

HORSE CREEK ACADEMY
STALLIONS

2026-27

STUDENT HANDBOOK



We are the Village.

Table of Contents

Welcome to the Village!.....1

Mission/Vision.....2

The School Year.....3

Fees/Finance.....4

HCA Cafe.....6

Facilities Usage.....7

Gifts and Requests.....8

The HCA School Board.....11

Medical Information.....14

Family Responsibilities.....29

Arrival and Dismissal.....33

Attendance/Enrollment/Withdrawal..38

Student Assessments.....53

Special Services.....58

Academics.....67

Dress Code.....84

Technology and Social Media.....89

Student Concerns/Complaints.....98

Title IX and Student Protections.....100

HCA Code of Conduct.....119

Welcome to the Village!

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at Horse Creek Academy! Whether you're joining us for the first time or returning for another year, I am so glad you're here. The start of a new school year always brings a sense of excitement and possibility, and I couldn't be more excited for what lies ahead.

At HCA, our mission goes beyond academics. We strive to create an environment where students feel supported, challenged, and inspired to grow. Every day, our staff works to help students build confidence, develop character, and discover their unique strengths while preparing them for success in school and in life.

What makes Horse Creek Academy special is the strong partnership between our students, families, staff, and community. Together, we create a learning environment where students are known, valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential. It is that sense of belonging and support that makes HCA feel like home for so many families.



Dr. Ann Marie Talyor
Chief Vision Officer

Thank you for choosing Horse Creek Academy and for trusting us with your child's education. It is an honor to be part of their journey.

I look forward to celebrating their accomplishments, supporting their growth, and making this another incredible year together.

Here's to a fantastic 2026–2027 school year!

Our Mission

Our mission is to create an innovative and challenging learning environment that teaches the whole learner through the pillars of connection, flexibility, and service.

Our Vision

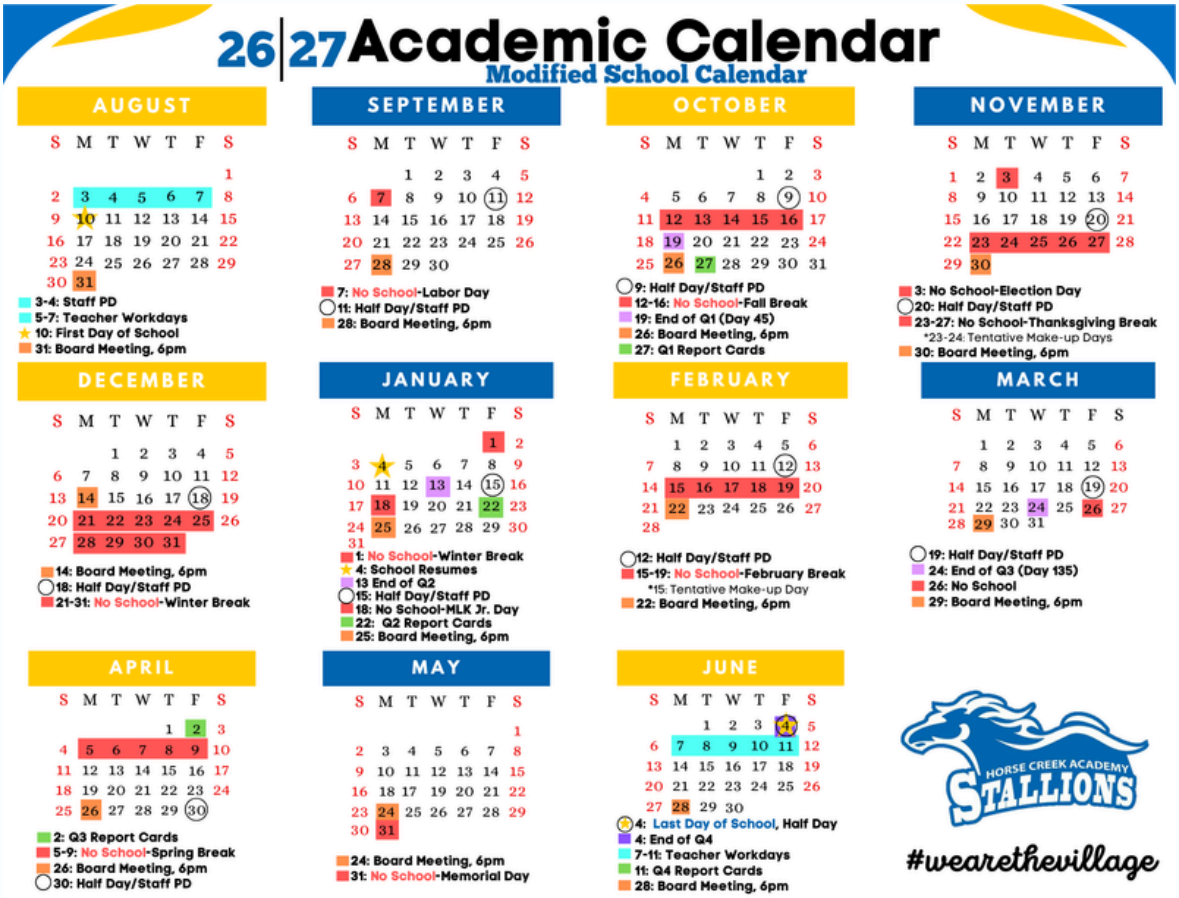
At Horse Creek Academy, we envision a future where every student, staff member, and family flourishes as a well-rounded individual, empowered by an education that extends beyond traditional academic boundaries. Our learners will be known for their adaptability, their deep-rooted sense of community, and their commitment to making a meaningful impact in the world.

The School Year

The length of the school year is 180 instructional days. Throughout the school year, there are several break weeks and holidays.

Check out our academic calendar for a full look at the year! Full page printable version available here

Make sure to check out our online events calendar at www.hcacs.net or on the HCA App!



School Closure Due to Weather

If there's ever a change to our regular school schedule—such as a delay, early dismissal, or closure—we'll get the word out as quickly as possible. You'll receive updates through our website, robocall system, and other school communication channels. We also recommend checking local news outlets for the most up-to-date information. As always, your child's safety is our top priority, and we appreciate your flexibility when unexpected changes arise.

Fees and Finance

Student Fees at HCA

At Horse Creek Academy, student fees help support the high-quality educational experiences we're proud to provide. These fees cover essential resources, materials, and services used throughout the year. Fees are expected for every student and help ensure that we can continue to offer a well-rounded, enriching learning environment.

We understand that financial hardships can arise. If your family is facing a severe hardship, please reach out to administration to create a payment plan. We're happy to work with you—just communicate with us early.

Please note: Participation in extracurricular activities (including school dances) may be restricted for students with unpaid fees.

Mandatory Yearly Student Fees:

- Registration Fee – $65 per student
  - This fee supports essential student services like access to communication platforms, technology resources, and administrative processing. It is required for all students in 5K-12th Grades and is due by August 31.
- Enrollment Fee – $50 per student
  - This annual fee secures your child's seat for the upcoming school year. It confirms your family's commitment to attend and helps us finalize class rosters and staffing plans. Families may present a Medicaid card in the front office to waive this fee. 4K families are exempt from this fee.
- Parking Fee – $25 (High School students only)
  - Required for students who plan to drive and park on campus during the school year.

Check Return Procedures

All returned checks are subject to a $40.00 fee. Families/Employees will be sent a written notice of the returned check by the administration, along with a copy of the returned item and a note explaining the returned check fee ($40). The note will serve as an invoice for the total amount due including the returned check fee. Horse Creek Academy will accept another check to cover the invoice balance.

Families/Employees who have two (2) returned checks must make all future payments by cash. Additional checks cannot be accepted.

Fee and Payment Procedures

At HCA, we have a certain procedure that must be followed for receiving and accounting for any incoming money, from parents and/or students, brought into the classroom. Please help us by doing your part and acting in accordance with the following fee payment procedure:

Parents when sending in money to the school, please do so in the following manner:

- Money must be brought in by 8 a.m. each morning, contained in a labeled sealed envelope and the following information should be written on the outside of the sealed envelope: Student Name, Grade, Teacher, Amount, Reason for Money (i.e., Canteen, Catering, Donation, Fee, Field Trip).
- Payments must be exact change. The office cannot keep cash on hand and change is NOT guaranteed. Money is deposited daily. If multiple payments for different purposes are being made each item must be listed on the envelope.
- Checks should be made to Horse Creek Academy unless noted by a fundraiser event.
- DO NOT ENCLOSE A SIGNED PERMISSION SLIP in a field trip payment envelope.
- Deadlines for fee payment should be honored as this directly impacts our ability to move forward in securing the paid services.

HCA Cafe

The Cafe is available for all students to purchase lunch, drinks, and snacks from daily. Each day, students have meal options, including catered items from local businesses or lunch combos from the Café. There are also multiple options readily available for purchase such as, Lunchables, Uncrustables, chips, juice etc. More information on meal options is located on our website.

Pre-ordering meal options must be completed by midnight on Wednesday the week before. To do this, an online lunch account at www.schoolpaymentportal.com must be created. Through this account, you can preorder, add money to your child's account, and check the balance. Information on how to create this account is located on our website.

Lunch

All students are to remain only in designated areas during lunch. Students are not to leave campus for lunch. **To ensure a safe school environment, the school will not accept food delivery services such as Uber Eats, Door dash, Grub hub, Postmates, or pizza delivery during school hours.**

Parents/guardians may drop off lunch to students at the main office if the student forgets lunch. The student may pick up the lunch during their designated lunchtime.

Food Trucks

Students in grades 6th-12th will have the opportunity to order from a food truck Monday through Friday of each week.

Kona Ice will also be on campus throughout the school year. Make sure to check the HCA event calendar online to see which days they are scheduled!

Facilities Usage

As a means for fostering community involvement, the Board of Directors wishes to make Horse Creek Academy's facilities reasonably available to the community in a way that does not take away from its primary responsibility; does not jeopardize the person or property of the school, the user, or any invitee, and does not materially burden the school with additional costs or risk of liability. This does not apply to school-sponsored organizations.

Individuals interested in using Horse Creek Academy's facility for an event should contact Sandy Penvoe at spenvose@hcacs.net for more information regarding policies, availability, and rental fees.

Public Forum

Horse Creek Academy Charter School premises may not be used as a public forum by any individual, group, or organization other than the Horse Creek Academy Board of Directors or designee. Any use of school facilities by any other entity for purposes such as the signing of petitions, is expressly prohibited.

Gifts and Requests

Gifts

HCA requests that individual expressions of appreciation be made with small gifts or through a note. Solicitation of financial donations for group gifts is prohibited. We make this request because the donation can be a financial burden to some families, the receipt of an expensive gift may be uncomfortable for a teacher, but most importantly, we look to preserve the professional, conflict-free, balance that exists among Employees, Students, and Parents.

HCA Spirit Rock

Want to celebrate a birthday, accomplishment, or share a positive message with the Village? Families are invited to rent the HCA Spirit Rock throughout the year!

Rental Options:

- 3-Day Rental: $30
- 5-Day Rental: $50
- All rental dates are first come, first served.

How to Reserve:

To request a Spirit Rock rental, please contact Rebecca Fail at rfail@hcacs.net. She will confirm availability and provide next steps.

Payment & Painting Info:

- Payment is due one week before your scheduled rental start date. A reminder will be sent if payment hasn't been received.
- All payments must be made at the Middle & High School Front Office (Building B).
- If payment is not received on time, your reservation will be canceled.
- You may begin painting the rock after 5:00 PM the day before your rental begins (weather permitting).
- For example: A rental from August 2–4 can be painted after 5:00 PM on August 1.

- The rock must display a positive and appropriate message. Any content deemed inappropriate or offensive by HCA administration will be painted over immediately.
- Renters must supply their own paint and may only paint the front and top of the rock.
- The rock will be returned to its base white color on the final day of the rental during elementary carline, weather permitting.

Classroom Teacher Requests

Parents and guardians may request a teacher through email to the Lead Learner. These requests are not guaranteed to be fulfilled. There are many factors that contribute to roster building and we cannot guarantee a specific classroom teacher placement.

Twins and Multiples Exception:
SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:
"Section 59-63-35. A parent or guardian may request that their twins or multiples, who are enrolled in the same school and in the same grade, be placed in the same classroom. Upon receiving the parent or guardian's request in writing, the executive director must grant the parent or guardian's request if the twins or multiples are on the same educational level and meet the class's qualifications. If after sixty classroom days, the executive director has documented reasons as to why separating the twins or multiples best serves the school's health or safety needs, the executive director may separate the twins or multiples. A parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the local school board.

Class Observations-Parent Expectations

At Horse Creek Academy, we deeply value the partnership between home and school. We welcome parent involvement and are committed to fostering a transparent, collaborative learning environment. To ensure that classroom observations are productive and respectful of all students and staff, the following guidelines must be followed:

All observing parents/guardians must complete and sign a Classroom Observation Confidentiality Agreement prior to entering the classroom.

1. Scheduling Your Observation
   - Observations must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance by contacting either school administration or your child's teacher.
   - Dates and times must be mutually agreed upon, based on teacher availability and classroom needs.

2. Length of Visit
   - Standard classroom observations are limited to 60 minutes.
   - Longer visits may be approved with special permission from school administration.

3. Maintaining a Respectful Presence
   - Parents must follow all school discipline and decorum expectations while on campus.
   - To avoid disruption, please do not engage in conversation with students, the teacher, or other staff members during the observation.

4. Protecting Student Privacy
   - The privacy and confidentiality of all students and staff must be respected.
   - Recording or photographing during an observation is strictly prohibited unless explicitly approved by administration.

5. Preventing Disruptions
   - If your presence becomes a distraction to the classroom, the observation may be paused, rescheduled, or ended early.
   - Repeated disruptions may result in a temporary or permanent restriction from future classroom observations.

partnership with families.

The HCA School Board

Each school board member is responsible for actively participating in the work of the Horse Creek Academy's Board of Directors and the life of the school. Each member is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. These expectations are to be clearly articulated prior to accepting a nomination or applying to a position on the Board of Directors. Individual members of the Board are expected to help each other fulfil the responsibilities below.

- Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values and mission of Horse Creek Academy Charter School.
- Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
- Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board of Directors:
  - Focus on the good of the organization and not on a personal agenda.
  - Support board decisions once they are made.
  - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the Board.
  - Build awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management
  - Adhere to all School policies.
  - Maintain in the strictest of confidence, all personnel, and legal matters.
- Regularly attend Board meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing and bringing necessary materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the Board President.
- Be prepared to contribute approximately 8-10 hours per month toward Board service including:
  - Attending a monthly Board of Directors meeting (2-3 hours)
  - Reading materials and preparing for meetings (1 hour)
  - Attending events at the school, assisting with fundraising and other ambassador tasks as needed (1-2 hours)
- Keep informed about the school and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.

- Actively participate in three or more event(s) annually.
- Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of Horse Creek Academy

Board Governance

Horse Creek Academy Charter School is a tax-exempt non-profit corporation through the South Carolina Secretary of State's office, and as such, is governed by a Board of Directors.

The Horse Creek Academy Board of Directors is elected annually each September by the parent body and employees of Horse Creek Academy Charter School, in compliance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (1996).

Horse Creek Academy's Board of Directors is responsible for governing, not managing, the school.

Board members ensure that Horse Creek Academy's academic programs are consistent with the school's mission and are successful in educating all students. They also ensure that school funds are properly managed and accounted for. Board members develop and evaluate school policies to ensure that they are lawful, fair, and provide appropriate protection and opportunity for everyone involved with the school.

Horse Creek Academy Charter School's Executive Director and Leadership Team are responsible for inspiring, leading, guiding, and directing every member of the instructional and support services team, and for achieving the highest standards of excellence, so that each individual student enrolled in the school may have a complete, valuable, meaningful, and personally rewarding education.

The Executive Director is responsible directly to the Board of Directors for operating the school. The Board will delegate its authority to the school Executive Director to execute approved policies as well as manage the day-to-day activities of the school.

Board Meetings

At Horse Creek Academy, we believe in transparency, community voice, and shared leadership. Our school board meetings are open to the public and provide a great opportunity to learn more about school policies, decisions, and upcoming initiatives.

Meeting Access & Participation

- Regular meeting dates are posted in advance on our website and livestreamed via our HCA Board YouTube Channel.
- Meetings follow a structured agenda and may include executive sessions as allowed under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
- Community members and parents are welcome to attend and observe.

Public Comment

- Most board meetings include a time for public comment. To speak during this time, you must register in advance as outlined below.
- Please note that while we value your voice, board meetings must stay on schedule and follow the posted agenda.

For the latest meeting dates, livestream links, or to learn how to register for public comment, visit the Board section of our website or reach out to the school office for more details.

How to Speak at a Board Meeting

- Individuals wishing to have their name and/or topic on the agenda must register via the website by 12:00 (noon) the day of the meeting, completing the online form in its entirety. The individuals will be given five (5) minutes to comment.
- All materials to be distributed at the Board meeting must be turned into the Board secretary at Horse Creek Academy no later than 12:00 (noon) the day of the scheduled Board meeting. Failing to meet this deadline will result in those materials not being allowed to be distributed at the meeting.
- Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation; if appropriate.
- No participant may speak more than once on the same topic unless all others who wish to speak on the topic have been heard.
- All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.

Medical Information

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for meeting the health needs of students while under the charge of individuals employed or contracted to act on behalf of the school.

