authorization.
- **Language and Behavior:** Students may not use obscene, profane, disrespectful, demeaning, pejorative, or discriminatory language or gestures. Joking and teasing are not

acceptable excuses for hurtful comments or behavior.

DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE

Students are expected to dress in a manner that aligns with the Mission of Academy High and fosters a conducive learning environment. We trust students to exercise good judgment and common sense in selecting attire that adheres to the daily dress code.

In general, students should dress modestly in clean, neat clothing suitable for the classroom. Offensive clothing or grooming practices are not permitted. Students must adhere to the dress code from the beginning of the school day until 4:15 pm, and whenever representing Academy High off-campus.

While the specifics of the dress code are outlined below, they may not cover every fashion trend. The school values the spirit of the dress code as much as its specifics and expects students to comply if cautioned by faculty or staff regarding a specific article of clothing. With a cooperative and sensible approach, clothing should not pose a significant issue for any student.

Allowable Dress and Grooming

- Students must be fully clothed, including both a shirt with pants or skirt (or the equivalent) and shoes.
- All clothing must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments, waistbands and bra straps excluded.
- Fabric must not be see-through.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible and not interfere with the line of sight to any student or staff. Hoodies must allow a student's face and ears to be visible to staff.

Non-Allowable Dress and Grooming

- Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other illegal or controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
- Words or symbols on clothing or attire that degrade others, constitute political advertisement, or promote illegal products or behavior which violates the Student and Family Handbook are prohibited. Enforcement of the dress code is at the discretion of faculty and staff. Infractions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- Clothing, including gang identifiers, must not threaten the health or safety of any other student or staff.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities. Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

Academy High is compliant with Illinois Public Act 102-0360, known as the Jett Hawkins Law, which prevents school boards, local school councils, charter schools, and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools from creating hairstyle-based dress code requirements. Specifically, the Public Act prohibits discriminating against hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

BATTERY, WEAPONS, AND DRUGS

It is Academy High policy that if something is in violation of state or local law, it is not permitted on school property or off-site at school events. The Illinois State Board of Education requires that the school have explicit policies related to battery, possession of weapons, and possession of drugs or controlled substances. These policies are listed below. In the event of a student violating any of the below policies, the student's parents and local law enforcement will be promptly notified, and disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, may occur.

- **Battery** Battery, or aiding or abetting in the commission of a battery, is illegal. Illinois law requires that written complaints of battery against school personnel be reported immediately to local law enforcement authorities and to the Illinois State Board of Education. Academy High complies fully with this requirement. Any written complaint, including those submitted electronically, alleging battery against school personnel will be reported in accordance with state law.
- **Weapons and Drugs** The possession of firearms or illegal drugs on school grounds or at school-related activities is strictly prohibited. In accordance with Illinois law, the school will immediately notify local law enforcement of any firearm or verified drug-related incident occurring on school grounds. If a student is found to be in possession of a firearm, the school will also immediately notify the student's parent or guardian. Required reports will also be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education through the appropriate reporting systems.

In accordance with Illinois law, if a student is found to possess a firearm or weapon, or if a verified drug-related incident occurs on school grounds or at a school-related activity, the Head of School will take the following actions:

1. **Immediately notify local law enforcement** of any firearm-related incident occurring on school property, on real property comprising the school, on a public way within 1,000 feet of the school, or in any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by the school to transport students to or from school or a school-related activity.
2. **Notify the parent(s) or guardian(s)** of any student found to be in possession of a firearm on school property, on a public way within 1,000 feet of the school, or in any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by the school to transport students to or from school or a school-related activity, within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident.
3. **Notify the municipal police department or the office of the county sheriff** of any verified drug-related incident occurring on school property, on real property comprising the school, on a public way within 1,000 feet of the school, or in any conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by the school to transport students to or from school or a school-related activity, within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident.
4. **Report all incidents listed above to the Illinois State Police** through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS) in the Illinois State Board of Education's IWAS system, as required by law.

FORMAL DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Students must understand and comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Violations of the Code,

whether on or off campus or at any school-sponsored activity, may result in disciplinary action.

The administration, at its discretion, determines the nature and severity of offenses and administers appropriate discipline. Responses to misconduct vary based on the seriousness of the issue and include counseling, formal warnings, restricted privileges, parent conferences, detention, probation, suspension, expulsion, or other actions as deemed appropriate.

Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at Academy High. The school reserves the right to conduct searches of student's personal items, including cars and backpacks, as well as deploy surveillance, to ensure the safety of the school community.

Consequences for failing to meet behavioral standards are categorized into three levels, each with its own set of consequences.

Level One Violations

These minor infractions serve as opportunities for faculty and staff to address concerns early, guiding students toward behavioral improvements. Consequences may include a conversation with parents or Lunch/After-school Detention. Repeated offenses may lead to more serious consequences. Examples include:

- Dress code violations
- Inappropriate behavior like yelling, running, or not cleaning up in the cafeteria
- Unauthorized cell phone use
- Tardiness to school obligations or appointments
- Inappropriate displays of affection

Level Two Violations

More serious offenses warrant potential suspension and may include:

- Physical aggression or bullying
- Verbal aggression or intimidation
- Disrespect towards faculty or staff
- Cheating or plagiarism
- Reckless driving on school property
- Destruction of school property
- Possession or use of tobacco or illegal substances

Level Three Violations

The gravest offenses may result in expulsion and include:

- Physical assault on staff or students
- Harassment (physical, personal, sexual, racial, ethnic)
- Drug or alcohol possession or use
- Weapon possession

Students who violate Academy High's Code of Conduct, and/or who demonstrate a history of serious or repeated disciplinary issues, are subject to the following additional sanctions:

Disciplinary Probation

During this period, students must demonstrate improved behavior and adherence to school

regulations. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal. Probation may include the removal of privileges or restrictions on participation in activities. Length and terms are determined by the Head of School.

Suspension

Temporary separation from the Academy High community and school-related activities. The purpose is for the individual to reflect on their actions. Suspensions may be imposed by the Head of School for serious or repeated infractions, violation of probation, or major violations.

In-School Suspension

Given for serious infractions, students spend the day on campus under supervision, completing related work. They may turn in homework, take quizzes/tests, or complete assignments online. Faculty are not obligated to provide extra help or extend deadlines.

Out-of-School Suspension

For severe infractions, students are completely separated from campus and community. They must meet with parents and the Head of School to review the event and conditions for return. Students may need to write a reflection piece determined by the Head of School. All missed work must be completed promptly.

Dismissal

Permanent expulsion from Academy High, determined solely by the Head of School. While challenging, it may be necessary to uphold behavioral standards. Each case is evaluated individually, with extenuating circumstances considered. Expelled students cannot return to campus or attend school functions for at least the remainder of the academic year.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND TIME-OUT

Academy High complies with all applicable Illinois laws and regulations regarding the use of physical restraint and time-out. As a matter of philosophy and practice, Academy High emphasizes proactive support, de-escalation, and restorative approaches to student behavior.

Physical restraint or time-out, as defined by Illinois law, is not used at Academy High except in rare circumstances where a student's behavior poses an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others and no less restrictive intervention is effective.

Any such incident would be documented and communicated to parents/guardians in accordance with legal requirements.

Section VI: Student Health and Wellness

REQUIRED HEALTH FORMS

Academy High takes very seriously its role in ensuring a safe learning environment for all students and strives to maintain full compliance with laws and regulations set by the Illinois State Board of Education. As such, submission of the following documents is required for all students. Per State requirements, students will not be able to attend school after October 15th until all required information is received.

All Freshman and Transfer Students

- Physical exam completed within the last year
- Complete immunization record (this is part of the physical exam form)
- Certified copy of student's birth certificate (due within 30 days of enrollment)
- *For freshman only:* dental exam completed by December 10th (can be dated within the last year)

Students Matriculating to Academy High from Homeschool Contexts or Out of State

- Eye exam by a qualified physician or licensed optometrist for students who are enrolling for the first time in public nor non-public schools in Illinois completed by December 10th (can be dated within the last year).

STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Parents are required to notify Academy High of any medical conditions that might require prompt/emergent care. It is requested that parents provide Academy High with a care plan for such conditions- links to care plan templates are available via DreamClass.

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Food Allergies
- Seizure Disorder
- Sickle Cell Disease

Policies regarding medication use are provided below.

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

Parent help and consideration is essential for the safety of students who must receive medication while at school. Please review Academy High's policy related to prescription and over the counter medication (OTC) administration at school.

Whether prescription or OTC, medication administration at school requires completion of Academy High's Medication Permission Form. If the medication is prescription, parents must also submit a printed copy of the prescription. Both documents are maintained in Academy High files and must be renewed annually. A new Medication Permission Form must be completed for medication or dosage changes. The school requires parents to provide a copy of the prescription label, which will include the name of the medication, prescribed dosage, and the time or circumstances in which the medication is to be administered.

STUDENT MEDICATIONS & MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Students may self-carry and/or be administered prescribed medications—including asthma inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors, diabetes or seizure medications, opioid antagonists, and other legally permitted prescriptions—when proper written authorization is provided by both a parent or guardian and the student's healthcare provider, as required by Illinois law. Academy High permits self-carry and self-administration of prescription medications for chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and food allergies when all documentation requirements are met. The school does not maintain a supply of undesignated medications.

Academy High maintains procedures and required forms for student-provided medications. Families should contact the school office to obtain current documentation requirements before any medication is brought to or used at school.

All medications must be provided in the original, pharmacy-labeled or manufacturer's container. Families may request an additional labeled container from their pharmacy if needed. Controlled substances (e.g., Ritalin, Adderall, methylphenidate) must be transported to school by an adult, not by the student. Any medication requiring splitting or cutting must be prepared by the parent or guardian in advance; school personnel will not alter medication. No more than a 30-day supply of medication may be stored at school, and parents or guardians are responsible for maintaining the supply. A written notice must be provided if a medication is to be discontinued.