Provision of School Health Services

The Horse Creek Academy health services program promotes health and safety, facilitates positive student development, and intervenes when actual or potential health issues could hinder the education process. We are here to serve students with chronic conditions, emergent needs, and minor injuries during the school day. Injuries or health concerns that occur outside of school should be treated at home or by students' health care providers. The school nurse cannot diagnose or prescribe medications.

Parents must inform the school nurse of chronic medical conditions requiring intervention during the school day. All medications or procedures require a signed permission form and/or Dr. order when required. All students with life-threatening allergies or conditions must have a completed Emergency Action Plan.

Medical records and emergency contact forms for new and returning students must be updated and available by the first week in August each year. The school must have up-to-date contact information for parents and guardians in case of a medical emergency.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has outlined general standards of medication administration in a school setting to provide a safe and effective system for administering medications to students during the school day and at school-sponsored functions. HCA follows these standards of practice to promote safety, compliance, and quality in meeting the needs of our students.

Horse Creek Academy will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that the need for health services does not impede any student's access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Legal References:

- Federal Law - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act Section 1400
- SC Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
- Code of Laws - Title 40 - Chapter 33 - Nurses

Health Room Visits and Medication

Horse Creek Academy is committed to keeping students healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Beginning with the 2025–2026 school year, the following procedures were put into place for student visits to the school nurse for non-chronic and non-emergent issues:

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication:

- Students may receive up to six (6) visits per school year for over-the-counter medications provided by the school, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- A completed Over-the-Counter Medication Permission Form must be on file.
- Per South Carolina law, no medication can be administered to a student under 18 without written parental consent.

After the Sixth Visit

Once a student reaches six visits for OTC medication, one of the following options will be required:

- A parent or guardian must come to school to administer the medication in person.

OR

- The parent or guardian must provide the student's own OTC medication, along with a completed Medication Permission Form, signed by both a parent/guardian and a healthcare provider. This form must include specific instructions for administering the medication.

Please note: The school nurse may decline to administer any medication that does not include a doctor's order.

Special Considerations

- Benadryl (diphenhydramine) will only be administered in cases of severe allergic reactions.
- Students with chronic health conditions requiring frequent visits must provide:
  - Medical documentation from a healthcare provider
  - A completed Medication Permission Form
  - The appropriate medication supplied by the parent

How Parents Can Help

- Administer any necessary OTC medication at home before school when possible.
- Understand that school nurses operate under physician orders and cannot diagnose or treat conditions that did not occur at school.
- Injuries or illnesses that happen at home must be treated at home.
- If your child has an acute condition that may require more frequent nurse visits temporarily, please reach out to the HCA nursing team to create a care plan.

Medication Forms:

- Over the Counter Medication Form
- Prescription Medication Form
- Self-Carry/Self-Medication Permission Form

Parent Notification

Most health room visits do not require verbal notification to a parent/guardian. It is important to note that the nurse cannot comply with a parent's request to receive a call every time their child is seen in the health room. If a student must be dismissed from school, the parent/guardian is expected to pick them up within 45 minutes of notification. If the parent/guardian is unavailable to pick up a student, it will be the parent/guardian's responsibility to arrange appropriate transportation. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the nurse will try to reach the approved contacts until pick-up

arrangements are made. If no one is available to pick up the student, the nurse and administration team will decide on the next steps.

A parent/guardian will be verbally notified in the following instances: • Symptoms that require the student to be excluded from school per the SCDHEC School and Childcare Exclusion List

- Any condition related to a known medical diagnosis, but the symptoms make it difficult for the student to remain in class.
- Significant head injury as evidenced by any of the following symptoms: significant bruising or swelling, loss of consciousness, excessive drowsiness or dizziness, disorientation, severe headache, unequal or dilated pupils, double vision, nausea, vomiting, seizures, unsteady gait, loss of coordination, paresthesia (numbness, tingling), or behavioral changes.
- Significant eye injuries as evidenced by any of the following: excessive redness, visual disturbances, or moderate pain.
- Significant back or neck injury resulting in impaired mobility, tingling, or numbness in the extremities.
- Insect stings or bites with significant reactions, or if it is the child's first time being stung.
- Wounds that the nurse recommends receive further medical evaluation.
- A suspected sprain or fracture.
- Animal bites that occur at school.
- Any situation where the nurse determines the student's well-being is threatened.

Excessive Nurse Visits

At HCA, we are committed to supporting students' health while also ensuring uninterrupted learning. We want every student to feel safe and supported when visiting the health room, and we also aim to minimize unnecessary disruptions to classroom instruction.

When to Visit the Nurse

Some symptoms require immediate attention, while others can often be handled in the classroom. Teachers may encourage students to first:

- Get a drink of water
- Eat a snack
- Rest briefly with their head down
- Apply a classroom-provided bandage

Essential Reasons to Visit the Health Room Include:

- Fever or vomiting
- Nosebleeds or open wounds
- Head injury or injury during gym/recess
- Persistent headache or stomachache
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Severe allergic reactions
- Other visible or medically necessary concerns

Non-Essential Reasons May Include:

- Work avoidance or general classroom distraction
- Requesting water, mints, or snacks without symptoms
- Minor bumps or scratches that can be addressed in class

Frequent Health Room Visits

We monitor nurse visits to ensure students receive appropriate care and to identify patterns that may need support. A frequent visitor is defined as a student who visits the health room three or more times within one month (or four consecutive weeks) without medical documentation of a chronic condition.

When this occurs, HCA may implement the following interventions:

- A meeting with the student to determine the cause of frequent visits
- Parent/guardian contact via phone or email
- Notification to relevant teachers, administrators, or school counselors.

- A meeting with the parent/guardian, school nurse, and appropriate staff to develop a support plan

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication Policy

- Students may receive up to six (6) visits per school year for over-the-counter medications provided by the school, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- A completed Over-the-Counter Medication Permission Form must be on file.
- Per South Carolina law, medication cannot be administered to students under 18 without written parental consent.

After the Sixth Visit for OTC Medication

Once a student reaches six visits for school-supplied OTC medication, one of the following will be required:

Option 1: A parent or guardian must come to school to administer the medication.

Option 2: The parent or guardian may provide the student's own OTC medication, along with a completed Medication Permission Form signed by both a parent/guardian and a licensed healthcare provider. This form must include instructions for administration.

Please note: The school nurse may decline to administer any medication that does not include a provider's written order.

School Nurse Designee

Horse Creek Academy maintains a minimum of one licensed nurse on staff to provide school nursing services for students during regular school hours. Nurses must possess a current unrestricted license recognized by the South Carolina Board of Nursing for nursing practice in the state of South Carolina. The duties and responsibilities of nurses will be set in accordance with the laws and regulations governing nursing in South Carolina. If a school employs a licensed practical nurse (LPN), a registered nurse (RN) will be available for oversight.

. If an RN or LPN is unavailable, a trained Unlicensed Assisted Personnel (UAP) may provide students with specific medication administration and nursing services.

All UAPs will be trained by a licensed nurse employed by Horse Creek Academy in accordance with the South Carolina Board of Nursing Advisory Standards. Consistent with the laws governing nursing practice in South Carolina and the most current South Carolina Board of Nursing Advisories, training for school personnel who are not licensed nurses may include the following.

- Performing nursing tasks related to meeting a student's needs for personal hygiene, nutrition, ambulation, or elimination; taking a student's vital signs; maintaining asepsis; and observing, recording, and reporting any of the above-mentioned tasks.
- Providing emergency medications and assistance for specific students if the students experience an emergency event when a licensed nurse is unavailable.
- Assisting students with routine medications (i.e., medications given on a routine schedule) if the licensed nurse assigned to the school on a full-time basis is absent or not available.

A licensed RN who is an employee of the school will be available via telecommunications to support trained school personnel who are providing nursing tasks and services in the absence or unavailability of a licensed nurse. All school and contract personnel providing health services will follow school procedures for reporting medication errors and other health services for quality assurance purposes.

Legal References:

- SC Code, 1976, as amended:
- Section 40-33-44. – On-site supervision of a licensed practical nurse (LPN).
- Section 40-33-42 – Delegation of nursing tasks to unlicensed assistive personnel.

Medication Administration:

Horse Creek Academy recognizes the occasional need for students to take medication at school, during field trips, or at school-related functions. Only the school nurse or trained UAP may administer medication or prescribed treatments. Only a licensed school nurse may administer injections; however, a student may be authorized to self-administer injections if determined appropriate and consistent with district policy and federal and state law. In certain circumstances, eligible students may self-monitor or self-administer medication as prescribed in their individual healthcare plan (IHP). HCA retains the discretion to reject requests to assist students with a medication or medical procedure.

ALL MEDICATION MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER

- Permission for medications must be renewed and reviewed each school year. A completed permission for medication administration form must accompany all medications.
- When possible, medications should be given by parents/legal guardians before or after school hours.
- If your child forgets to take a morning dose of medication, health room personnel are not allowed to give that dose at school. Failure to administer morning medication may have an adverse effect on the child's learning. In these cases, the parent will be called to either administer the medication at school or remove the child from school for the remainder of the day.
- The school nurse or UAP will not give the first dose of any medication prescribed or OTC that the student has not taken previously.
- All medication must be taken directly to the school nurse upon arrival on campus. It is against school policy for a student to carry ANY medication on their person without a physician's, parent's, and school's permission to self-administer and self-monitor (SC Law S144).

Any medication found in a student's possession during the school day (other than a student who has permission to possess the medication under an IHP) will be confiscated by school personnel and the school principal or designee will take necessary action in accordance with school policy.

- Medication required for field trips must be given to and administered by an employee of Horse Creek Academy who has completed field trip training. A parent may send in a written request that daily medication not be given on a field trip.

HCA follows the South Carolina Boards of Medical Examiners, Nursing, and Pharmacy, Joint Advisory Opinion Regarding Over-the-Counter Medications in Schools, Issued September 2013 - Delineating requirements for administration of over-the-counter medications with and without a prescription.

Before administering any medication, which includes prescription, herbal, homeopathic, and non-prescription medications, all the following conditions must be met:

- **Prescription Medications:**
  - The parent/legal guardian must submit a completed "Permission for Medication" form to the school nurse which includes written orders from a healthcare practitioner recognized by South Carolina's Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation as authorized to prescribe medications.
  - Forms must include the following information:
  - Child's full name and date of birth
  - Physician's name and telephone number
  - Name of medication
  - Time(s) to be administered
  - Dosage
  - Purpose of medication
  - Possible side effects

- Termination date for administering medication
- Medical diagnosis

- One form per medication.
- ALL prescription medication must be brought to school by a legal guardian or designated person over 18 years of age and given directly to the school nurse or designated school personnel. The responsible adult delivering medication to the school may be required to count and sign in medication with the nurse or designated employee. The school nurse has the discretion to allow an eligible student to bring medicines with written parental permission under certain circumstances.
- Prescription medications will only be given as written on the original bottle and physician's order.
- If a prescribed medication is changed or discontinued, the school nurse must be notified immediately. Prescriptions that have been changed must be updated on the Permission for Medication Form and signed by the physician before administration.
- Neither the school nor its personnel will be held liable for adverse reactions when the medication is given in the prescribed manner.
- The student's parent or legal guardian will reclaim unused medications within one week of the termination of treatment or within one week of the last day of school. Remaining medications will be securely destroyed at this time.

Non-prescription/Over- the -counter medication

- Students may receive up to six (6) visits per school year for over-the-counter medications provided by the school, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- A completed Over-the-Counter Medication Permission Form must be on file.
- Per South Carolina law, no medication can be administered to a student under 18 without written parental consent.
- Refer to page 15 for information on what occurs after the sixth visit.

- Herbal/Alternative Medicinal Products are not regulated by the FDA and will not be administered by HCA personnel. A Physician Authorization form and a Parent-Student Agreement form must be completed and turned into your school nurse prior to allowing your student to self-administer an herbal/alternative product in the school setting. The school retains the right to deny requests for Herbal/Alternative Products.
- Parents are responsible for knowing the expiration date of any medication brought to school and replacing medication before the expiration date. School nurses will not administer any medication past the expiration date.
- No medication containing aspirin can be given at school without a doctor's authorization. This includes but is not limited to Pepto Bismol (children's Pepto is allowed), Excedrin, and some OTC cold medications.
- Medications that have expired or are not currently being used by a student will not be stored at the school. Parents will be notified and given an opportunity to pick up their child's medications. Medications not picked up will be disposed of in a manner that respects security and environmental concerns.

https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t44c053.php

Self-monitoring and Self-carry

Students may be allowed to carry, self-monitor, and self-administer specific medications only with permission from the prescribing doctor, written parent/legal guardian, and signed student acknowledgment form. Forms are available in the Self-Carry/Self-Administration packet. If there is sufficient evidence that unsupervised self-monitoring or self-medicating would seriously jeopardize the safety of the student or others, the school may refuse to allow the student to carry their medication. Examples of medications that are approved for self-administering include but not limited to asthma inhalers, insulin for diabetic students, and Epi-Pens for severe allergic reactions. The school nurse and administration retain the right to decline requests for self-carry and self-administration.

The school will grant permission to self-monitor and self-administer medication on a year-by-year basis, based on appropriate written authorizations while considering the following:

- Recommendation from the student's provider who prescribed the medication
- Signed permission from parent/guardian and provider
- Student's maturity level and competency
- The school environment
- The type of medication or equipment involved, e.g., risk of addiction/overdose/abuse, particularly in the case of controlled substances, effects of medication if taken by others, disposal procedures for biohazardous waste
- The outcome for the student if not allowed to self-monitor or self-administer medication
- Other factors determined by the school nurse or administration on an individual basis
- Authorization requires the parent/legal guardian to sign a statement acknowledging that the school will incur no liability because of any injury arising from taking or using medications or self-monitoring devices by the pupil and that the parent/legal guardian will indemnify and hold harmless Horse Creek Academy and its employees and agents against any claims arising out of the self-monitoring or self-administration of medication by the pupil.

Legal references: SC Code, 1976, as amended:

- Section 15-78-60– Immunity from liability for districts and employees.
- Section 59-63-95 – Administration of lifesaving medications in schools.

IHPs

Horse Creek Academy will provide certain students with special healthcare needs with an individual healthcare plan (IHP) written by a registered nurse. Students with the medical definitions below require an IHP.

- Students who have been granted permission to self-medicate and/or self-monitor.
- Students with chronic health conditions requiring treatments, procedures, medications, and/or monitoring that must be performed by school personnel and that meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - Complicated and/or lengthy
  - Require several contacts with the nurse or UAP during the day
  - On an emergent basis to prevent death or disability
  - Students who have medically fragile health conditions
  - Any prescribed treatment, medical procedures, medications, and/or monitoring required at school for more than fourteen consecutive days
- The IHP will provide guidance for meeting a student's health monitoring and care needs during the school day or at school-sponsored functions. The student's IHP will contain components as required by the state department of education and will be developed with input from and approval of the following individuals:
  - Student's healthcare provider
  - Parent/legal guardian
  - Student, if appropriate
  - School nurse or other designated school staff member.

Exclusion Procedures (When to stay home)

HCA follows the guidelines outlined in the SCDHEC School and Childcare Exclusion List. https://scdhec.gov/health/child-teen-health/school-exclusion.

Reasons to keep your child home include but are not limited to the following:

- Excessive diarrhea or vomiting
- Unexplained rash
- Common contagious illnesses, including pink eye, strep, flu, covid, etc.
- Temperature above 100.4 degrees F

A child who has been ill should return to school only when well enough to participate fully in all activities and is symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medications.

Help your child practice infection control at home and school by reinforcing simple hygienic practices. Encourage children to use a tissue to wipe their nose following a sneeze, cover their cough with a sleeve or tissue, and wash hands with soap and water after disposing of tissues in a wastebasket. Remind them to wash their hands thoroughly before lunch and after going to the bathroom and not to share food or drinks.

Emergency Medications

Pursuant to state law Horse Creek Academy authorizes the school nurses and other designated school personnel to utilize epinephrine auto-injectors in the following circumstances:

- Provide an epinephrine auto-injector to a student to self-administer in accordance with a prescription specific to the student that is on file with the school.
- Administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a student in accordance with a prescription specific to the student that is on file with the school.

HCA's plan for managing students with life-threatening allergies enrolled in the school includes but is not limited to the following:

- Education and training for school personnel on the management of students with life-threatening allergies, including training related to the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector; techniques on how to recognize symptoms of severe allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis; and the standards and procedures for the storage and administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.
- Procedures for responding to life-threatening allergic reactions, including emergency follow-up procedures.
- A process for developing individualized health care and allergy action plans for every student with a known life-threatening allergy.

Emergency Medications (Life-Threatening Situations Only)

Horse Creek Academy recognizes that an emergency may arise when school nurse or other designated school personnel believes in good faith that a student or visitor on school premises is experiencing anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction. State law permits physicians and certain medical personnel licensed to prescribe epinephrine auto-injectors to be maintained in the name of a school. A school may maintain a stock supply of epinephrine auto-injectors in accordance with a prescription issued under the Safe Access to Vital Epinephrine (SAVE) Act. Pursuant to state law and in accordance with district policy Horse Creek Academy authorizes school nurses and other trained UAPs to utilize epinephrine auto injectors in life-threatening emergencies.