In accordance with state regulations, Academy High faculty are trained in the emergency administration of medications related to asthma, diabetes, and food allergies when students with these conditions are identified. The school and its personnel incur no liability, except in cases of willful or wanton conduct, for injuries resulting from the administration of asthma medication, diabetes medication, epinephrine auto-injectors, or opioid antagonists. Parents or guardians are required to acknowledge this limitation of liability in writing as part of the medical documentation process.

The only medication that does not require completion of a Medication Permission Form is topical sunscreen approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration. Students may possess and use FDA-approved topical sunscreen while on school property or at school-sponsored events and activities.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICAL CANNABIS ON CAMPUS

At Academy High, we prioritize the health and well-being of our students by fostering a clear distinction between medical cannabis use and substance abuse. We acknowledge that medical cannabis may be a legitimate treatment option for certain medical conditions, and we are committed to working closely with students, their families, and healthcare professionals to ensure appropriate and safe usage on campus. However, we maintain a zero-tolerance policy for substance abuse, which includes the possession or use of any drugs or controlled substances, including cannabis, that jeopardizes the safety, academic progress, and overall development of our students.

The use of medical cannabis by a student requires annual completion of the Permit for Administration of Medical Cannabis During School Hours form, plus a copy of the student's IDPH registry identification card and the caregiver's IDPH registry identification card. Cannabis products must be stored in the school's front office and administration must be done in a manner that does not disrupt the educational environment or expose the product to other students. Academy High allows for administration only under the direct supervision of the Head of School.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

While encouraging good attendance, Academy High recognizes that the welfare of all students must be considered. The following guidelines for school exclusion are in accordance with the recommendations of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Medical Society:

- Students who are or feel sick must always report to the faculty and administration before contacting parents or leaving the building.
- Students may rest in administrative offices for a limited amount of time, concerns will be

assessed (not diagnosed), and the parent may be contacted.

- Students will be sent home in the event that they have a temperature of 100.4 or more, a rash, the flu, injuries needing medical consultation, lice, pink eye, or are vomiting.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Students experiencing illness must stay at home until appropriate treatment has begun and/or symptoms are absent. Students with the following conditions should not attend school:

- a fever within the last 24 hours
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- a frequent or disruptive cough or other signs of an acute respiratory infection
- any contagious illness that requires antibiotic therapy
- any undiagnosed skin rash. A student with a rash may attend school upon presenting a physician's note stating the rash is not contagious
- pronounced lethargy or fatigue that interferes with participation in learning activities.

Once a student has been fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications or on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, they may return to school.

COVID-19

Academy High is committed to the health and safety of our students, staff, and community members. In matters related to COVID-19, we defer to the guidance and recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD). Our policies and protocols will align with the most current guidelines to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. We will continue to monitor updates from the CDC and CUPHD and adjust our procedures accordingly, prioritizing the well-being of all individuals within our school community. Through these measures, we strive to maintain a proactive and informed approach to managing the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19.

INJURIES AT SCHOOL

All injuries or illnesses occurring during school hours or at school-sponsored activities must be reported immediately to a member of the faculty or administration. For any serious injury, a formal injury report will be completed, and standard Red Cross first aid procedures will be followed. In the case of a serious injury, the injured student will not be moved. The Head of School or a designated faculty member will contact the student's parents or guardians and call paramedics if necessary.

Since there are no medically trained personnel on staff, faculty and staff will refrain from providing treatment beyond basic first aid, such as cleaning minor wounds or applying bandages. Parents will be contacted immediately if an injury or illness requires professional medical attention.

Whenever possible, treatment arrangements will be made with the consent of the parent or the emergency contact person(s) designated by the family. If neither can be reached, the Head of School or their designee will determine the necessary arrangements in the student's best interest, which may include calling emergency services or arranging transportation to a medical facility.

All injuries or illnesses that occur on school premises or during school activities will be promptly reported to the student's parents or guardians, following the instructions and preferences provided

by the family. Emergency assistance and/or transportation may be requested at the discretion of the Head of School or their designee.

FREQUENT OR PROLONGED ABSENCES CAUSED BY ILLNESS

Academy High responds to frequent and prolonged absences with consideration for both the needs of the student involved and the integrity of our academic program. It is Academy High's intention to partner with the family in a confidential and supportive manner in order to serve the student's needs appropriately.

When illnesses that involve prolonged absences occur, it is necessary for the family to provide appropriate documentation from the attending physician or mental health professional. Once the clarity of the illness is established Academy High will request the required paperwork:

- A signed release-of-information form granting permission for the practitioner to exchange confidential information with Academy High who, with permission from the parents, share necessary information with appropriate members of the faculty. The school remains in continuing contact with the healthcare and psychological service providers engaged by the family.
- Written documentation from the student's therapist, psychiatrist, and/or medical doctor outlining the student's diagnosis, treatment plan, and recommendations.

The team will then create a plan, which may include, but is not limited to

- A reduction in course load and/or extensions on assessments
- A recommended Leave of Absence
- A mandated Leave of Absence.

A letter outlining the student's individual plan and time requirements is sent to the family by the Head of School. It is Academy High's expectation that all work be completed within the specified time to receive credit. If, after a plan has been set forth, the student's condition deteriorates, a meeting with the Head of School and/or other appropriate team members is required to reevaluate the student's status. New guidelines are established, if necessary, or, in rare cases, the student may not continue at Academy High.

MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL PROTOCOL

Academy High is committed to supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of all students. Our goal is to provide a safe, respectful, and compassionate environment in which students can learn and grow.

Initial Support and Referral

When a student experiences mental health or behavioral difficulties, the first line of support is their classroom faculty. Faculty members are encouraged to address concerns through conversation, reflection, and restorative practices whenever possible.

If a situation requires additional support, the student may be referred to the Front Office for consultation with the Director of Operations or the Head of School. In some cases, a student may independently request to speak with the Front Office regarding a mental or behavioral concern.

Parent Engagement and Temporary Leave

If it is determined that a student needs to leave school for mental health or behavioral reasons, the Front Office will contact the parent or guardian directly. The student will only be released once a parent or guardian has been notified and appropriate arrangements have been made.

Reentry Process

A student who leaves school for mental health or behavioral reasons may not return to class until a reentry conversation or meeting has taken place between the parent or guardian and the Head of School. The purpose of this conversation is to ensure that the student has had the time and space needed for reflection, recovery, or behavioral correction, and that the school and family are aligned on next steps for a successful return.

If the family is working with a licensed mental health professional, that individual may be invited to participate in the reentry conversation, as appropriate. The goal is to create a short, clear Reentry Plan that supports the student's well-being and readiness to reengage fully in the school community.

Scope of Confidentiality

Academy High respects the privacy of students and families regarding mental health and behavioral matters. Information shared with school personnel will be treated sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis with individuals directly involved in the student's care and support.

If a student is working with an outside counselor, therapist, or medical provider, families are encouraged—but not required—to share relevant recommendations that may help the school provide appropriate support. Academy High will not request or release medical or counseling records without the written consent of the parent or guardian, except when disclosure is legally required to protect the safety of the student or others.

Crisis Response

If a student exhibits behavior or communicates statements suggesting that they may be at risk of harming themselves or others, school personnel will respond immediately in accordance with Academy High's Crisis and Safety Procedures. This may include contacting emergency services, notifying the parent or guardian, and consulting with the Head of School to determine next steps for student safety. In such cases, confidentiality may be limited to ensure timely and appropriate intervention.

SUICIDE AND SELF-HARM PREVENTION

Academy High recognizes the importance of supporting student mental health and well-being. The school takes any expression of self-harm, suicidal ideation, or related concern seriously. If a student is identified as being at risk, the school will take immediate steps to ensure student safety, which may include supervision, referral to outside professionals, and communication with parents/guardians. Decisions are guided by professional judgment and the specific needs of the student. Faculty and staff receive guidance on recognizing warning signs and responding appropriately. Academy High works in partnership with families and external providers to support students during times of concern.

MANDATED OUTSIDE COUNSELING OR MEDICAL SUPPORT

From time to time Academy High may have concerns about a student's well-being that extend beyond academic or discipline/behavior concerns. In these cases, Academy High may require

outside counseling or medical support to address concerns about the student's safety, security, emotional health, or physical health.

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All Academy High faculty and staff are mandated reporters under Illinois law. This means that any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that a student may be experiencing abuse or neglect is legally required to report that concern to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Reports are made in accordance with state law and professional guidelines. The responsibility to report rests with the individual who has the concern and may not be delegated. Academy High takes this responsibility seriously and is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all students. Parents and guardians should be aware that mandated reporting obligations may require the school to make a report without prior notification to the family.

Section VII: Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

The following rules and guidelines outline the acceptable use of technology resources at Academy High. These regulations extend to cell phones, personal computers, and all portable digital devices. While examples of prohibited uses are provided for clarification, this policy does not cover every possible activity and students are encouraged to seek further guidance if unsure. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion. Illegal activities may also be reported to law enforcement.

STUDENT POLICY

Academy High emphasizes the responsible use of technology to facilitate learning, communication, and global understanding. Students are expected to demonstrate integrity and adhere to ethical standards in their use of technology resources. This policy aims to uphold the safety and educational environment of Academy High.

- **Compliance** Students must adhere to this policy. Violations may lead to disciplinary action, up to expulsion. Academy High reserves the right to monitor computer, email, and internet activity.
- **Purpose of Access:** Technology resources are provided for educational and research purposes, in line with Academy High's curriculum and instructional goals. Students are expected to follow faculty instructions and conduct themselves appropriately online.
- **Off-Campus Use:** School rules apply to the use of school-owned devices off-campus, particularly regarding communication between Academy High students. Inappropriate behavior using school-owned technology will be disciplined accordingly. Additionally, private communication using personal devices may prompt school intervention if it negatively impacts the Academy High community.
- **Responsibility for Losses:** Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for compensating Academy High for losses or damages resulting from policy violations, including investigation costs.
- **Monitoring:** While efforts are made to supervise technology use, Academy High cannot prevent all inappropriate activities. The school is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet.
- **Policy Amendments:** Academy High reserves the right to amend this policy as necessary to

address evolving technology and school policies.