No one, including, without limitation, parents/legal guardians of students, should rely on the school for the availability of an epinephrine auto-injector. There is no guarantee of availability for an epinephrine auto-injector; students and their parents/legal guardians should consult their physician regarding this medication.

The SAVE Act provides school boards, districts, schools, school nurses, and/or other designated school personnel immunity from liability for damages caused by injuries to a student or another person resulting from the administration or self-administration of an epinephrine auto-injector and plan development and implementation as allowed and set forth under the Act.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the administration of medications at Horse Creek Academy, please reach out to one of our school nurses- Norma Tibbs for elementary or Christina Shealy for MS/HS at 803-226-0160.

Family Responsibilities

Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between the school, the family, and the community. To send a consistent message to students regarding the importance of service and connection every family is expected to complete 15 service hours per year. 10 of these service hours must be done on the HCA campus, while 5 hours must be completed in the surrounding CSRA community. Starting with the 26-27 school year, families should log hours via the Track it Forward platform.

In addition to service hours, families are expected to upload the values and mission of HCA by:

Model attitudes and behaviors that support the Horse Creek Academy mission by:

- Showing respect to the teachers and Horse Creek Academy employees by work and deed, both at school and away from school.
- Modeling effective conflict resolution by handling concerns appropriately, directly, and honestly, only with those involved.

Show respect for the importance of school by having students:

- Arrive on time and remain the full length of the school day.
- Comply with the school calendar regarding vacations.
- Attending to everyday health and nutritional needs.
- Balance activities outside of school with school responsibilities.

Enhance learning by:

- Staying informed by reading, discussing, and signing communications from the school, thereby demonstrating to your child that you are interested in his/her progress and learning.
- Monitoring the completion of classwork, homework, and projects.
- Assisting in remedial assignments.
- Planning to obtain make-up assignments and monitoring their completion when necessary.

- Working with the attendance clerk and teachers to plan for absences other than those due to illness.
- Establishing a time, place, and routine for study at home.
- Giving positive reinforcement for appropriate attitudes and behaviors.
- Encouraging your child and praising him/her for doing his/her best.
- Attending Teacher/Parent/Student conferences to obtain detailed information about your child's strengths, weaknesses, and progress and fulfilling agreements made at those conferences.
- Ensuring that your child has proper rest, nutrition, and recreation to promote well-being and readiness to learn.
- Providing home consequences for inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning or the well-being of all students.
- Spending time with your child so that his/her emotional needs are met, and he/she can focus on learning.
- Cooperating with specific requests of the school to ensure appropriate student behavior and/or an appropriate academic program for your child.
- Checking the PowerSchool Parent Portal for your child's grades, absences, and tardies.

Supporting the overall school program by:

- Attending Horse Creek Academy parent meetings and school functions regularly.
- Making an impact through our Village Volunteers Program.

Village Volunteers

At Horse Creek Academy, we emphasize the importance of parent and family involvement. HCA is enhancing our community impact by expecting families to complete 15 service hours. Of these, 10 hours must be on the HCA campus, and 5 hours should be in the larger Aiken/CSRA community.

To support and show our appreciation for our staff, families are also expected to make one supply donation per quarter. While there is no minimum monetary cost for these donations, we encourage you to give as generously as you can.

Families should log their hours and donations via our new Track it Forward platform.

Volunteering

All volunteer checks will be done in-person as you enter the school. You must have a state issued ID with you, as your ID will be scanned. After scanning, an instant background check is completed, then a badge is created for you for that day/time. In order to keep our campus secure, volunteers must scan their ID every time they volunteer on campus. This ensure all records are up to date and we are creating a secure campus environment that tracks all visitors and volunteers.

Note: Additional steps and a fee will be required in order for individuals to volunteer to drive on field trips. More information on these steps will be provided by your child's classroom teacher.

VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS

Supporting Horse Creek Academy through service and giving.

10 ON-CAMPUS SERVICE HOURS

Activities that count include:

- Attending PTO Meetings
- Board Meetings
- Chaperoning Field Trips
- Being a Teacher/Office Helper
- Campus Clean-Ups
- Running the School Store at After-Hours Events
- Serving at PTO Events
- And More!

5 OFF-CAMPUS SERVICE HOURS

Volunteer around Aiken County!

- Community Events
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Faith-Based Service Projects
- Local Charities
- Community Clean-Ups
- And More!

EVERY HCA FAMILY COMPLETES 15 SERVICE HOURS ANNUALLY

10 On-Campus + 5 Off-Campus

SUPPLY DONATIONS

Every HCA family will make at least **4** supply donations per year (one per quarter).

Donations can include:

- Teacher Wish Lists
- PTO Events
- General Office Supplies
- Cleaning Supplies
- Copy Paper
- And More!

The amount is whatever is feasible for your family.

Looking for your teacher's wishlist? It's listed on their staff page!

NEW FOR 2026–2027

Volunteer hours and supply donations will be logged through our new **Track It Forward** platform.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

For the health, safety, and well-being of children, please do not arrive before 7:30am as personnel are not available to supervise students. Please have all students remain in the car until Horse Creek Academy Faculty and Employees greet students at their car in the Student Loading Zone at 7:30am. The Front Doors of the school are locked until this time. Additionally, visitor parking is limited and should be reserved for parents wo are parking to volunteer, chaperone a field trip, attend a school meeting, etc. Lastly, REFRAIN from using your cellphone or speeding while driving on school grounds. Again, the school parking lot is a busy place – safety is our top priority.

Elementary: 7:30-8:00am

- School begins at 8:00am for 4k-5th grade students. Any student who arrives after 8:05am is tardy.
- Regular student drop-off begins at 7:30am.

Middle School: 8:00-8:20

- School begins at 8:20am for 6th-8th grade students. Any student who arrives after 8:25am is tardy.
- Regular student drop-off for middle school begins at 8:00am.

High School: 8:00-8:20

- School begins at 8:20am for 9th-12th grade students. Any student who arrives after 8:25am is tardy.
- Regular student drop-off for high school begins at 8:00am.

*Middle/High School students may be dropped off with their elementary siblings/s. Students will be supervised in a designated location until their respective arrival time.

Early Care

HCA provides a paid Early Care program for all students beginning at 6:15 AM each school day.

For more details, please see the flyer below or contact Sharon Birchmore at sbirchmore@hcacs.net.



Dismissal

Elementary-2:30
Students will dismiss to their designated locations for car line dismissal. Students will exit through the front doors of the main building to load into their car. Teachers will be on duty to assist with loading.

Middle School-3:20
Students will dismiss to their designated locations for car line dismissal. Teachers will be on duty to assist with loading.

High School-3:20
High school student drivers should report directly to the high school parking lot for dismissal. If they are driving home a younger elementary or middle school student, they should meet their sibling on the sidewalk between the high school building and elementary building. Non- drivers should report to their designated location to wait for car line pick up. Teachers will be on duty to assist with loading.

*Elementary/Middle School students may wait for older siblings at no cost in a designated supervised area

Carline Procedures
Updated Emergency/Pickup Information

It is important that your emergency contact and carpool information is complete and up to date. Students can only be released to adults listed on the Student Information form completed during enrollment. If you wish to have another adult listed, please send the request in writing to the Front Office. If your request for a particular adult is just for one day, please send a note to the classroom teacher.

Children must have a permission note (from their parents/guardians) to go with a person not designated on the enrollment form. All changes to dismissal plans are to be reported to the Front Office by 1:00pm (Elementary) and 2:00pm (Middle/High).

Late Pick-up
Elementary: 3:00 Middle and High: 3:45

If you are running late, please call the front office and inform your child's teacher. At 3:00 pm (for elementary) and 3:45pm (for middle and high), any students remaining in the carline will be considered late pick-up. Students not picked up by 3:45 will go to HCA's After Care Program.

1st Late Pick Up - $25 registration fee per student
2nd Late Pick Up & Moving Forward - $15 per student

After Care

HCA also offers a paid After Care program for students in 5K through 12th grade. For more information, please refer to the flyer below or reach out to Sharon Birchmore at sbirchmore@hcacs.net.

After Care

HCA also offers a paid After Care program for students in 5K through 12th grade. For more information, please refer to the flyer below or reach out to Sharon Birchmore at sbirchmore@hcacs.net.



Attendance, Enrollment, and Withdrawal

Attendance Policy, updated May 2023

PURPOSE: The purpose of this attendance policy is to formally establish guidelines regarding student attendance at Horse Creek Academy. The HCA School Board believes that regular school attendance and participation will allow students to not only progress academically but will allow them to grow socially and emotionally in the areas of the three pillars as designated in our mission statement.

According to South Carolina State Law, SECTION 59-65-10, all children between the ages of five and seventeen years of age shall be required to attend a public or private school, or be enrolled in a home school association.

The school year consists of 180 days of instruction. High school students will need to attend 170 days for a year long course, or 85 days out of a 90 day semester course to earn full course credit.

REFERENCES:
South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations
R-43-274 - Student attendance

South Carolina Laws, Section 59
Section 59-5-65(4) - Powers and responsibilities of state board of education.
Section 59-65-10 - Compulsory attendance age group in South Carolina includes children ages five through 17; parents may waive compulsory kindergarten attendance requirement.
Section 59-35-10 - Each district to provide a kindergarten program.

Section 59-63-20(3) - Entrance age for kindergarten program.
Section 59-63-20(4) - Entrance age for first grade.
Section 59-63-20(6) - Four-year-olds may attend optional child development programs.

Student Absences and Excuses

South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations
R-43-274 - Student attendance
According to South Carolina State Law, students aged 5-17 are required to attend school. An Attendance Intervention Plan must be completed by a school representative for students who have missed 3 consecutive or 5 unlawful/unexcused school days. This Intervention Plan meeting is held with the student, parent/guardian, and school representatives. This is an intervention on the school level to address the issues that have prevented the student(s) from not attending school as required by law.
If a student accumulates ten (10) or more unexcused absences, then State Law allows legal action to be taken against the parent or guardian through a Family Court referral or even investigation by the SC Department of Social Services. It is important for parents, guardians and custodians to remember that written notes are needed to excuse an absence for reasons listed in the student handbook under excused absences. This note must be received by the school within 72 hours of the absence.

From SC State Law R-43-274

Absences

Lawful Absences
Lawful absences include but are not limited to:

- absences caused by a student's own illness and whose attendance in school would endanger his/her health or the health of others,
- absences due to an illness or death in the student's immediate family,
- absences due to a recognized religious holiday of the student's faith, a

- absences due to activities that are approved in advance by the executive director.

Unlawful absences

- absences of a student without the knowledge of his or her parents, or
- absences of a student without acceptable cause with the knowledge of his or her parents.
- Suspension is not to be counted as an unlawful absence for truancy purposes.

Truancy

Truant - A child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of a truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.

Habitual Truant - A "habitual" truant is a child age 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences. This child may need court intervention and an initial truancy petition may be filed. The written intervention plan, and documentation of non-compliance, must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention.

Chronic Truant - A "chronic" truant is a child ages 12 to 17 years who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a "habitual" truant, has been referred to Family Court and placed on an order to attend school, and continues to accumulate unlawful absences. Should other community alternatives and referrals fail to remedy the attendance problem, the "chronic" truant may be referred to the Family Court for violation of a previous court order. All school intervention plans existing to this point for this child and family must accompany the Contempt of Court petition as well as a written recommendation from the school to the court on action the court should take.

Intervention Plans

After three consecutive unlawful absences or total of five unlawful absences occur, school officials will do the following.

- Immediately intervene by identifying the reasons for the student's continued absences and develop a plan in conjunction with the student (if 12 or older) and parent/legal guardian to improve future attendance. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet with the parent/legal guardian to identify the reasons for the continued absence, including phone calls, written messages, and home visits, both during and after normal business hours.

- Hold a conference with the student (if 12 or older) and the parent/legal guardian for the purpose of improving the student's attendance. This conference will be documented on an approved intervention plan form and will include but is not limited to the following:
- Reasons for the unlawful absences.
- Actions to be taken by the parent/legal guardian and student to resolve the cause of the unlawful absences.
- Documentation of referrals to appropriate service providers and if available, alternative school and community-based programs.
- Actions to be taken by school personnel.
- Actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue.
- Signature of the parent/legal guardian or evidence that attempts were made to involve the parent/legal guardian.
- Signature of all school personnel that have been involved in developing the plan.
- Results of the actions taken by the parent/legal guardian and school personnel.
- Addendum to the plans as needed.
- Guidelines for making revisions to the plan.

If the student has continued to accrue unlawful absences after the intervention plan is completed, the student will be reported to South Carolina Department of Social Services and/or Aiken County Solicitor for Family Court. HCA administration will refer parents/legal guardians of students who are aged 5 through 16 years of age to family court only after an intervention plan has been completed and the student accumulates two additional unlawful absences. Students and/or parent/legal guardians already under a school attendance order will also be referred to family court only after an intervention plan is completed. Included documentation reported to DSS or the courts will include a copy of the intervention plan, attendance printout, student demographics information, contact numbers and any documentation of efforts taken by the school to involve the student and/or his/her parent/legal guardian.

A child or parent/legal guardian will not be referred to family court to be placed under an order to attend school prior to the written intervention planning being completed with HCA and parent/legal guardian. Should the parent/legal guardian refuse to cooperate with the intervention planning to remedy the attendance problem, HCA has the authority to refer the student to family court in accordance with S.C. Code 59-65-50.

After 10 lawful absences, unlawful absences or a combination of the two, the administration of the school will approve or disapprove each succeeding absence. A medical note will be required to assist the administration in making that decision. The executive director may decide to not include those absences that are medically excused as a part of the 10 total absences provided the medical excuses are not deemed excessive (less than 10).

Tardiness

Tardiness has a negative impact on a student's education and can be disruptive to that of the student's classmates when a latecomer interrupts instruction. Parents should make an effort to ensure that a student arrives on time to class and is ready to participate. Unexcused tardies will be addressed in an Attendance Intervention Plan and may result in a referral to the District Attendance Office and/or Family Court.

Lawful Tardies: In order for a tardy to be excused written documentation must be provided.

- Illness on part of the student with written medical excuse
- Emergency and/or hardships at the discretion of the executive director
- Doctor or Dentist appointment
- Late bus arrival
- Teacher, Guidance or Administrator Conference

Unlawful Tardies: Three written parent excuses for any reason or combination of reasons will be accepted
per semester. Any additional excuses must be official written medical excuses etc. or will be considered unlawful.

- Illness on part of the student without a written medical excuse
- Oversleeping, traffic, carpool trouble or other "personal reasons"
- Missed Bus
- Car trouble

To support the goal of the Compulsory School Attendance Law and decrease a possible referral to the Family Court, schools may implement the following actions:

Tardies & Actions

- Tardies 1-3: Verbal and/or written warning by school personnel (Level g1)
- Tardies 4-6: Verbal and written offer to connect parent with support services (Level 2)
- Tardies 7-9: Verbal and written letter for an Unlawful Tardy Intervention Plan (School Level) (Level 3)
- Tardies 10-15: Verbal and written letter for an Unlawful Tardy Intervention Plan (School Level) (Level 4)
-
- Level 1: Warning Level
- Level 2: Support Services Letter: (i.e. Student Services Worker, Guidance, Transportation, etc.)
- Level 3: Unlawful Tardy Intervention Plan (School Level)
- Level 4: Unlawful Tardy Intervention Plan (School Level)

Signing In and Out

Once on school property during normal school hours, students may not leave school grounds unless properly signed out by a parent or legal guardian.

Signing In

Students arriving at school late must sign in at the attendance office. Only students who have a professional excuse (doctor, dentist, attorney, court, etc.) will be allowed to receive an excused permit to class. All other students who are tardy will receive a tardy pass.

Signing Out

Students are never allowed to leave school during the school day unless personal contact is made with a parent or guardian. When the student brings a written note to the attendance office, the attendance office will contact the parent or guardian to verify the information. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the student cannot sign out.

This includes all students, even those aged 17 and older. Students are not permitted to leave for lunch.

Special Circumstances

Field trips - Students may be permitted to miss class to participate in approved field trips. Students will be counted present while participating in school approved trips.

Early dismissal for sports/clubs - School executive directors are required to schedule competitive events at times that will not conflict with the instructional day of the school. However, there may be times when tournaments and playoffs will require students to miss class in order to participate. Lawful absences for these purposes are not to exceed five during the school year. No student may be excused from class for practice or team meetings.

Suspension - In-school suspensions will not count as absences. Out-of-school suspensions will count as lawful absences.

Dental/Medical/Mental Health Appointments - Students who require routine periodic visits to their healthcare provider should schedule their appointments at other than instructional time. If such visits are required during the school day, they will be scheduled at varying times. Lawful absences for these purposes are not to exceed five during the school year. Parents will make every effort to submit an excuse from the provider's office if the student is seen during the school day.

Make-up work - Students will be given the opportunity to make-up any work missed during an absence as long as the student makes appropriate arrangements with the teacher. The student will have the same number of days missed due to absence to make up any missing work, unless extra time is granted by the student's teacher(s).

Chronic or extended illness - This requires certification of the illness from the physician or other healthcare provider. Parents/Legal guardians who anticipate a student's absence of more than five consecutive days due to an extended health problem should apply immediately for homebound instruction by calling the school guidance office. A child is not counted as absent if the homebound is approved and the student receives instruction for each day approved. HCA administration will be responsible for implementing and expediting the homebound program for students experiencing a prolonged illness or injury requiring them to be absent from school.