PROHIBITED USE

The student is responsible for their actions and activities involving school technology and for their computer files, passwords, and accounts. The school takes full responsibility for investigating reports or observations of inappropriate use of technology. However, there is no expectation that Academy High can monitor all on-line activity. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

Accessing Inappropriate Materials. Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning or displaying materials that are insulting, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing and/or illegal;

Illegal and Inappropriate Activities. Using Academy High's technology resources for any illegal activity or activity that violates other Academy High policies, procedures, mission, and/or school rules;

Violating Copyrights. Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission or any other activity that violates other Academy High policies regarding copyright material;

Plagiarism. Representing as one's own work any materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher, and Web site must be identified;

Non-School-Related Uses. Using Academy High's technology resources for private financial gain, commercial uses, advertising or solicitation purposes, or to proselytize;

Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access. Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission and/or accessing other users' accounts;

Malicious Use/Vandalism. Any malicious use, disruption or harm to Academy High's technology resources including, but not limited to, hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses;

Harassing or Threatening a Member of the Academy High school Community. Using technology to harass, threaten or intimidate members of the Academy High community has the potential to adversely affect the safety and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Such behavior may also harm the learning atmosphere of Academy High. As a result, any harassing, threatening and/or intimidating use of school technology resources of any member of the Academy High community, including students, faculty, and staff, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Academy High reserves the right, in circumstances it deems appropriately serious, to investigate claims of harassing, threatening and/or intimidating uses of technology, even though they may take place off-campus, after school hours, using non-school equipment. Where Academy High determines that such conduct has harmed the learning environment and/or adversely affected a member of the Academy High community, the offending student will be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion;

Tampering with Academy High's Technology Resources. Disabling or attempting to disable the functionality of Academy High technology resources; including but not limited to software, computers, and printers.

Student Security

A student shall not reveal their full name, address, or telephone number on the Internet without prior permission from a supervising faculty member. Students should never meet people they have contacted through the Internet without parental permission. Students should inform their supervising faculty member if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them feel uncomfortable in any way.

Restriction on Use of School Web Pages

School Web pages may be used only for school purposes and only authorized individuals may modify or post materials to these pages. No other pages may suggest that they are school Web pages. If confusion is possible, pages should contain a disclaimer and links to school sites.

Responsibilities of Students Posting Web Materials

By posting materials and using school technology resources, the user represents that they have created the materials or that they have the right to post or use the materials. The storage, posting, or transmission of materials must not violate the rights of any third person in the materials, including copyright, trademark and any rights of publicity or privacy of any person. The materials posted must not be defamatory, libelous, slanderous, or obscene.

Control of School Internet Domain Names

The use of all Academy High internet domain names is at the sole discretion of Academy High. Any Academy High student Internet activity, posting or publishing that references or includes Academy High Internet domain names must not be defamatory, libelous, slanderous, or obscene.

Use of non-Academy High Internet Sites for Storing School Content

The school is not responsible for the security or accessibility of content stored on non-Academy High Internet sites, including but not limited to: Google, Yahoo, and YouTube.

Additional Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Policies: Student Use of Digital Media and Privacy

Students are expected to follow Academy High's Code of Conduct when using the internet, social media, electronic communications, and digital platforms. This includes adherence to the Academy High Policy Against Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation (see Section IX). Students must not communicate false or misleading information about other students, families, employees, or members of the school community and are expected to strive for accuracy in all digital communications, including posts, comments, and shared content. If an error is made, students are expected to correct or retract the information promptly. Students must also refrain from sharing content that violates the privacy rights of students, families, or employees.

Only an Academy High administrator may initiate or conduct an investigation into reported or observed digital activity when there is sufficient evidence that such activity may violate school policies. In these circumstances, students are required to cooperate fully in the investigation, including by providing specific content relevant to the matter under review. The school will not request or require students to disclose usernames, passwords, or other access credentials for personal social media accounts, nor will students be required to “friend,” follow, or otherwise grant access to personal accounts.

This policy does not limit the school’s authority to regulate the use of school-owned devices, school-provided accounts, or school networks.

DATA RETENTION AND SECURITY POLICY

Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines Academy High’s expectations for the responsible use, storage, and protection of electronic and physical data. It applies to all members of the school community—including faculty, staff, students, parents, contractors, and volunteers—who create, access, transmit, or manage school data in any form.

Acceptable Use and Access

Access to Academy High’s information systems, including email, cloud storage, and student information platforms, is a privilege extended for educational and administrative purposes. All users are expected to:

- Use school systems ethically, responsibly, and only for school-related activities.
- Protect login credentials and never share passwords with others.
- Access, store, or transmit only the data necessary to fulfill their academic or job responsibilities.
- Refrain from downloading, sharing, or disclosing confidential data without authorization.
- Log out of systems or lock devices when leaving them unattended.

The school reserves the right to monitor network and system activity to ensure compliance with this policy and to protect the integrity of its data systems.

Student and Parent Responsibilities

Students are responsible for using school technology and online accounts in ways that safeguard their personal information and the privacy of others. Specifically, students must:

- Use only school-approved platforms (e.g., Google Workspace) for academic work.
- Avoid sharing personal data—including addresses, phone numbers, and passwords—online or with individuals outside the school community.
- Report any suspicious online activity, phishing attempts, or unauthorized access to a teacher or the Front Office immediately.
- Respect the privacy and intellectual property of others when collaborating online.

Parents and guardians play a critical role in protecting student data. Families are asked to:

- Access student information (grades, reports, etc.) only through official school systems.
- Refrain from sharing login credentials with anyone other than authorized guardians.
- Notify the school promptly if they suspect unauthorized access to their student’s account or records.

- Understand that Academy High follows federal and state regulations regarding student privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable ISBE data-protection guidelines.

Data Retention

Academy High retains student, personnel, and institutional records in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, including ISBE and IRS requirements.

- Student academic and enrollment records are maintained permanently.
- Health and disciplinary records are retained for a minimum of seven years after graduation or withdrawal.
- Personnel and employment records are retained for a minimum of seven years following separation.
- Financial, donor, and operational records are retained for a minimum of seven years unless otherwise required by law or contractual agreement.

At the end of the retention period, records are securely deleted, shredded, or otherwise destroyed to protect privacy.

Data Protection and Security

To safeguard sensitive information, Academy High employs administrative, technical, and physical security measures. All users are expected to:

- Use school-issued systems (e.g., Google Workspace, FACTS, QuickBooks) for storing and transmitting school data.
- Avoid saving school files on personal or unsecured devices.
- Report suspected data breaches, phishing attempts, or unauthorized access immediately to the Director of Operations or Head of School.
- Follow all password, encryption, and device-security protocols established by the school.

Incident Response

If a data breach, loss, or compromise occurs, Academy High will promptly investigate, mitigate potential harm, and notify affected parties as required by law. The Head of School and Director of Operations will coordinate any external reporting, communication, or corrective actions.

Compliance and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the administration to ensure continued alignment with applicable laws, accreditation standards (SAIS), and best practices in data privacy and cybersecurity. Updates are communicated to all employees and families through the annual handbook review process.

Section VIII: Policy Against Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation

Academy High is committed to creating and maintaining a learning environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Accordingly, Academy High will not tolerate any form of harassment, whether it be on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, or disability. Sexual harassment is explicitly forbidden. Harassment in any form is unacceptable and the harasser will be disciplined.

This policy is intended to be broad in its scope and may well include conduct, whether intentional or unintentional, that is harmful or offensive or when it excludes rather than includes an individual. It is intended to cover not only harassment of a student by another student, but also harassment of a student by a school employee and harassment of a school employee by a student. For purposes of this policy, the term “school employee” includes Board members, faculty, staff, coaches, substitute faculty, volunteers and third-party contractors under the control of Academy High. Successful implementation and enforcement of these policies is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

All reports of conduct that violate this policy will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Any student or school employee who engages in conduct which violates this policy, will be disciplined as appropriate, under the circumstances. Discipline may include expulsion for a student and termination for a school employee.

This policy is reviewed by the Academy High Board of Directors every two years as required by the State of Illinois. This policy is posted on our website and where other policies, rules, and standards of conduct are posted. It is also distributed annually via handbooks to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new employees when hired.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Bullying, including cyberbullying, may be reported by students, parents/guardians, or staff members. Reports may be made to any faculty member or administrator, who will forward the information to the Head of School for review. The school will investigate reports promptly and take appropriate action consistent with the nature of the conduct and the school’s Code of Conduct. Retaliation against any individual who reports bullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

Academy High strives to provide all students with a safe school environment that facilitates learning. Academy High’s desire is for all students to thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect, and an atmosphere of respect for individual differences. The school is committed to maintaining an educational environment that is safe, inclusive, and free of bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination, and retaliation. This may include behavior that occurs off school property, uses technology that is not owned by Academy High (e.g., social media, other digital communications), or that negatively impacts or affects Academy High community.

Using any form or type of aggressive behavior that does physical or psychological harm to someone else and/or disrupts the learning environment, and/or urges students to engage in such conduct is prohibited. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation are not acceptable in any form and will not be tolerated at school or any school-related activity, on school property, or through a school computer, network, or other school electronic equipment. The school will protect students against retaliation for reporting incidents of bullying, intimidation, or harassment, including sexual harassment, and will take disciplinary action against any student who participates in such conduct. Violations of bullying and harassment policies may be subject to discipline under applicable school policies. The jurisdiction of Academy High in bullying and harassment is the same as for other discipline incidents (see the Discipline section). Typically, Academy High becomes involved in external behavior of bullying and harassment only when it interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects Academy High environment, school operations, or an educational function at the sole discretion of the Head of School.

Caveats

Bullying is contrary to State law- the policy of Academy High, which is a non-sectarian nonpublic school, is consistent with the free exercise of religion. Nothing in this document is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution.