Bereavement

Due to unfortunate circumstances, students may experience the loss of a family member or relative. The school understands the need for students to be present for the family and might need to miss school. The student will be responsible for the work missed during these absences. As a school we can approve following absences as "bereavement" if the student or parent submits a copy of the obituary or funeral program. HCA can approve up to 3 to 5 Bereavement days if the funeral is local. HCA may approve up to 10 Bereavement days for out of town or country.

High School Credit

In order to receive one unit of credit, a student must be in attendance at least 120 hours, per unit, regardless of the number of days missed. Students whose absences are approved for the purpose of awarding credit should be allowed to make up any work missed in order to satisfy the 120-hour requirement. HCA administration will consider students whose excessive absences are approved, regardless of whether these absences are lawful, unlawful, or a combination thereof, to make up work missed to satisfy the 120-hour requirement. If a grade of FA is assigned, it will carry no earned CP units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 50.

Special Note of Concern

Maximizing instructional time is a priority at Horse Creek Academy. To protect valuable time, early dismissals will not be allowed after 2:00pm (for elementary), and 3:00pm (for middle and high). Should your child have a need to be dismissed early from school, please make sure that your child is signed out prior to the deadlines listed above. Classes will not be interrupted after these time frames for the correlating grade levels. Medical notes or other documentation will be required for any sign-outs to be excused. Unexcused absences may lead to a referral to the truancy office. It is not a valid reason to sign out your child to avoid carline. Repetitive sign-outs will be referred for administrative action.

Lottery Process

In accordance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (1996), HCA's admission policy will be to admit all children eligible to attend public school in South Carolina, subject to space limitations (in which a lottery will be used). As a public charter school, HCA may accept students that live out of district; however, all students must reside in South Carolina. State residency will be confirmed upon enrollment via Final Forms online registration.

HCA will recruit, register and admit students without regard to race, religion, gender, natural origin, disability, need for special education services, immigrant status, or English-speaking status.

For the 2026-27 school year, HCA will serve students in grades 4k-12th grade. For 4k, students must be 4 on or by September 1st, 2026. For 5k, students must be 5 on or by September 1st, 2026. All new students must apply during the Open Enrollment period each year to attend.
While HCA is a free public school serving students in 5K through 12th grade, please note that our 4K program operates as a fee-based program due to the lack of state funding allocated for this grade level.

While we welcome applications from all students without discrimination, it's important to recognize that in our 4K program, students may not have their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and associated services carried over. This policy applies exclusively to the 4K grade level.

Applications and Waiting Lists are only valid for one school year at a time and do not roll over from year to year. Applicants for whom no space is available must reapply each year.

Enrollment is not guaranteed due to space limitations. When there are more applicants in a grade than spots available, a lottery for that grade will take place. In accordance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (1996), there is no appeal process when an applicant is denied admission because of lottery results and acceptance to the school. Lottery admission may not be deferred to another school year.

Continuing Enrollment

Continuing Enrollment will take place each year in December; the specific dates will be advertised yearly. This enrollment period is for CURRENT HCA students. Through this process, these students re-enroll and confirm their spot at HCA for the next grade level for the following school year. Continuing Enrollment is only for students who already attend HCA. To complete the Continuing Enrollment Process, students must complete the online Continuing Enrollment form available on our website (and sent out through social media and robocalls/emails) and pay a $50 processing fee per child. The processing fee is payable online via our school store, but HCA also accepts cash or check at the main office. A current Medicaid card may be submitted to the main office to waive the $50 processing fee.

Students who do not complete the Continuing Enrollment process (in its entirety by the deadline) lose their spot for the following school year. To re-enroll at HCA after a spot is forfeited, families would have to apply during Open Enrollment and go through the Lottery; HCA cannot guarantee that they will have a spot.

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment will take place each year in January/February; specific start and end dates will always be advertised. This enrollment period is for NEW students who wish to join the HCA Village for the following school year. Families who wish to apply to HCA for the following year must fill out the online Enrollment Application and enter their students into Lotter ease by the deadline to be considered a part of Open Enrollment. Applying during Open Enrollment does not guarantee a spot at HCA but does guarantee that your child will go into a Lottery drawing to be accepted into HCA. If a particular grade has fewer applicants than spots available, a Lottery is not needed, and all applicants are accepted automatically. Grades with more applicants than spots available will have a Lottery drawing to determine which students are accepted and which students are placed on the waitlist.

If a child is expelled from another school, we are not mandated to enroll the student here at HCA.

Late Enrollment

Late enrollment occurs any time after Open Enrollment has ended in January/February (each year the specific end date will be advertised). Students who apply during late enrollment do not have a chance to go into the Lottery drawing and, as such, are placed at the bottom of their respective grade's waitlist, unless they hold priority status. The only time a student who applies during late enrollment will be accepted is if there are still open spots in a particular grade after the Lottery has taken place.

The HCA Lottery

The Lottery applies to all grade levels in which the number of applications submitted exceeds space availability for that grade level. The lottery is an annual event that takes place in late February/Early March. Students must have applied during Open Enrollment to be placed in the HCA Lottery. HCA uses Lotterease to conduct a fair and transparent Lottery. The Lotterease system is fully randomized and creates an auditable lottery.

Applicants are ensured to be fairly placed by using a random algorithm taking into account preferred status as permitted by the school system (such as priority status which is outlined in the next section). The lottery will be run digitally through Lotterease and posted on the school website and on HCA's Facebook platform. Families are also immediately contacted via the Lotterease software through email or text message as to if their child was chosen in the Lottery or if they were placed on the Wait List.

Waitlist

The Wait List is randomly and fairly generated from the results of the HCA Lottery. A child's waitlist position may be checked online at any time through the Lotter ease portal that is available on the HCA waitlist. You may check your child's position by knowing their grade, first initial, last initial, and the last four digits of your phone number. The Wait List arranges itself in real time and all changes are logged and auditable. The Lotter ease system will automatically notify you if your child moves up the waitlist by 5 or more spots, when your child is in the top 5, and each time your child moves up above the number 5 spot.

Priority Status

Some new student applicants may receive a preference known as Priority Status. This status allows these students to be pulled first in their grades respective Lottery. If there are more priority students than spots available in a particular grade, it is not guaranteed that all priority students will get in.

If this happens, priority students are automatically placed higher on the waitlist than a general applicant. Per Section 59-40-50(8) of the SCCSA (1996), the following preferences for enrollment are allowed to give a student Priority Status as permitted by law:

- Siblings of a student already enrolled at HCA;
- Children of an HCA employee.

Acceptance

Students who are selected via the HCA Lottery will be automatically emailed and contacted via text by the Lotter ease system from the following email: Horse_Creek_Academy@lotterease.com. Please be sure to add Horse_Creek_Academy@lotterease.com as an email contact to ensure important emails do not go to spam. Horse Creek Academy is not responsible for emails or deadlines that are missed. Within the acceptance email it will be made clear that families only have a predetermined about of time, typically 7 calendar days, to accept their spot at HCA and pay the enrollment fee. Families who do not follow the steps to accept their spot within that time period will lose their spot at HCA and be placed at the end of the waitlist. Within the acceptance email is important information regarding student registration via Final Forms. This registration is mandated and must be completed by the specified deadline.

Disclaimer for Parents

Please note: Providing false or inaccurate information during registration or enrollment—whether intentional or accidental—will result in your child's application being voided and any offer of admission being withdrawn. Applications found to contain false information will be moved to the bottom of the waitlist. This includes unintentional errors, such as enrolling a student in the incorrect grade level.

Please note: ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE ONCE PAID, EVEN IF YOU LATER CHOOSE TO GIVE UP YOUR CHILD' S SPOT.

Other Lottery Information

- Website: https://app.lotterease.com/cgi-bin/sl_V2_1.pl?account_id=482&nav=Parents

Student Withdrawal

If you are withdrawing your child from Horse Creek Academy for any reason, please contact the Front Office for a withdrawal form so your child's records may be sent to the receiving school in a timely manner.

The withdrawal form provides us with the name and address of the new school your child will be attending. Student records will be forwarded upon receipt of the request from the new school. All fines must be cleared, and all school property must be returned before withdrawal.

If a student is absent for ten (10) consecutive days without the school being notified, the student will be withdrawn, and their spot will be filled. Additionally, withdrawal can be triggered by a parent's/student's failure to adhere to school discipline policies and procedures as stipulated in the discipline section.

Student Assessments

Elementary

KRA/Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (given once)
The KRA is a developmentally appropriate instrument that measures a child's school readiness across multiple domains. Understanding a child's school readiness helps kindergarten teachers best meet the child's needs, and it helps schools, families, communities and policy makers know how best to support young children as they enter the K-12 environment.
The KRA determines each child's readiness level from an evaluation of four domains: Social Foundations, Language/Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Well-Being. The KRA provides a snapshot of students' abilities at the beginning of the school year.

CogAt/Iowa: 2nd (given once)
The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and Iowa Assessments provide a comprehensive picture of a child's aptitude and mastery of certain academic skills and is administered to all 2nd grade students in SC to determine eligibility for Gifted and Talented program services. The CogAT assesses Verbal, Quantitative and Non-verbal problem solving. The Iowa Assessment is a norm- referenced achievement test to measure mastery of academic skills found in the elementary curriculum.

PTA: 2nd-5th (given once per academic year)
The South Carolina Performance Tasks Assessment (PTA) is administered from mid-February to early March. Some students in grades 2-5 (for placement in grades 3-6) participate in the PTA to qualify in Dimension C, which is one dimension, required for Gifted & Talented identification according to South Carolina state criteria. Students must qualify in two out of three dimensions.

MAP Fluency: K-1st (given three times/year)
MAP Reading Fluency provides a clear view of early literacy skills and learning needs for students in K-3rd.

MAP Growth: K- 5th (given three times/year)
MAP Growth is the most trusted and innovative assessment for measuring achievement and growth in K–10 math, reading, language usage, and science. It provides teachers with accurate, and actionable evidence to help target instruction for each student or group of students regardless of how far above or below they are from their grade level. It also connects to the largest set of instructional content providers, giving educators flexibility in curriculum choices.

SC READY: 3rd-5th (given once per academic year)
The South Carolina College- and Career- READY Assessments (SC READY) are statewide assessments administered to students in grade 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics to measure mastery of SC state standards. Results are used for state accountability and are used formatively to monitor student progress in meeting college and career ready standards and to identify curricular modifications.

SC PASS: 4th–5th (given once per academic year)
The South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) is a statewide assessment administered to students in grades four, six, and eight for science and grades five and seven for social studies. All students in these grade levels are required to take the SCPASS except those who qualify for the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt). SCPASS includes tests in two subjects: science and social studies. The PASS assessments are one of the tests used in calculating Absolute Ratings, Growth Ratings, and Federal Accountability status.

Access for Multi-lingual Learners: select students
(given once per academic year)
States must administer an English language proficiency assessment to limited English proficient students in grades K through 12 in order to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 USC 6301 et seq. (2002). The assessment administered for this purpose will be ACCESS for ELLs through the WIDA Consortium.

Middle School

MAP Growth: 6th-8th (given three times/year)
MAP Growth is the most trusted and innovative assessment for measuring achievement and growth in K–10 math, reading, language usage, and science. It provides teachers with accurate, and actionable evidence to help target instruction for each student or group of students regardless of how far above or below they are from their grade level. It also connects to the largest set of instructional content providers, giving educators flexibility in curriculum choices.

SC READY: 6th-8th (given once per academic year)
The South Carolina College- and Career- READY Assessments (SC READY) are statewide assessments administered to students in grade 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics to measure mastery of SC state standards. Results are used for state accountability and are used formatively to monitor student progress in meeting college and career ready standards and to identify curricular modifications.

Access for Multi-lingual Learners: select students
(given once per academic year)
States must administer an English language proficiency assessment to limited English proficient students in grades K through 12 in order to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 USC 6301 et seq. (2002). The assessment administered for this purpose will be ACCESS for ELLs through the WIDA Consortium.

High School

End of Course Exams
End of Course Exams (EOC) are administered to students in Algebra I, U.S. History, English II, and Biolog. End of Course Exams will count 20% of the final grade.

Access for Multi-lingual Learners (given once per academic year)
States must administer an English language proficiency assessment to limited English proficient students in grades K through 12 in order to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 USC 6301 et seq. (2002). For the 2022-2023 school year, the assessment administered for this purpose will be ACCESS for ELLs through the WIDA Consortium.

WIN (Workforce Readiness Assessment)

All Horse Creek Academy juniors participate in the WIN Career Readiness Assessment. This statewide assessment measures students' essential workplace skills in areas such as applied mathematics, workplace documents, and graphic literacy. Results help students identify career strengths, demonstrate workforce readiness to employers and colleges, and may qualify them for a nationally recognized Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). The assessment also provides valuable information to help students make informed decisions about future education, training, and career pathways.

PSAT

Students must sign up in the Counseling Office to take the PSAT no later than two weeks prior to the test date. The Junior year PSAT score is the only means of qualifying for the National Merit Scholarship, National Achievement Scholarship, and others. The PSAT score is also needed for Governor's School applications and is used in qualifying to take A.P. classes. Students should take the PSAT during their sophomore year for practice. The fee for PSAT will be collected prior to the test date. Fees will be determined on a year-to-year basis.

ACT

There are four test areas for the ACT: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. Students must send an application to the testing service 5-6 weeks before the test date.

SAT

There are three parts to the ACT: Verbal, Writing, and Mathematics. Students must send an application to the testing service 5-6 weeks before the test date.

Special Services

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

HCA is committed to providing high-quality instruction and support to promote the highest achievement of all students. At the school level, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework used to maximize the success of all students.

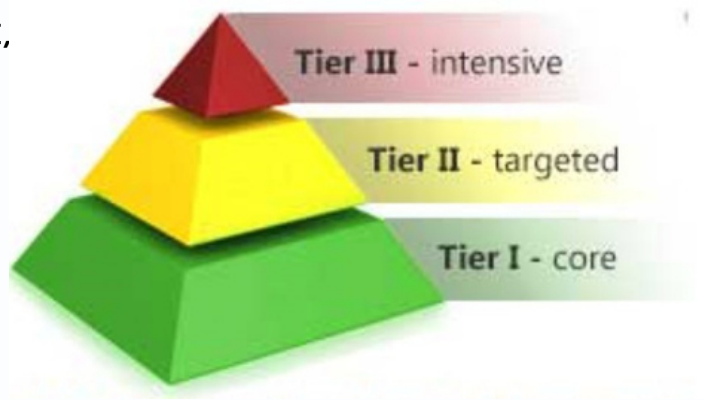
Purpose of MTSS:
The goal of MTSS is to screen early and to deliver targeted support quickly.

What are the key components of a multi-tiered system of support?
The key components of the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) are:

- High quality, research-based instruction in the general education setting
- Universal screening to identify students needing supplemental support (Tier 2 or Tier 3)
- Multiple tiers (levels) of instruction that are progressively more intense, based on the student's response to instruction
- Evidence-based interventions matched to student needs
- Ongoing progress monitoring of student performance (response to intervention)

In the multi-tiered system of support, the progress of all students is monitored, and instruction and intervention are provided in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need.

In the multi-tiered system of support, the progress of all students is monitored, and instruction and intervention are provided in varying intensities (multiple tiers) based on student need.



What can I expect from MTSS?

- Information on my child's progress in meeting grade-level standards.
- Notice of academic or behavior concerns (early identification).
- Instruction and intervention that is matched to my child's needs.
- Feedback on how my child is responding and making progress; and
- Involvement in individual, data-based problem solving for my child.

Whom do I contact if my child is struggling and needs help?
Contact your child's teacher for the first point of reference.

The second point of reference is:
Elementary Lead Learner or Middle/High Lead Learner

Special Education & 504

Special Education means specially designed instruction (34 C.F.R. § 300.39(a)(1)) to address the unique needs of a child that result from the child's disability to ensure the child has access to general education. Special Education supports the student in the Least Restrictive Environment (L.R.E.) through the implementation of specially designed instruction, accommodations/modifications, materials, and curriculum, as appropriate.

Individualized Education Programs (I.E.P.s) are required by federal law (IDEA) for all students who meet the criteria as a student with a disability and have a need for special education and related services. An IEP is developed by a collaborative team that includes the child's parents, at least one general education teacher, a special educator teacher, and a representative of the school agency. Related service providers and community other agency representatives may also be part of the team as appropriate. The I.E.P. documents the educational and related services a student requires to reach specified short-term and long-term goals.

In order for a student to qualify for Special Education services, a student must meet eligibility as a student with a disability, and the child must have specific needs which are so unique that they require specially designed instruction to access the general education curriculum (34C.F.R. § 300.8).

Section 504 is an act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. It assures that persons with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non–disabled students. The Act defines a person with a disability as anyone who:

- Has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working)
- Has a record of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

As a public school, Horse Creek Academy has obligations under IDEA and Section 504, which include identifying, evaluating, and, if the child is determined to be eligible under IDEA or Section 504, affording access to appropriate educational accommodations or specially designed instruction.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Information regarding a student with a disability must be kept confidential and should not be discussed with parties who are not directly involved with the student.