It is important for students and parents to realize that all social conflict is not bullying or harassment per se, although it might be inappropriate behavior that would be addressed by Academy High with education and consequences. In addition, bullying and harassment can be difficult to detect by staff, and all bullying and harassment can never be stopped in any school environment, no matter how diligent the school is. It is essential that victims, bystanders, parents, and faculty report bullying directly and clearly and in a timely fashion using proper procedures below to give Academy High an opportunity to address problems. All faculty are expected to intervene in any conduct they witness that approaches bullying and harassment and report significant instances of misbehavior to the Head of School as appropriate.

Definitions and Examples of Bullying

"Bullying" includes "cyber-bullying" and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

- Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
- Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
- Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photoelectric system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section. "Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

With bullying, there is a relationship between bully and victim and typically a real or perceived difference in power between bullying and victim. Bullying typically involves a pattern of negative behavior over time and is typically intentional harm-doing.

Bullying and similar prohibited conduct may include, without limitation, threats, intimidation, sexual harassment, stalking, physical violence, theft, public humiliation, teasing, social exclusion or social aggression/control, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. Below are examples of acts that may be considered as bullying:

- Name-calling, racist remarks, put-downs, hazing, and extortion.
- Spreading rumors, wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice, taking, hiding, and destroying others' possessions.
- E-mail, blogs, other computer transmission from school computers, signs, and graffiti.
- Cyberbullying may include, without limitation, some of the above behaviors by electronic means (such as rumor spreading) but might also include photo altering, flaming, trolling, impersonation, sexting, and other conduct.
- Extreme or subtle relationship manipulation, reputation attacking, and using demeaning gestures.

Definition and Examples of Harassment

Academy High considers harassment to be, without limitation, intimidating, bullying, physical, or verbal conduct that is based upon perceived race, color, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, gender identity, status as homeless or other socioeconomic difference, or pregnancy, or association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguished characteristics. Harassment can take many forms:

Verbal, Written, And Visual Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making disparaging statements, telling jokes, using epithets, slurs, stereotypes, insults, or labels based on an individual's Protected Classification(s), threats of physical harm or statements designed to intimidate, abuse or humiliate another, whether communicated verbally, in writing, electronically, or in posters, cartoons, drawings, or gestures. This may include comments on appearance including dress or physical features, or dress consistent with gender identification, or stories and jokes, focusing on race, national origin, religion, or other Protected Classifications

Physical Harassment includes, but is not limited to intimidating conduct, such as touching of a person or a person's property, hazing, assault, grabbing, stalking, or blocking or impeding a person's movement.

Sexual Harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, demands for sexual activity; sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; sexual innuendoes or suggestive jokes; comments of a sexual nature to describe an individual or an individual's body; unwelcome physical contact such as touching, pinching, or brushing the body; any type of coerced sexual activity including sexual abuse; displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; obscene gestures or materials; spreading rumors of a sexual nature; leering; making sexual gestures; or sexual contact. Sexual harassment can occur between individuals of different genders or individuals of the same gender.

Racial, Ethnic or Religious and Sexual Orientation Harassment are specifically prohibited and will not be tolerated. Language, gestures, apparel, or any action that shows disrespect, intimidate, threaten, or cause injury on the basis of racial, ethnic, or religious origin or background or sexual orientation will constitute harassment.

Discrimination

Academy High values the contributions to learning that results from maintaining a diverse student body, faculty, and staff. Academy High does not tolerate discrimination based on race, color, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, gender identity, status as homeless or other socioeconomic difference, or pregnancy, or association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguished characteristics.

Retaliation

Academy High prohibits retaliatory behavior against anyone who complains in good faith or participates in a complaint and/or investigation process. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, taking sides against an individual, spreading rumors about or shunning or avoiding an individual, or making real or implied threats of intimidation towards an individual, because that individual reported bullying, harassment, or discrimination or participated in an investigation related to a report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

Witnessing Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation

Student bystanders in any situation involving bullying, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation are asked to refrain from joining in, to tell the agitator to stop his or her behavior and report the incident to a trusted adult.

Reporting

Students who believe they are victims of bullying, intimidation, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or have witnessed such activities, are encouraged to promptly discuss the matter with any Academy High employee or trusted adult. Students may choose to report to a person of the student's same sex, and students may be accompanied by a parent/guardian, friend, or advisor in making such a report. The Head of School should be informed in person or via phone (217-239-6000) or email the Head of School of the report of the incident of bullying as soon as

possible after the report is received.

Should concerns about discrimination or harassment directly involve the Head of School, the Chair of the Board of Academy High should be promptly notified in writing. The Chair will review the complaint with the Executive Committee and will respond to the person submitting the complaint within ten business days.

Academy High appreciates that there are rare occasions when a student believes they can only report their concern anonymously. If this is the case, an anonymous report may be submitted on the school's website. While Academy High will do its best to address the concern, please note that no follow-up with you is possible unless you reconsider identifying yourself, and that formal disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report.