Multi-Lingual Services

Formerly recognized as ESOL services, but now known as Multi-Lingual Learning Services (MLL) are services that Horse Creek Academy provides while remaining in compliance with the South Carolina (S.C.) State Department of Education. The S.C. Department of Education's purpose, and that of Horse Creek Academy, is to ensure we are serving children of diverse multilingual backgrounds while adhering to strict guidelines in meeting these needs. Horse Creek Academy follows the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act purposes from the S.C. Department of Education in meeting students' needs to include:

- to help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.
- to assist all limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects so that those children can meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet, consistent with section 1111(b)(1).
- to develop high-quality language instruction educational programs designed to assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools in teaching limited English proficient children and serving immigrant children and youth.

- to assist State educational agencies and local educational agencies to develop and enhance their capacity to provide high-quality instructional programs designed to prepare limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, to enter all-English instruction settings.
- to assist State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to build their capacity to establish, implement, and sustain language instruction educational programs and programs of English language development for limited English proficient children.
- to promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents and communities of limited English proficient children.
- to streamline language instruction educational programs into a program carried out through formula grants to State educational agencies and local educational agencies to help limited English proficient children, including immigrant children and youth, develop proficiency in English, while meeting challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards.
- to hold State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools accountable for increases in English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of limited English proficient children by requiring —
    - demonstrated improvements in the English proficiency of limited English proficient children each fiscal year; and
    - adequate yearly progress for limited English proficient children, including immigrant.

Gifted & Talented Program

Horse Creek Academy recognizes gifted students and their needs. Gifted and talented students are those identified in grades 3-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas. These students often require an educational program beyond the normally provided general school program to achieve their potential.

Principles

- Gifted and talented students have the right to progress in learning, acquire new

knowledge and skills, and access educational programming grounded in the recognition of their individual potential, differences, unique learning styles, and needs.

- Curricula for gifted and talented learners must be based on and exceed South Carolina academic standards, be grounded in evidenced-based practices in gifted and talented and must allow for a confluence of acceleration and enrichment, as well as the integration of real-world issues.
- The instructional environment for gifted and talented learners encourages and nurtures inquiry, originality, creativity, and flexibility. This environment integrates effectively by supporting the gifted and talented student's social and emotional development.
- Students identified in both the academic and artistic domains deserve equal access to both areas of study at levels appropriate to their needs.

GT Criteria

How are students identified?

Gifted and talented students are found within all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Identification is a multi-step process, established by the South Carolina Department of Education.

All second-grade students are tested with a nationally normed aptitude and achievement test in the fall. Students in other grades are screened based on any new data less than two years old.

No private testing may be accepted for consideration but may be used for referral purposes. Teachers, parents, and administrators may refer a student for screening at any time during the school year.

In order to qualify for placement in the academically gifted and talented program, a student must meet the eligibility criteria in two of the following three dimensions.

- **Dimension A –Aptitude**
  - Students must score at or above the 93rd national age percentile on a nationally normed aptitude test, in one or more of these areas: verbal/linguistic, nonverbal, quantitative/mathematical, and/or a composite of the three areas.
- **Dimension B – Academic Achievement**
  - Students must demonstrate high achievement (94th national percentile and above or advanced status) in reading and/or math as measured by a nationally normed or South Carolina statewide assessment instruments.
- **Dimension C - Intellectual/Academic Performance**
  - Students must demonstrate a high degree of interest in and commitment to academic and/or intellectual pursuits, or demonstrate intellectual characteristics such as curiosity/inquiry, reflection, persistence/tenacity in the face of challenge and creative, productive thinking. Rising third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students may be eligible to take the Performance Task Test in March if they have already met the criteria in Dimension A or Dimension B. Beginning at the end of grade 5, students can meet the criteria in Dimension C with a 3.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Eligibility Criteria in at least Two of Three Dimensions:

Eligibility Criteria in at least Two of Three Dimensions:		
Screening/Referral/Assessment Profile	**Criteria**	**Examples of Qualifying Test(s)**
Dimension A: Reasoning Ability	93rd age percentile or higher on a nationally normed aptitude test (Verbal, Nonverbal, Composite)	Cog AT (V, NV, C) OLSAT (V, NV, C) TCS (V, NV, C) Raven or NNAT (NV only)
Dimension B: High Achievement in Reading and/or Mathematical Areas	94th percentile or higher on nationally normed achievement test or Qualifying score on the SC state test set annually by the state	MAP (Fall/Spring) Iowa Test of Basic Skills Terranova MAT8 Stanford 10 ACT Aspire (2015) SC Ready
Dimension C: Intellectual/Academic Performance	Qualifying score on South Carolina Performance Tasks (Verbal or Nonverbal) Rising grades 3-6 **OR** 3.75 GPA for Rising 6th and above	SC Performance Tasks (administered annually in February/March) GPA on 4.0 scale for core content classes and yearlong world language

How will students be served?

Elementary Students

Most elementary students will participate in a pull-out GT model during the school day, typically served during Stallion Time. During this time, students who are state identified will receive Gifted and Talented (GT) services. Teachers who work with these students are trained to work and endorsed in the area of gifted education. If your child misses any work given in the classroom during the time, they are being served GT minutes, then they will be required to make up the missed work on their own time.

Select 4th and 5th grade students will participate in an in-class model designed to enhance their learning through enriched curriculum and learning models from gifted and talented endorsed teachers.

Middle and High School Students

Gifted and talented students in middle and high school will be enrolled in Honors courses selected during their IGPs.

Academics

Grading Policies

Grading Scale

A—90-100
B—80-89
C—70-79
D—60-69
F—59 and Below

Academic Integrity

Integrity is one of Horse Creek Academy's core values and it has a significant role in academic pursuits. An academic community must be able to rely on the honesty and integrity of all its members. Using or copying another's words, ideas, thoughts, or arguments without giving credit is intellectually dishonest. Students who plagiarize will receive a 0 on the assignment.

Homework

Homework assignments are intended to solidify concepts and skills after the classroom teacher has verified that the student can work independently on the homework. The amount of time needed to complete homework varies from child to child. Parents are asked to inform the teacher if their child is spending a substantial amount of time on homework.

Please place emphasis on having your child engage in reading each night.

- Long-term projects have specific written guidelines with the due date indicated for each portion of the assignment.
- Teachers will coordinate so that no more than two tests or projects are due on the same day.

Make-up Work

When students are absent, particularly for an extended period, it is their responsibility (parents need to assist elementary school children) to communicate with their teachers to find out what work and tests were missed so that make-up arrangements can be made in a timely fashion. Assignments that can be completed at home may be sent via email or picked up in the main office. Teachers will send make-up work at the request of the student/parent. Teachers must be granted 24 hours from the date of the request to gather make-up work. In the case of extended absences due to illness, the teachers and a member of the administrative team will work with the returning student to schedule make-up arrangements and tests within a reasonable time frame, ensuring no undue pressure.

Retention

Retention is the practice of requiring a student who has been in a given grade level for a full year to remain at that level for a subsequent school year. Horse Creek Academy is committed to differentiation in instruction and provides support for meeting the instructional needs of each child through strategies including Unit Planning, Mutli-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), counseling services, and Response to Intervention (RTI).

Faculty members or a parent/guardian may refer a student for consideration of retention. Each student will receive individual consideration and a decision will be made only after a careful study of facts relating to phases of the child's growth and development. The child's academic achievement level, mental ability, physical and social characteristics are all important factors. All decisions are to be based upon sufficient data, collected over a period and motivated by the desire to place the child in the school program where he or she will be the most successful in addition, such decisions, when applied to students enrolled in special education, shall be on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the individualized education plan. The Executive Director has final authority regarding the retention of students.

Read to Succeed (R2S) Third Grade Specific

The South Carolina Read to Succeed Act became law in 2014. The intent of Read to Succeed is to ensure all students have the reading skills necessary to become college and career ready. Read to Succeed includes significant changes regarding the promotion and retention of third-grade students.

Section 59-155-160 of Read to Succeed states:
"... a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade as indicated by scoring at the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment that equates to Not Met 1 on SC READY"

Though there are exceptions to this requirement in Read to Succeed, please be assured that our school's goal is that all students will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Actions to improve student success include additional instructional time devoted to literacy, small group and individualized instruction, and classroom teachers' receiving specialized literacy training and support from school-based literacy coaches.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your Lead Learner or the literacy coach. You may also find information about the Read to Succeed Act on the South Carolina Department of Education website.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent electronically through our PowerSchool parent portal to the email address provided during student registration. Should this email address need to be updated, or if you need PowerSchool login information, please contact the main office.

Kindergarten and Montessori programs do not use PowerSchool currently. Report Cards for Kindergarten and Montessori classes will be emailed to parents by the teacher to the email address that is on file in PowerSchool or sent through the child's folder. Please contact the main office to update any information.

Conferences
Teachers are responsible for keeping parents informed about student progress. Therefore, our early childhood and elementary (4K-5th grades) program ensures that students are regularly issued progress reports that must be signed and returned. Check with your child's teacher for when progress reports are issued. Teachers in middle and high schools maintain an open flow of parent/teacher contact via use of email, use of the Remind App, teacher websites, phone calls, letters home, etc.

Tutoring
Horse Creek Academy Charter School faculty and employees may only tutor students for pay with prior written approval by the Executive Director. This policy is in place to avoid conflicts of interest, which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Classroom teachers may not tutor a student who is enrolled in their class.

Textbooks
Students are responsible for the upkeep and for the return of all textbooks issued to them. If the barcode on the back of the book is taken off and/or damaged so that it is not able to be scanned, students will be charged the full replacement cost of the book. Students must pay for lost textbooks before being issued replacements. Students may receive refunds for lost textbooks if they find their original textbook and if they have their receipt of payment for the lost textbook. ALL REFUND REQUESTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE JUNE 30 OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR.

Educational Records – Confidentiality

Under federal law parents and students have a right to expect the confidentiality of student records. Educational agencies may act to declare certain aspects of a student's educational records to be "directory information," meaning information contained in such records which is not considered to be generally harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Federal law and regulatory authority allow the release of such information without prior consent subject to certain conditions of pre-disclosure to parents or students.

The purpose of this notice is to meet such pre- disclosure requirements. Under District policy the following information is considered to be releasable: The student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, subjects of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, date of attendance (on both an annual and daily basis), diplomas and awards received, photographs, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. (Examples of the types of information frequently released include, but are not limited to, Senior Class Listings, Annuals/Yearbooks, Science Fair Winners, Students of the Month, Honor Roll Lists, National Honor Society, athletic event programs, etc.)

A parent or guardian of a student attending Horse Creek Academy who would prefer that any or all of the information designated above not be released without the parent's or guardian's prior consent should so notify the Executive Director in writing. If there are any questions, please contact Dr. Taylor.

Notification of Rights Under Family Educational and Privacy Act (Elementary and Secondary Schools)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school executive director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write to the school executive director and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support employees member including health or medical

employees and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or a student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by
the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5920

Annual Student Records Notice Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Student Records Notice: Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act parents or eligible students have the right to 1) inspect and review a student's educational records; 2) request an amendment to incorrect or misleading records, or records otherwise in violation of a student's privacy rights; 3) consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information (except as allowed without consent by law);

and 4) file with the U. S. Dept. of Education a complaint about any alleged failure by this School District to comply with the Act. A copy of this policy will be mailed to any parent upon request. Parents or eligible students who have limited or no visual acuity, who have a primary home language other than English, or who may be disabled in some other way that effectively impairs their ability to see, comprehend, or become aware of this notice will be accommodated upon discovery of such limitations by the District. Patrons who may be aware of others with such limitations are requested to notify the District of these circumstances.

Class Rank, Junior Marshalls, Honor Graduate Policy
Created May 2023

The uniform grading scale and the system for calculating GPAs and class rank will apply to all courses carrying high school units of credit (also known as Carnegie units), including units earned at the middle or junior high school levels. All units taken for high school credit are included in class rank calculations.

The determination of honor graduates, including valedictorian and salutatorian, will be based on the class rank at the end of the seventh semester. Horse Creek Academy honor graduates will be determined by the top 10% of the graduating class after their seventh semester (end of the first semester of their senior year). The student with the highest GPA ranked as number one, will be honored as valedictorian, while the student ranked number two will be honored as salutatorian. If two or more students share the same rank, the position(s) shall be shared. Class rank for LIFE Scholarships is determined after the spring semester of the senior year. Students will only be allowed to participate in graduation if they meet the graduation requirements set forth by the South Carolina State Department of Education.

Junior Marshalls for the senior graduation ceremony will be determined by the class rank of the junior class of students at the end of the fifth semester of high school.

High School Grading and Exams Policy

Grading Scale

A - 90-100 WF = 50
B - 80-89 FA = 50
C - 70-79
D - 60-69

Other letter grades were added to the SC UGP Scale Conversion Chart so that appropriate grades could be displayed for students who recover or do not recover a credit, who audit a course, or for students who have specific transfer credits from out-of-state or non-public schools:

- P – Pass
- NP – Not Passing
- AU – Audit

The course and grade information (for these letter grades of P, NP, or AU) will display on the student's transcript for students as follows:

- A student who has successfully recovered the credit for a failed course will receive a "P" as the letter grade.
- A student who does not successfully recover the credit for a failed course will receive "NP" as the letter grade.
- A transfer student whose transcript indicates s/he earned a failing grade in any course in which s/he had a numerical average of 60 or above will receive an "NP" as the letter grade. (Refer to Converting Grades on Transcripts.)
- A student allowed to audit a course per local school/district policies will receive an "AU" for the letter grade.

Dual credit courses—whether taken at the school where the student is enrolled or at a postsecondary institution—are those courses for which the student has been granted permission by his or her home school to earn both high school units of credit and college credit.

One quality point may be added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable to baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, or certification programs that lead to an industry credential offered by accredited institutions per established district articulation agreements. One-half of a quality point (.5) is added to the CP weighting for honors courses.

If the transcript shows that the student has earned a grade of P (passing) or F (failing), that grade will be converted to a numerical designation based on information secured from the sending institution as to the appropriate numerical value of the "P" or the "F." If no numerical average can be obtained for the "P," an earned credit will be awarded and follow UGP Administrative Procedures for entering a "P" on the transcript. If no numerical average can be obtained from the sending institution on the "F," an "NP" will be entered on the transcript.

Students who drop out of school or are expelled after the allowed period for withdrawal but before the end of the grading period will be assigned grades per the following policies:

- The student will receive a WP if he or she was passing the course at the time of withdrawal. The grade of WP will carry no earned units of credit and no quality points to be factored into the student's GPA.
- The student will receive a WF if he or she was failing the course. The grade of WF will carry no earned units of credit but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 50.

Excessive Absences (Failure due to Absences)
As noted in Regulation 43-274 VII(B), students with absences may make up work or demonstrate proficiency as determined by the local school district. If a grade of FA is assigned, it will carry no earned CP units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 50.

Exams

Semester exams are required for all credit-bearing high school courses. All students are required to take exams, except seniors that meet all exemption criteria for final exams. Semester exams count for 20% of a student's semester grade. For courses assessed through the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP), students are not required to have a Semester 2 final exam counting 20% of their Semester 2 grade. Only graduating seniors with a final (year) grade of an A in the course may be allowed to be exempt from second-semester exams only.

Students may only take exams early if prior approval is given from the HCA administration. Parents should send a written notification (email/signed parent note) at least ten days prior to the exam date.

- Students that miss exams may make up their exams only if accompanied by a doctor's excuse or death in the immediate family.
- Students will not be able to be dismissed from school during exam blocks, as this would disrupt the classroom and other students that are testing. Suppose a student needs to be signed out at a particular time for a doctor's appointment, etc. In that case, written notice must be provided with the specific time the student should be dismissed, and the administration must approve this in advance.

End-of-Course Exams

The End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) is a statewide assessment program of end-of-course tests for gateway courses awarded units of credit in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The EOCEP encourages instruction in the specific standards for the courses, encourages student achievement, and documents the level of student's mastery of the academic standards. Gateway courses in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies will be defined by the State Board of Education. EOCEP examination scores count 20 percent in calculating the student's final grade in gateway courses.

Defined gateway courses currently include Algebra 1, Intermediate Algebra, Biology 1, English 2, and United States History and the Constitution, or courses with other names and activity codes in which the academic standards corresponding to these subjects are taught.

To meet federal accountability requirements, the EOCEP in English/language arts, mathematics, and science must be administered to all public school students, including those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

To receive a South Carolina high school diploma, students must pass a high school credit course in science and a high school credit course in United States history in which the state's end-of-course examinations are administered. These courses are Biology 1 (science) and United States History and the Constitution (social studies).

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Legal References:
S.C. Code Ann. § 59•5•68 (2004)
S.C. Code Ann. § 43-274 (2014)
S.C. Code Ann. § R.43-234 (2018)

Athletic Eligibility Policy (SCHSL)
Middle School: To be eligible, a student must be promoted to the next grade level from the previous year.

High School: To be eligible in the first semester, a student must pass a minimum of five Carnegie units applicable toward a high school diploma during the previous year. At least two units must have been passed during the second semester or summer school. To be eligible during the second semester, the student must meet one of the following conditions:
If the student met first semester eligibility requirements, then he or she must pass the equivalent of four ½ units during the first semester.

Defined gateway courses currently include Algebra 1, Intermediate Algebra, Biology 1, English 2, and United States History and the Constitution, or courses with other names and activity codes in which the academic standards corresponding to these subjects are taught.

To meet federal accountability requirements, the EOCEP in English/language arts, mathematics, and science must be administered to all public school students, including those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

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If the student met first semester eligibility requirements, then he or she must pass the equivalent of four ½ units during the first semester.

If the student did not meet first semester eligibility requirements, then he or she must pass the equivalent of five ½ units during the first semester. NOTE: In most cases on a traditional or AB block schedule, the following example would apply: If eligible first semester, must be passing four subjects. If not eligible for the first semester, must be passing five subjects. In a 4X4 block schedule where units or ½ units are granted at the end of the first semester, the following will apply: If eligible first semester, must earn 2 units. If not eligible first semester, must earn 2 ½ units.

Credit Recovery

School administrators will coordinate with staff members to identify students appropriate for participation in credit recovery programs.

Students must have previously failed a course to be eligible for credit recovery. Participation in credit recovery will not affect a student's GPA. Should a student wish to modify his/her GPA, he/she should repeat the full course for credit and not seek participation in the credit recovery program.

Eligibility

Students are eligible for a credit recovery course if they have previously taken and failed an initial credit course. Students must have obtained a grade of 50% or higher in the initial credit course, or the student is not eligible for credit recovery and must retake the full course to receive credit. Students who have already received credit for a course are ineligible to participate in credit recovery to improve their final grade.

Students will be required to complete an application to request placement in a credit recovery course. Consent of the student's parent/legal guardian must be obtained prior to enrollment. Student approval for enrollment in credit recovery is at the discretion of the district committee.

Students may apply for credit recovery for up to four courses during one school calendar year. Credit recovery courses must be completed within one calendar year of failing the course. For example, a student who fails English 2 during the 25-26 school year, must complete English 2 Credit Recovery by the end of the 26-27 school year.

Instruction and Curriculum

The method of instruction for credit recovery courses may vary based upon the district resources available, and includes, but is not limited to, use of an online or computer based program, Virtual SC, direct instruction by a certified teacher either in person or via distance learning, or blended learning. Individuals charged with facilitating credit recovery courses will receive training in online instruction management and related technology, when applicable.

Each credit recovery course will be based upon state curriculum standards and objectives for the corresponding subject and will be aligned across courses within the district. The standards and concepts to be addressed in credit recovery courses will be determined by the teacher who assigned the student the failing grade in the initial credit course, through a diagnostic tool utilized by the credit recovery course facilitator or software program, or through another diagnostic assessment offered by the district.

Credit recovery course offerings may be limited by the availability of space, facilitators, and appropriate computer-based content and/or due to district budgetary constraints.

Grading

Students are not permitted to remain in a credit recovery course for more than an academic year.

Credit recovery courses taken during the final semester of the school year must be completed by the 180th day of the school year. Students enrolled in credit recovery courses during a summer session must complete those courses no later than August 15 to count for the current academic year.

When a student has shown mastery of the credit recovery material, the student will receive credit for the course. Because end-of-course examinations focus on assessing a student's mastery of an entire course, and credit recovery only focuses on a portion of the course's content, students will not be permitted to retake the end-of-course exam.

Student grades in credit recovery courses are designed to be GPA-neutral, meaning that the student's GPA will not be affected by the student's grade in the credit recovery course. The student will only be permitted to earn the course credit. The failing grade in the initial credit course will remain on the student's transcript and reflected in the student's GPA.

The South Carolina Department of Education issued a memo explaining the second round of revisions during this past school year to the SC Uniform Grading Policy (UGP). This change ensures that grades earned for completing credit recovery courses are GPA neutral. As a result, grades of "P" and "NP" have been added to the grading scale. When a student successfully recovers the credit for a failed course he/she will receive a "P" (Pass) as a letter grade. When a student fails to recover the credit for a failed course, he/she will receive an "NP" (Not Passed) as the letter grade. Because the "P" and the "NP" are excluded from the GPA calculations, the impact on the GPA is neutral.

Cost

Credit recovery courses offered in the summer will be charged at the existing summer fee schedule. Moreover, a student's parent/legal guardian will be responsible for any and all costs associated with a district-approved request to utilize an alternative method of instruction.

Student Athletes

Student athletes and their parents/legal guardians should be aware that current National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules place strict limitations on credits earned through content recovery and credit recovery programs. Participation in these programs are likely to affect a student's eligibility for NCAA play (i.e., VirtualSC credit recovery courses are not approved by the NCAA). Student athletes must retake the course in its entirety and earn the full credit. Consult the district athletic director or your respective coach for more information.

Dress Code

Uniform Policies

- HCA Leadership reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate dress.

- Parents will be contacted to bring appropriate clothing if it is not available or the student refuses dress-code-appropriate clothing. If appropriate clothing is not available from home, the student will be asked to wear an oversized HCA shirt to provide school appropriate coverage if needed. The borrowed HCA shirt must be returned to HCA immediately.

- Dress Code Check – The dress code will be checked in 1st period or homeroom. If the teacher suspects a dress code violation is possible, the student will be sent to the office to see an administrator. Two warnings of this nature will be given before the student begins the Discipline Policy consequences.

- Hats are not allowed on campus at HCA. The student will be asked to remove his/her hat immediately when on campus. We are not able to recognize students using our security camera system when hats are worn. Please help us enforce this norm at home.

- To maintain a safe and distraction-free learning environment, full face paint is not permitted at school. Students may use small face decals or minimal face paint (such as school colors or simple designs) during spirit days but full-face coverage or costume style face-painting is not allowed.

Elementary and Middle School

Elementary and Middle School students must wear a specific HCA Uniform. Throughout the year, we will offer both special and free dress days (these will be announced in advance on Facebook, the school messaging app, and Robocall). Every Friday, students may wear either a uniform shirt or HCA Spirit Shirt with appropriate free dress pants, shorts, or skirts that follow coverage guidelines as listed in the Uniform/Dress Code section listed below and provided on our HCA website.

HCA UNIFORM GUIDE

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

Simple. Clear. Ready for Day One.



WHAT TO WEAR EACH DAY

Elementary and Middle School students wear the HCA uniform daily, with opportunities throughout the year for free dress and special dress days (always announced in advance).

FRIDAYS = SPIRIT DAYS!

Students may wear an HCA Spirit Shirt or uniform shirt with approved free dress bottoms that meet coverage guidelines.

UNIFORM TOPS

- Black, white, royal blue, or gold
- Short or long sleeve
- Collared

Additional Guidelines:

- For uniform shirts logos/monograms must be small (no larger than a deck of cards).
- Sweaters, sweatshirts, and hoodies of any color or brand may be worn in the building as long as they are school-appropriate (No profanity, references to drugs or alcohol, weapons, or offensive images, whether explicit or implied)
- **IMPORTANT:** A collared uniform shirt must always be worn underneath.



UNIFORM BOTTOMS

Approved Bottoms:

- Khaki or black pants/shorts
- Skirts, skorts, or jumpers (black, khaki, or HCA plaid)

Important Notes:

- Bottoms with back pockets: khaki or black
- Bottoms without back pockets: black only
- No visible undergarments
- Midriff must be covered; tops must be long enough so that no skin is visible at the waist or abdomen.
- Polo dresses (with collar) allowed in uniform colors.





QUICK RULES

COVERAGE
Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit.

LENGTH
Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh length.

MIDRIFF
Midriff must be covered.

RIPS/TEARS
Rips/tears should be lower than 3" on the upper thighs. If above this length, leggings or other material must be worn under.

SHOES
Any color permitted. No slippers, shoes with wheels, or very high heels (stilettos, etc.).

TIGHTS



- May be worn under uniform/free dress bottoms or dresses.
- May be any color.
- No fishnet tights.

FRIDAY SPIRIT DAYS

Wear bottoms of your choice with an HCA Spirit Shirt or uniform shirt.

Blankets, sleep pants, and slippers are not allowed unless it is a special dress day for those items.

JACKETS

- Any color jacket may be worn.
- All jackets must be unzipped in the building.
- Students must ALWAYS wear a uniform collared shirt underneath.

HEADWEAR

No sunglasses, hats, or hoods are allowed in the building unless permitted by administration for medical or other applicable reasons.

COVERAGE ON FREE DRESS DAYS

Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit.

- No strapless tops.
- Straps must be at least 1 inch wide.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh length.

RIPS/TEARS ON FRIDAYS

On Fridays, ripped jeans are permitted if they follow the coverage guidelines listed here.

WHERE TO SHOP

Uniform items can be purchased anywhere, as long as they meet HCA dress code standards.

We have a special relationship with French Toast for uniforms.

French Toast offers the ONLY HCA-approved plaid items.



SHOP FRENCH TOAST
Search for "Horse Creek Academy" at frenchtoast.com

High School Dress Code

While 9th-12th graders do not have to wear a uniform, HCA does have a dress code for these students. All students must abide by the protocols listed on the following page.

HCA HIGH SCHOOL DRESS CODE

GRADES 9–12

More freedom in how you dress.



WHAT TO EXPECT

High school students enjoy more freedom in how they dress. With that freedom comes responsibility. Follow the HCA dress code every day.

- Keep students safe
- Maintain a focused learning environment
- Allow for appropriate personal expression

COVERAGE MATTERS

- Clothing must cover from one armpit across to the other armpit.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh length.
- Shoulder straps must be at least 1 inch wide.
- Midriffs must be fully covered; no skin visible at waist or abdomen.

CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS

- No visible undergarments.
- No see-through or mesh garments without appropriate coverage underneath.
- Rips/tears must be lower than 3" in length on the upper thighs. If above this length, leggings or other material must be worn under.



SHOES & ACCESSORIES

- Shoes must be worn at all times and be safe for the school environment.
- No bedroom slippers or shoes with wheels.
- No hats, hoods, or sunglasses indoors.
  Unless permitted by administration for religious, medical, or other applicable reasons.

NOT ALLOWED

Clothing may **NOT:**

- Depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
- Depict or imply pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
- Display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene languages or images.
- State, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.

Blankets, sleep pants, and slippers are not allowed, unless it is a designated dress day.

SAFETY FIRST

Clothing and accessories that could pose a safety concern are not permitted, including:

- Items that could be considered weapons (fishhooks, spurs, or other items that may be considered a weapon).
- Apparel, jewelry, accessories, tattoos, or manner of grooming that denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior.

QUICK CHECK

Before heading to school, ask:

- Is it covered?
- Is it school-appropriate?
- Is it safe?

If yes— you're good to go!

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the dress code, please contact your school administrator.

Thank you for helping us maintain a positive and respectful learning environment!

♡ *We are the Village* — and we're here to support every student's success.

Technology and Social Media

Technology Policy

Student Responsible Use of Technology Policy
To protect the due process rights of students and establish necessary controls, these guidelines define appropriate educational and ethical uses of the Internet, identify student responsibilities, and outline procedures for enforcing the behavior on the Internet and handling violations.

The Internet user is expected to abide by the following accepted guidelines of the network.

- The Internet is to be used for educational purposes.
- Users should be polite and use appropriate language.

Users need to follow current policies and behavior standards of HCA.

- Users should respect the equipment and other resources, the network time, and the privacy of others.
- Users should not give out anyone's name, school, or email address, including their own.
- The use of another person's passwords or files is not allowed.

Unacceptable uses of the network include:

- Illegal activities (including copyright infringement),
- Wasting or misusing technology resources
- Commercial activity
- Account theft (using someone else's account without permission).
- Offensive, demeaning, defamatory, harassing, or disruptive messages are prohibited.

Users should not access information on the Internet that would be considered controversial or inappropriate if brought to school in any other format, including pictures or articles of an adult nature.

Any items produced by students will not be posted on the Internet without their permission. If permission is granted, the items will be considered fair use and available to the public.

If a student finds him- or herself on a website that is not appropriate for a school setting, he or she should immediately turn off the monitor (but not the computer) and get a teacher. The teacher will clear the student out of the site. The teacher can also ascertain if the site was arrived at accidentally or intentionally.

If a student misuses the Internet at school or encourages another student to misuse the Internet at school, HCA employees have the right and responsibility to take immediate action against the misuser and may suspend student access privileges.

Social Media Use for Students and Families

Horse Creek Academy supports our students and families in posting, blogging, or tweeting about their experiences. However, if a social media post that is deemed inappropriate or offensive about HCA or HCA students and/or faculty is brought to the leadership team, actions may be taken. If a student or family member has a concern about HCA, they need to bring this concern to the School Leader. These concerns should not be posted on social media.

HCA Free to Focus Policy

To support a positive learning and social environment at Horse Creek Academy, all students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines during the school day effective January 13th, 2025 . These guidelines are mandatory and are designed to clarify expectations outlined in Administrative Regulation SS-27 from the SCDE.

Students who bring personal electronic or communication devices onto Horse Creek Academy property are personally and solely responsible for the care and security of their devices.

- **Personal Electronic Devices:** Any device not issued by the school that can electronically send, receive, store, record, reproduce, and/or display information and data. Examples include, but are not limited to, computers, tablets, e-readers, portable media players, drones, video gaming systems, GPS devices, digital cameras, and camcorders.
- **Personal Communication Devices**: Any device not issued by the school that can communicate by sending, receiving, storing, recording, reproducing, or displaying information and data, including any device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, live streams, or otherwise alerts or communicates with the user. Examples include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, smart watches, headphones/airpods, and other accessories used for electronic communication.

Student Usage Guidelines

- **Elementary School (4K–5th Grade):** Elementary students should not bring personal electronic or communication devices to school. If a device must be brought, a signed parent permission form is required. Upon entering campus in the morning devices must be powered off and stored in the student's bookbag, remaining off the student is picked up in the afternoon.

- **Middle School (6th–8th Grade):** Middle school students may bring personal electronic and communication devices to school; however, these devices must be powered off and stored in a bookbag or locker at the start of the school day. Devices must remain off until 3:20pm. Students may use personal combination locks on their lockers but are required to inform administration of the lock placement and combination.
- **High School (9th–12th Grade):** High school students are allowed to bring personal electronic and communication devices to school, but these devices must be powered off and stored in a bookbag or locker upon the start of the school day, and remaining off until 3:20pm. High school students will be allowed to access during their lunch. Students may use personal combination locks on their lockers but are required to inform administration of the lock placement and combination.

Staff/Visitor Usage Guidelines

- **HCA Staff and Visitors:** Staff and visitors may bring personal electronic and communication devices onto campus but are not permitted to use or access these devices in student areas, including hallways, classrooms, and common areas. Devices may be used in non-student areas such as offices and classrooms during planning time.

Travel Usage Guidelines

- **Students:** Unless otherwise directed by field trip leaders, the same device policy as the regular school day applies to all students during travel. For longer, overnight field trips, device usage may be allowed while en route to the destination and for brief check-ins with family. Field trip leaders will provide specific instructions on when and where device use is permitted.
- **Staff/Chaperones:** Staff and chaperones may use personal electronic and communication devices for official field trip purposes only, such as coordinating with other chaperones, contacting the school, or taking photos for documentation. Device use should be limited to chaperone or teacher conversation and must never occur while driving. Personal device use unrelated to the field trip (e.g., personal calls or browsing) is not permitted in student areas.

Usage per IEP/504 Plans

- If explicitly required by a student's IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan, the student shall be allowed to access their personal electronic device for medically or educationally necessary purposes described and required for administration of the IEP, Medical Plan or 504 Plan.

Consequences

- Violations of device usage guidelines will be addressed in accordance with the Horse Creek Academy Code of Conduct.
- If a student does not follow the established guidelines, HCA teachers and/or administrators will ask the student to surrender their device.
- Depending on the frequency or severity of the infraction, administration will inform parents, and, as outlined in the HCA discipline policy, an adult may be required to pick up the device from the front office.
- For detailed information on how violations align with HCA Behavior Phases and their associated consequences, please refer to the HCA Code of Conduct.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I contact my student during the school day?

Parents and/or guardians who need to contact their student during the school day and or change the pick-up method of your child, may do so by calling the main office. Contacting your child via their cell phone during the school day distracts them from their studies and the needed in-person interaction with their teachers and peers. By having 24/7 access, we prevent growth opportunities that our children need educationally, socially, and developmentally. If students text their parents every time they have a question, they miss the opportunity to think for themselves and develop problem-solving skills.

What if my child needs their phone in case of a crisis or lockdown at the school?

School security experts say phones can make children less safe in crisis situations for the following reasons:

- Student use of cell phones during an unfolding emergency can distract their attention from safety and emergency response directions being given by school staff.
- Cell phone use by students can hamper rumor control and, in doing so, disrupt and delay effective public safety personnel response.
- Cell phone use by students can impede public safety response by accelerating parental and community arrival at the scene of an emergency during times when officials may be attempting to secure the area or evacuate students to another site.
- Worried family members trying to get through can jam communications, interfering with first responders.

Our goal is to keep students focused on the adult getting them to safety before they access their phones.

What if my child has a medical condition that must be monitored by their cell phone? Or what if my child has an IEP/504 plan?

This exception must be written into a 504, IEP, or medical plan, and is specific to the need only and still prohibits cell phone use for any other purposes. It is extremely rare for a cell phone to be required for an IEP/504 plan. But if the situation does arise,
documentation should be provided and the exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits cell phone use for any other purposes.

How will I be notified if there is an emergency?

HCA has a comprehensive emergency plan in place. Parents will be notified and updated in a timely manner regarding any emergency via robocall, text, email, Facebook post, and/or HCA App Notification.

As parents we naturally worry about the potential for a worst-case scenario, but that focus makes it easy to overlook the everyday negative impacts that smart phones are having on students and their education. Furthermore, even in a worst-case scenario, the presence of cell phones can create significant safety concerns in the event
of an emergency.