Consequences

Academy High will make all reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within 10 school days after the date the report of the incident of bullying was received and take into consideration additional relevant information received during the course of the investigation about the reported incident of bullying. The school will involve appropriate paid staff with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention, as deemed appropriate, in the investigation process. The Head of School should be immediately notified of the report of the incident of bullying.

Consequences for engaging in bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination, and retaliation, are severe. Depending upon the behavior, circumstances, history, and other contextual factors, consequences including, but not limited to, verbal or written reprimand, detentions, denial of privileges, and other penalties may be assigned; often suspension or expulsion from school are warranted. As stated above, illegal behavior may be reported to the police. Students found to have falsely accused another of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation as a means of bullying or as a means of retaliation will be subject to similar consequences and appropriate remedial actions as those listed above.

Consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights, Academy High will promptly inform the parents and guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying. They will have the opportunity to meet with the Head of School to discuss the investigation, its findings, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying. Other interventions will be discussed, as appropriate, including, but not limited to, social work services, restorative measures, social-emotional skill building, counseling, school psychological services, and community-based services.

"Restorative measures" means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that

- Are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- Contribute to maintaining school safety,
- Protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- Teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,
- Serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and

- Reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- Increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Additional community-based counseling may be recommended or required based on the outcome of the investigation.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Policy

Academy High will review the incidences of bullying and harassment annually and evaluate the anti-bullying policy's effectiveness. This process will include, but not be limited to factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. Academy High will use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation will be made available on the Internet website of the school. The information will also be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Addendum

Asbestos Annual Notification

The building owned by Academy High at 2001 Fox Drive was built in 1987, one year before asbestos was banned from construction. As such, the school has an exemption letter on file with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), certifying that asbestos containing building material was not used in its construction. As required by law, Academy High uses its handbooks as means of official communication with its families that the school is free of asbestos. Copies of the school's Asbestos Management Plan are on file in the school office.

Faith's Law

Faith's Law, consisting of two pieces of legislation passed by the Illinois General Assembly, aims to address sexual misconduct within educational institutions and enhance prevention measures. Academy High is dedicated to upholding the principles and standards outlined in this legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of its students and staff. A link to Faith's Law resource guide [can be found here](#). Additional information about Faith's Law can be found on the [ISBE website](#).

Key Provisions:

1. **Definition of Sexual Misconduct:** The first piece of legislation establishes the definition of sexual misconduct within the school code.
2. **Employee Code of Professional Conduct Policies:** Schools are required to develop and post policies outlining the code of professional conduct for employees. At Academy High, this information is included in the Faculty & Staff Handbook.
3. **Employment History Reviews:** The second piece of legislation mandates employment history reviews as part of the hiring and vetting process for schools. Academy High conducts thorough employment history reviews when hiring faculty and staff.
4. **Notification Requirements:** Schools must provide notices to parents/guardians and the applicable student when there's an alleged act of sexual misconduct. Academy High is committed to involving all affected stakeholders in the event of misconduct,

making every effort to ensure transparency and accountability.

Academy High maintains a Code of Professional Conduct for all employees and contractors, designed to promote student safety and well-being. In accordance with Illinois law, parents or guardians will be notified if an employee, agent of the school, or contractor is alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct involving a student. Parents or guardians will also be notified of any formal employment action taken as a result of such allegations. Information about the State of Illinois Sexual Abuse Response and Prevention Resource Guide is made available to families annually and is on our website.

EMPLOYEE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All employees at Academy High are expected to uphold high standards in their relationships within the school community. This includes demonstrating integrity, honesty, consideration, and cooperation while maintaining professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents, staff members, and others.

Professional Expectations

- **Ethical Standards:** All employees must adhere to the ethical standards set by our school and any applicable state or national guidelines.
- **Prohibited Conduct:** Engaging in behaviors such as sexual harassment, failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect, engaging in grooming behaviors, violating appropriate boundaries with students, or any other misconduct will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Standards for Employee-Student Conduct

- **Code of Ethics Compliance:**
 - Follow the [code of ethics for educators](#) established by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- **Prohibition of Inappropriate Behaviors:**
 - Grooming and sexual misconduct are strictly prohibited. This includes any act or communication, whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic, aimed at forming a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. Examples include:
 - Sexual or romantic invitations.
 - Dating or soliciting dates.
 - Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialogue.
 - Making sexually suggestive comments.
 - Sharing personal details of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature.
 - Any sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with a student.
- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries:**
 - Keep all communications with students professional and appropriate. This means no unprofessional or inappropriate emails, letters, notes, text messages, phone calls, social media engagement, or conversations.

- Maintain boundaries that consider the student's age, grade level, and developmental stage in situations such as:
 - Transporting students.
 - Taking or possessing photos or videos of students.
 - Meeting with students or contacting them outside of professional duties.
- **Mandated Reporting:**
 - All employees are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with the [Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act](#).
- **Reporting and Training:**
 - Students, parents, and third parties can report prohibited behaviors or boundary violations to any Academy High board member or staff member they feel comfortable with.
 - Employees must complete training on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations as required by law.

By adhering to these standards, we ensure a safe and supportive environment for our students and uphold the integrity of our educational community.