Contrary to popular assumptions, student cell phones often make the education environment less safe both physically and emotionally. Many schools and districts experience disruptive and unsafe learning environments in part because of student phone use, which is linked to distraction, bullying, physical violence, and hoax security threats.

It is understandable that families want to be able to quickly contact their students or to have their students be able to call for help or contact family members in an emergency. But students and families calling and texting one another during an emergency is more likely to decrease student safety, not enhance it, during a crisis or even during normal school operations:

- Cell phones and social media can be used to spread threats and coordinate acts of violence.
- Use of cell phones by students can accelerate the spread of misinformation, rumors, and fear.
- In an emergency lockdown situation, cell phones could ring or vibrate audibly at a time when students need to be quiet for safety reasons.
- Students on cell phones are less focused on listening to adults for directions on how to respond and stay safe.
- Cell phones can lead to families arriving at the school and make it more difficult for First Responders to facilitate safe evacuation and tactical and emergency response

- Cell phones can delay or hinder timely and efficient family-student reunification and potentially put families into a zone of harm.

The proposed policy will not remove all cell phones from schools. Employees including school administrators, teachers, and crisis team members will have cell phones that they can use as an emergency management resource tool. In addition, school staff will have access to communication devices to contact the school office should emergency conditions arise. Finally, students are not prohibited from accessing their phones in the event of an emergency once they are safe and directed to do so by staff/first responders.

Why is it important to allow our children to be independent during the school day?

Students need to be given independence from their parents or guardians during the school day to develop foundational skills. Constant contact can fuel a cycle of anxiety for both students and parents. Research shows encouraging independence fosters a child's self-confidence, resilience, problem-solving ability, and mental health.

Will it be harder for students to make connections and friends if they are offline all day?

Social media tends to foster asynchronous interactions leading to greater levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. In-person socializing forms far stronger connections and supports the development of healthier social and emotional skills.

Don't some students benefit from having social media?

Even for students who use social media for connection, it is still a distraction during school hours. Our goal is to limit use during the school day to minimize disruption and mitigate the potential harms of social media dependency.

STUDENT/TEACHER EQUIPMENT ISSUED AGREEMENT FORM

iHorse Creek Academy (HCA) students will be provided with the opportunity to use laptops/tablets that are the property of HCA so that they may continue using the technology away from campus. These laptops/tablets are to be used for educational purposes only. No student or parent should use an HCA laptop/tablet for personal use of any kind.

The following terms and conditions will serve as guidelines for the use of HCA laptops/tablets.

Terms and Conditions:

- I understand that my student is being issued a laptop/tablet to facilitate learning or instruction; it will be in their possession for use at and away from the school.
- I understand that my student is responsible for the device issued to them and that they will care for the equipment in such a manner as to prevent loss or damage. The device should not be left unattended in any unlocked area.
- I understand that the device should be transported and stored carefully, so it is not susceptible to damage. The device should never be left inside a vehicle where temperature extremes can permanently damage the unit and/or its components or result in theft.
- I understand my student may not make any permanent identifiable marks on the device, including but not limited to adhesive labels/stickers.
- I understand that any data corruption or configuration errors caused by installing unauthorized or illegal software may result in a loss of all data on the device and/or system due to the need for a complete reload of the device.
- I understand that I am responsible for backing up all data on the device. The school is not liable for lost data.
- I understand that I need to monitor my child on the device because it is no longer filtered once it leaves campus. Use of this device is governed by and subject to the rules and conditions contained in the Student Responsible Use of Technology policy found in the Horse Creek Academy Charter School Student Handbook.
- I understand that the device and any other accessories/components will be returned to the school immediately upon withdrawal from HCA or at any time as specifically directed by school authorities.
- I understand that in the event of damage, loss, or theft of the device, the student will immediately notify the Computer Inventory Manager.
- I understand that in the case of any damage or abuse of the device, I am responsible for the payment of repairs or replacement as stated below.

Replacement Limit: I understand that after two free replacements due to damage, loss, or theft, the parent/guardian will be responsible for a replacement computer charge of $200. Parents/guardians will be notified after their student receives their 2nd replacement computer.

Date Parent/Guardian Signature Student Name

Device Info:

Student Concerns/ Complaints

Student Concerns

Horse Creek Academy Charter School provides a grievance procedure as a formal method for the resolution of any grievances concerning the treatment of students by Horse Creek Academy personnel. These grievances may arise from allegations of violations of student legal rights or school policy. In addition, the Board recognizes that there may be conditions that Horse Creek Academy could improve, and that students should have some means by which they can effectively express their concerns. Horse Creek Academy will resolve student complaints and grievances through orderly processes and at the lowest level possible.

Complaints/Grievances

A teacher will provide any student or parent/guardian the opportunity to discuss a decision or situation that the student considers unjust or unfair if the incident remains unresolved, the student, parent, or teacher may bring the matter to the designated Lead Learner or his/her designee for consideration and action.

Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their gender have the right to appeal to the Title IX Coordinator. The school's full Title IX policy is available at www.hcacs.net.

Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their disabling condition have the right to appeal to the Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High). If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High), he/she may appeal to the Executive Director (HCA Lead Learner).

The Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High) will schedule an appeal to the Executive Director (HCA Lead Learner.

Procedure:

- **Informal Complaint:** When a student and/or parent/guardian feels that an unjust decision or situation exists, the student or parent/guardian is encouraged to initially discuss the unjust situation with those involved. If the situation cannot be resolved or the student and/or parent/guardian does not feel comfortable with addressing the other party involved, the unjust situation should be discussed with the Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High) or Advisor (Elementary, Middle, or High) to resolve the situation. The student, parent/guardian, and the Lead Learner or Advisor will meet and try to arrive at a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- **Level One-Formal Complaint to Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High):** If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student and/or parent/guardian at the informal level, a formal complaint may be submitted to the Lead Learner (Elementary or Middle/High) or Advisor (Elementary, Middle, or High). The complaint must be in writing.
- **Level Two-Appeal to the Executive Director (HCA Lead Learner) :** If the situation is not resolved at Level One, the student and parent/guardian may appeal in writing to the Executive Director (HCA Lead Learner). This will lead to an investigation and an appeal conference with the student and parent/guardian. A written decision shall be presented to the aggrieved student and parent/guardian. If the situation is still not resolved with the Lead Learner, the parent/student will then discuss with the Board President.

Title IX and Student Protections

The US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has mandated new Title IX regulations with an effective date of August 14, 2020. Its purpose is to promote gender equity, prevent hostile environments based on sex, prohibit sexual harassment/violence, protection from retaliation, and to remedy other gender-based forms of discrimination in academic settings.

Horse Creek Academy (hereafter known as HCA,) as required by Title IX mandates, does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in its education programs or activities, and prohibits such discrimination by its employees, students, and third parties. Title IX prohibits gender-based harassment, which may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex even if those acts do not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

HCA Title IX team will respond promptly to actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of the school against a person in the United States in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. The response will treat complainants and respondents equitably. Any allegations of inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature that fall outside of this policy will be handled consistent with other applicable HCA Board policies, including the Code of Conduct.

Any complaints should be sent to the HCA Title IX Coordinator.

Legal Definitions

Actual knowledge means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to HCA's Title IX Coordinator or any official of the school who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of HCA.

- **Complainant** means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
- **Days** means a day on which the school is open.
- **Respondent** means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
- **Formal complaint** means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that HCA investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.
- **Sexual harassment** means conduct based on sex that satisfies one or more of the following:
    - An employee of the school's conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
    - Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity.
    - Sexual assault as defined by any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent, that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, statutory rape, dating violence, and/or stalking as used in the FBI's Crime Reporting system.

- **Supportive Measures** means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. HCA utilizes restorative justice procedures to support its students and employees.
- **Formal Complaint** is a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that HCA investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.
- **Jurisdiction** (Education Program or Activity) means locations, events, or circumstances (operations) over which HCA exercised substantial control over both the respondent AND the context in which the sexual harassment occurs. This encompasses any form of communication, including (but not limited to) in person, text, social media, and other virtual/online/cellular media, and must be analyzed to determine if it occurs in an educational program or activity. This type of harassment does not:
  - creates or apply a geographic test.
  - draws a line between "off campus/property" and "on campus/property."
  - does not create a distinction between sexual harassment occurring in person versus online.
- **Attempting to Participate** means to:
  - apply for or intend to apply for admission
  - indicate a desire to re-enroll if the school appropriately responds to sexual harassment allegations
  - prevent schools from being legally obligated to investigate allegations made by complainants who have no relationship with the schools, yet still protects those complainants by requiring the school to respond promptly in a non-deliberately indifferent manner.

- **Non-deliberate and Indifferent manner** means not clearly unreasonable considering the known circumstances and must comply with policy regardless of whether a formal complaint is ever filed.
- **Emergency Removal** is where a respondent poses an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of the complainant (or anyone else).
- **Administrative leave** is paid leave pending the outcome of an investigation; it may not be interpreted to alter any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Designation of Roles and Responsibilities

Designation of Title IX Coordinator Requirements

1. Select at least one Title IX Coordinator for each school and ensure his/her name, title, office address, email address, and telephone number are prominently displayed on schools' websites, in handbooks and in catalogs.
2. Ensure contact information is given to applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, and/or legal guardians of elementary and secondary schools; employees, unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements.

Designate at least one Investigator, Initial Decision Maker, Appeals Decision Maker

1. Select an Investigator who may also be the Title IX Coordinator.
2. Select an Initial Decision Maker who cannot be the Appeals Decision Maker nor the Title IX Coordinator.
3. Select an Appeals Decision Maker who cannot be the Initial Decision Maker nor the Title IX Coordinator.

Investigator Responsibilities

1. Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rest on the school and not on complaint or respondent.
    a. The factors that a Title IX coordinator may consider when determining whether to sign a complaint include, but are not limited to:
        i. Whether there have been other reports of sexual harassment or other relevant misconduct concerning the same Respondent
        ii. Whether or not the incidents occurred while the Respondent was an HCA student or employee.
        iii. Whether the Respondent threatened further sexual harassment or other misconduct against the Complainant or others.
        iv. Whether the alleged sexual harassment was committed by multiple perpetrators.
        v. The nature and scope of the alleged sexual harassment including whether the sexual harassment was perpetrated with a weapon.
        vi. The ages and roles of the Complainant and the Respondent.
        vii. Whether HCA can pursue the investigation without the participation of the Complainant (e.g., whether there are other available means to obtain relevant evidence of the alleged sexual harassment such as security cameras or physical evidence);
        viii. Whether the report reveals a pattern of perpetration (e.g., perpetration involving illicit use of drugs or alcohol) at a given location or by a particular group.
2. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory (guilty) and exculpatory (not guilty) evidence.
3. Warrant that neither party's ability to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence is restricted.

4. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice.
5. Provide, to individuals whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.
6.Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the school does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
7. Allow complainant, respondent, and their Advisors, if any, at least 10 days to review, inspect and submit a written response to evidence sent to them in electronic or hard copy format prior to completion of the investigative report.
8.Consider responses to evidence provided by complainant prior to completion of the investigative report.
9. Ensure all evidence subject to the parties' inspection and review is available at any hearing to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.
10. Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 days prior to a hearing, if requested.

Initial Decision Maker Responsibilities

1. Give each party reasonable time to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness.
2. Provide each party with the answers and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party

4. Explain decision as to why questions/evidence are not relevant, if respondent/advisor is proposing questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.
5. Issue a written determination regarding responsibility after applying the standard of evidence where either a preponderance of evidence standard or clear and convincing evidence standard is chosen and adopted throughout process.
6. Provide written determination regarding responsibility to the parties simultaneously, which becomes final either on the date that the school provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.
7. Offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations.

Appeals Decision Maker Responsibilities

1. Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed.
2. Give both parties to submit a written statement in support of or challenging the outcome
3. Issue written decision, simultaneously to both parties, describing the result and rationale for the results.

Informal Decision Maker Responsibilities

1. Meet with students, parents, advisors and facilitate resolutions after formal complaints and before determination regarding responsibility.
2. Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

3. May facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, at any time prior to reaching a determination of responsibility.
4. Provides complainant and respondent written notice of informal resolution process, such as mediation disclosing:

- Allegations
- Requirements of the informal resolution process
- Circumstances under which it precludes formal complaint
- May withdraw and resume formal complaint prior to agreeing to resolution
- Consequences

Required Notification

Ensure applicants for admission and employment, students, parents and/or legal guardians of elementary and secondary schools; employees, unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements receive following notifications via medians such as website, handbooks, catalogs, applications highlighting that schools:

1. do not discriminate based on sex in education programs or school activities.
2. are required by Title IX not to discriminate based on sex.
3. requirement not to discriminate based on sex extends to admissions and employment.
4. refer inquiries about Title IX application to school's Title IX Coordinator.

Determine Jurisdiction

1. Title IX Coordinator decides:
    a. if HCA has jurisdiction over the circumstance as previously defined
    b. Complaint applies to any person, in the United States, based on sex, who is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance

c. is filed by a complainant who is participating or attempting to participate in the education program or activity sanctioned by HCA or is signed by the Title IX Coordinator

d. covers all instances of sexual harassment on school property

e. ncludes “Off Campus” sexual harassment incidents that occur off campus if:

f. the off-campus incident occurs as part of the school’s operations.

g.the school exercised substantial control over the respondent and the context of alleged sexual harassment that occurred off campus.

Response to Sexual Harassment Notification

When HCA has notice of sexual harassment, within 24 hours, the Title IX Coordinator must:

1. Contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures. Supportive measures must be non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school’s education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the school’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.
2. consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures
3. Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint.
    a. Coordination and implementation of supportive measures are the responsibility of the Informal Resolutions Facilitator, who must:
        i. maintains as confidentiality any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the school to provide the supportive measures.

ii. maintain records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.

iii. document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school's education program or activity

iv. document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable considering the known circumstances, if the school does not provide a complainant with supportive measures

v. undertake an individualized safety and risk analysis and determine that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal.

vi. provide the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

4. explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

1. Complete Formal Complaint Form via HCA's website or obtain hard copy from school's administrative office. Form may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail.
2. Upon receipt of a formal complaint that meets jurisdiction guidelines, HCA must initiate a grievance process that complies with the following grievance procedures:
   a. Require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including inculpatory (guilty) and exculpatory (not guilty) evidence, and assume the presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process
   b. Apply the same standard of evidence for all formal complaints of sexual harassment
   c. Do not require, allow, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such

privilege has waived the privilege.

d. May consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances but must give discretion in doing so. Facts and circumstances given by multiple complainants' allegations must be so intertwined that their allegations directly relate to all the parties

e. Describe the list of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies based on a preponderance of evidence

f. Complete the grievance process within one hundred and twenty (120) days. Temporary delays and/or extensions of the time frames within this Policy may occur for good cause.

g. Written notice will be provided to the parties of the delay and/or extension of the time frames with an explanation of the reasons for such action. Examples of good cause for delay/extensions include, but are not limited to, considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

Investigation

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, HCA must provide written notice to all known parties in sufficient time to give the respondent time to prepare a response before an initial interview. Written notice must include:

1. Notice of grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
2. Notice of the allegations, including sufficient detail (i.e., names of known parties, the conduct alleged to be sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged conduct, if known) to allow the respondent to prepare a response; response to be submitted no later than 10 days from notice

3. Statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the conduct and that responsibility will be determined at the conclusion of the grievance process.
4. Notce of the parties' right to have an advisor (who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney) and to inspect and review evidence; furthermore, the right to have others present during any grievance proceeding.
5. Notice of any provision in the code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or providing false information in the grievance process.
6.Notification that the school cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless the school obtains that party's voluntary, written consent to do so for a grievance process under this section.
7. Notification that questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.
8. An equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory (guilty)and exculpatory (not guilty) evidence.
9. Written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

10. Both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
11. An investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, given to each party in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response, at least 10 days prior to the determination of responsibility (hearing).

Emergency Removal/Administrative Leave

In cases in which an employee is a respondent, HCA may place that employee on administrative leave during the pendency of an investigation and grievance process. In cases in which a student is a respondent, the HCA may remove, on an emergency basis, the respondent from the school's educational program or activity provided HCA: (I) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis and determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal and (ii) provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision does not modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Dismissal

1. Formal complaints must be dismissed if:
2. conduct would not constitute sexual harassment even if proved.
3. conduct did not occur in the school's education program or activity.
4. conduct did not occur against a person in the United States.
5. dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the school's code of conduct.

2. **Formal complaints Discretionary Dismissals may occur if:**
   a. a complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing within 10 days that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations.
   b. the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the school.
   c. specific circumstances prevent the school from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination.
3. **Decision to dismiss formal complaint requires school to:**
   a. end written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) simultaneously to the parties within 5 days.
   b. offer both parties an appeal from a school's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations.

Determination of Responsibility

The initial decision process requires HCA to:

1. afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants to be asked of any party or witness.
2. provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions.
3. issue a simultaneous written determination regarding responsibility, including:
   a. identification of the allegations.
   b. description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination.
   c. findings of fact supporting the determination.
   d. conclusions regarding the application of the school's code of conduct to the facts.
   e. Rationale for Appeal procedures.

Appeals Process

The appeals decision process requires HCA to:

1. notify the other party in writing within 2 days of when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

2. offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from a school's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations when:

a. procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter.

b. new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter.

c. the Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of nterest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter

d. offer an appeal equally to both parties on additional bases. ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator.

3. ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision- maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator, and that he/she complies with the standards set forth in the appeals process.

4. give both parties 5 days to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

5. issue a written decision within 5 days describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

6. provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties

Informal Resolution

Informal resolution process requires HCA to:

1. not require waiver of right to investigation and resolution of formal complaints.
2. not require parties to participate in an informal resolution process
3. not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

4. obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.
5. not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.
6. facilitate an informal resolution process at any time prior to reaching a determination of responsibility.
7. provide parties with a written notice disclosing:
    a. allegations.
    b. requirements of the informal resolution process.
    c. circumstances under which it precludes formal complaint
    d. options to withdraw and resume formal complaint prior to agreeing to resolution.
    e. consequences. Training Schools must ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receive training on:

1. definition of sexual harassment.
2. scope of the school's education program or activity (jurisdiction).
3. how to investigate and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable.
4. how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.
5. How to ensure that decision-makers receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.
6. How to ensure that investigators receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.
7. Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision- makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process
8. preventing sex stereotypes and promoting impartial investigations and decisions of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

Retaliation

Neither HCA nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege under Title IX or because the individual made a report, a complaint, testified, assisted, participated in, or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

HCA shall keep confidential the identity of any individual who made a report or complaint of sexual discrimination or sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual reported as a perpetrator, any respondent, and any witness except as permitted under FERPA or as required to carry out the purposes of this policy and its procedures.

Parties understand that exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation. Furthermore, charging someone with making a materially false statement in bad faith does not amount to retaliation.

Documentation/Recordkeeping HCA must:

1. maintain for 7 years, records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.
2. document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent.
3. document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the school's education program or activity.
4. document the reasons why not providing supportive measures was not clearly unreasonable considering the known circumstances if school does not provide a complainant with supportive measure

HCA's Title IX Complaint Form is available in the Main Office or online at www.hcacs.net under our "Resources Tab."

Footnotes

Comprehensive Credit Recovery Policy

Introduction
This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for the Credit Recovery (CR) program at our 4K-12th grade charter school, ensuring compliance with South Carolina state laws and regulations, and aligning with our district policies.

Purpose
The Credit Recovery program aims to provide a structured opportunity for students who have failed a course to recover course credit without affecting their GPA, allowing them to stay on track for graduation.

Eligibility Criteria
1. **Initial Failure**: Students must have previously failed an initial credit course to be eligible for Credit Recovery.
2. **Grade Requirement**: Students must have obtained a grade between 50-59% in the initial credit course.
3. **Application Process**: Students must complete an application with counselor and parent/legal guardian consent. Approval for grades below the minimum is at the discretion of the district committee.
4. **Seat Time Requirements**: Students must meet the 180 days of instruction before being eligible for Credit Recovery. Students failing due to absences (FA), Withdraw Passing (WP), or Withdraw Failing (WF) are not eligible.
5. **Previous Credits**: Students who have already received credit for a course are ineligible for Credit Recovery for grade improvement purposes.

Instruction and Curriculum
1. **Alignment with Standards**: Credit Recovery courses must align with state curriculum standards and objectives.
2. **Instructional Methods**: Instruction may include online or computer-based programs, Virtual SC, direct instruction by a certified teacher, or blended learning.
3. **Training**: Facilitators of Credit Recovery courses must receive professional development in online instruction management and related technology.
4. **Diagnostic Assessment**: The content of Credit Recovery courses will be determined using diagnostic tools or assessments to identify specific areas needing remediation.

Duration and Completion
1. **Time Frame**: Credit Recovery courses must be completed within one calendar year from the time the initial course was failed.
2. **Summer Completion**: Courses taken during the summer must be completed by August 15 of the current academic year.
3. **Academic Year**: Students cannot remain in a Credit Recovery course for more than an academic year. Seniors must complete coursework by the 180th day or will be classified as summer graduates.

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Footnotes

Grading and Transcript
1. **GPA Neutrality**: Credit Recovery courses are designed to be GPA-neutral. Students will receive a "P" (Pass) or "NP" (Not Passed) for the course, which will not affect their GPA.
2. **Transcript**: The original failing grade remains on the transcript and is factored into the GPA. The Credit Recovery grade will be recorded separately with a numerical value of “0”.
3. **End-of-Course Exams**: Students will not retake the end-of-course exam as part of Credit Recovery.

Retaking Courses
1. **Full Course Retake**: Students wishing to modify their GPA must retake the full course for credit.
2. **Highest Grade Calculation**: Only the highest grade obtained in retake attempts will be used in GPA calculation.
3. **EOCEP Retakes**: If the course has an End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP), the student must retake the exam when retaking the full course.

Special Considerations
1. **Student Athletes**: Participation in Credit Recovery programs may affect NCAA eligibility. Student-athletes should consult with the district athletic director or their coach.
2. **CTE Courses**: Credit Recovery for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses is subject to specific limitations due to the hands-on learning component.

Costs
1. **Summer Courses**: Credit Recovery courses offered during the summer will incur fees according to the existing summer fee schedule.
2. **Alternative Instruction Costs**: Parents/legal guardians are responsible for any costs associated with district-approved alternative methods of instruction.

Communication and Implementation
1. **Awareness**: The school will communicate Credit Recovery opportunities and procedures to students, parents, and faculty regularly.
2. **Review and Adjustment**: The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with state regulations and to address any emerging needs or challenges.

This policy is designed to support students in their academic progress while maintaining the integrity of the educational standards. For further details, parents and students are encouraged to contact the school administration.

HCA Student Code of Conduct

DISTRICT STATEMENT

The South Carolina Public Charter School District is committed to maintaining the highest standards for student conduct. The HCA Board, Leadership Team, and teachers maintain high expectations for student behavior.

Parent support is needed to help shape and guide our student's behavior to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.

It is the district's philosophy to handle all student disciplinary matters at the lowest supervisory level and in the most reasonable manner possible.

CODE RATIONALE

The Student Behavior Code applies to EVERY student. Students with disabilities' consequences are addressed in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

The Code applies to student conduct on and off school premises. The times and places include, but are not limited to, school-sponsored programs, field trips, athletic events, school transportation, and technology use. Parents/guardians must sign a statement they have read and discussed the following Attendance and Discipline Code Policy with their student. It is imperative that parents/guardians and students realize the policy applies to all school- related activities and events both on and off school premises to the fullest extent permitted by law (sports activities, field trips, technology etc.)

POLICY GOVERNING SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

A student can be suspended or expelled for commission of any crime, gross immorality, gross misbehavior, persistent disobedience, or for violation of written rules and regulations established by school administration, Board of Trustees, or the State Board of Education, or when the presence of the student is detrimental to the best interest of the school. An expelled student has the right for re-admission for the following school year. The student must enter the HCA lottery as a new student the following school year if interested in attending HCA again. Expulsion does not necessarily preclude enrollment and attendance at a local adult education program or other education systems.

When a student has been suspended or expelled, the student shall not attend school, participate in school sponsored activities, use school transportation, or enter the school grounds during period of suspension or expulsion. This also applies during an appeal of a suspension or expulsion.

SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS

- The Behavior Team may suspend a student for not more than ten (10) days for any one offense and for not more than thirty (30) days in any one school year, under the following conditions: The student shall not be suspended during the last ten (10) days of a school year if the suspension will make the student ineligible to receive credit for the school year, unless the presence of the student constitutes an actual threat to a class or to the school or a hearing is granted within 24 hours of the suspension.
- In many cases, the alleged misconduct may be informally discussed with the student minutes after it has occurred. The student may have an opportunity to give his/her version of the facts at this discussion, being first told what he/she is accused of doing and the basis of the accusation. If the Behavior Team finds the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. In that case, removed from school. Notice of opportunity for explanation should be given to the student as soon as practicable, after the suspension has been imposed.

- If the parent/guardian can't be contacted prior to the suspension, the Behavior Team will give the parent/guardian a report via email on the misconduct, the number of days of suspension, and the appeal procedures.
- Following suspension, the school administration will notify the parent/guardian in writing, stating the reason for the suspension, and the parent/guardian may request a meeting with the Behavior Team if desired.
- Following a conference, the parent/guardian may appeal the suspension to the HCA Director, or a designated employee chosen by the HCA Executive Director may act as the final decision maker in lieu of the HCA Executive Director's absence or unavailability.
- Suspension days are only counted when school is in session. A suspension occurring on an inclement weather day when school is not in session will not count. Schoolwork missed during a suspension can be made up. If the student is absent due to illness or signed out, the student will serve their suspension the next day in attendance.

EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

- A student may be recommended for expulsion by the HCA Executive Director.
- A student may be expelled by the HCA School Board after receiving notification of an opportunity to be heard.
- A hearing shall be conducted by the HCA School Board to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding an incident or offense alleged to have been committed by a student. The parent/guardian of the accused student shall be notified in writing of the time and place of the hearing, the name and title of the person before whom it is to be held, and the incident or charge to be investigated. The hearing shall take place not more than ten school days following mailing or delivery, written or digital, of the written notification to the parent/guardian.
- At the hearing, the student and their parent/guardian shall have, without expense to the school or district, the right to legal counsel.

- As soon as possible, but not later than 10 days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall render a decision.
- The decision of the HCA School Board to expel a student may be appealed to the HCA School Board. Any appeal to the HCA School Board shall be heard at its next regular monthly meeting, but not sooner than five (5) days after the notice of such appeal has been given. The appeal request shall be in writing and may be addressed to the HCA School Board, in care of the HCA Board President. The appeal may be heard at any other time by agreement of the HCA Executive Director or designee, and the student or his/her parent/guardian or their attorneys, and the HCA School Board.
- During expulsion procedures, the student shall be suspended from school and all school activities unless otherwise authorized by the HCA Executive Director.
- The HCA School Board may permanently expel any incorrigible student for the remainder of the school year.
- Note: Any student with serious criminal charges pending may be subject to recommendation for expulsion.

BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCES

- Though not specifically mentioned in the list of behaviors, students may be suspended or recommended for expulsion for first time offenses or any act which is detrimental to the good order, best interest, and physical safety of the school. The student may be punished according to its nature and degree at the administration's discretion. All final disciplinary actions are left to the administration's discretion. Additional consequences will apply when students are uncooperative. Each consequence may include the following as determined by administration: after-school detention, Saturday detention, counseling, parent meeting with administration, creation of a behavior contract, and a student having ISS or OSS until a parent meeting with administration.

Phase 1 Behaviors

Offenses	Consequences
• Computer Violation – Improper Use • Defiance • Disrespect • Disrupting Class • Hit/Kick/Push - Phase 1 Level • Horseplay • Inappropriate Behavior • Inappropriate Language • Phone Violation • Unprepared for the Learning Environment • Other as indicated by administration	1st Phase 1 Offense: • Parent contact from teacher 2nd Phase 1 Offense: • Parent contact from teacher • Silent Lunch/Lunch Detention *Students who refuse to attend lunch detention will receive additional consequences 3rd – 5th Phase 1 Offense: • 1-3 day(s) ISS

Phase 2 Behaviors

Offenses	Consequences
• 6th – 9th Phase 1 Offense • Bullying/Cyberbullying • Cheating/Plagiarism • Computer Violation – Inappropriate Use • Contraband – Phase 2 Level • Cutting Class – More than 10 Minutes Late • Fighting • Gambling • Harassment • Hit/Kick/Push - Phase 2 Level • In an Off-Limits Area/Unauthorized Area • Inappropriate Physical Contact – PDA • Intimidation • Major Disruption • Profanity • Other as indicated by administration	1st Phase 2 Offense: • 1-3 day(s) ISS 2nd Phase 2 Offense: • 1-5 day(s) OSS 3rd Phase 2 Offense: • 1-5 day(s) OSS

Phase 3 Behaviors

Offenses

- 10th Phase 1 Offense
- 4th Phase 2 Offense
- Contraband – Phase 3 Level
- Drug/Alcohol Possession and/or use on campus
- Weapons**
- Simple Assault
- Aggravated Assault
- Threats of Violence to the School
- Sex Violation
- Larceny/Theft
- Other as indicated by administration

Consequences

Board Expulsion Hearing
*If the student is not expelled, consequences will be determined by administration and may include but is not limited to the following: ISS, OSS, afterschool detention, Saturday detention, counseling, alternative placement, parent meeting with administration with the creation of a behavior contract

**Any student determined to have brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school shall be expelled for not less than one (1) calendar year, consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act

Tobacco/Nicotine

Offenses

Use and/or possession of tobacco or nicotine products.

Consequences

1st Offense:
- 3 days OSS

2nd Offense:
- Board Expulsion Hearing

Dress Code Violations

- 1st Offense:
  - Documented warning & parent contact
- 2nd Offense & ALL Additional Offenses Moving Foward
  - Student is in ISS until a change of clothes is provided
- 2nd – 5th Offense:
  - Lunch Detention
- 6th & 7th Offense:
  - 1 day off ISS with a parent conference

- 8th – 10th Offense:
  - 2 days of ISS with a parent conference
- 11th + Offense:
  - Student is in ISS until a parent conference to establish a Behavior Contract

Middle School & High School Tardies to Class (excludes 1st Period of the day)

- 1st Offense:
  - Documented warning & parent contact
- 2nd – 7th Offense:
  - Lunch Detention & parent contact
- 8th + Offense:
  - Tardy Intervention Plan & Behavior Contract with a Parent Conference

Refusal to Attend Lunch Detention: If a student refuses to attend lunch detention, they potentially may receive a day of in-school suspension the next day.

Student Driver Tardies to Their First Period of the Day

- 1st Offense:
  - Documented warning & parent contact
- 2nd – 7th Offense:
  - Lunch Detention & parent contact
- 8th + Offense:
  - Loss of driving privileges (length of loss of privilege will be determined by administration.)

Refusal to Attend Lunch Detention: If a student refuses to attend lunch detention, they potentially may receive a day of in-school suspension the next day.

DEFINITIONS

Alternative Placement

Due to poor behavior, a student who violates the rules in the Code of Student Conduct may be assigned an Alternative Placement. Placement may include virtual school assignments, home-based instruction, etc.

Assault

An actual offensive and intentional touching or striking of an individual, without use of a dangerous object or weapon, against his or her will, causing or intending to cause bodily harm.

Bullying/ Cyberbullying

Bullying, as defined by the National Centre Against Bullying, is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, and/or social behavior that intends to cause physical, social, and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more people who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time, for example, through the sharing of digital records.

Furthermore, it's important to note that even if bullying occurs off-campus, it can still have consequences at school if the bullying affects the learning environment.

Cheating

Academic dishonesty encompasses behaviors such as copying another student's work or permitting others to copy one's own work, whether on homework, classwork, tests, exams, or projects. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, which involves passing off another person's work as one's own. Additionally, it extends to the unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence tools, subject to the teacher's discretion.

Contraband

Items including toys, lighters, matches, bullets, fireworks, stink bombs, which disrupt or distract from the learning process or pose safety hazards. This includes laser pointers that are used with the intention to distract.

Cutting class

An unauthorized absence for any length of time from an assigned class or related activity.

Defiance

Refusal to comply with a request from school employees/personnel.

Disrespect
Disrespect encompasses rudeness, contempt, mockery, and ignoring or violating personal boundaries. It can also involve a failure to recognize the inherent value of others' individuality or their perspectives.

Disrupting class
Behavior which disrupts the learning environment.

Electronic device
Device such as cell phone, smart watches, iPod, headphones, handheld video game devices, etc.

Extortion
Attempting to obtain/obtaining money or other item(s) of value from an unwilling person or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.

Facsimile/ Imitation Drugs
A pill, capsule, tablet, or other item which is not a controlled substance, an alcoholic beverage, or illegal drugs, but which by appearance, including color, shape, size, marking or package, or by representations made, is intended to lead a person to believe that such a pill, capsule, tablet, or other item is a controlled substance, an alcoholic beverage, or marijuana.

Fighting
Actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur. Two or more parties striking each other with the intent to cause bodily harm. A student who is assaulted and retaliates by hitting, striking, or kicking, may be disciplined for fighting.

Forgery
Signing someone else's name or using a signature which is not authentic.

Gambling
Participation in games of chance for money and/or other things of value.

Ganging/Gang- related activity

Group activity which involves intimidating, threatening, lynching, or physical violence.

Harassing

Repeated annoyance of students/employees.

Hit/Kick/Push

Physical contact involving grabbing, pinching, closed-fist striking, slapping, chasing, or shoving. This includes incidents where individuals fail to keep their hands or feet to themselves, as well as shoving matches or slapping, which, while not severe enough to constitute a fight, still breach acceptable behavior.

Horseplay

Rough or boisterous behavior that can unintentionally result in someone getting injured.

Improper Use of Technology

Improper use of technology encompasses instances where a student engages in activities on a computer or device (regardless of if the device is school issued or a personal device) that are off-task, not assigned, or disruptive to others. This includes unauthorized or excessive personal use of school computers and computing equipment. Examples of improper use include accessing websites without permission, sending distracting or disruptive emails or messages, deleting other students' files, accessing unauthorized employees or student information, and attempting to bypass security measures on school systems.

Inappropriate Behavior

Behaviors not generally accepted as desired or suitable for a school situation, which disrupt the learning environment or compromise its safety. Examples include instigating misbehavior in others, taking items without permission, talking out of turn, throwing tantrums, etc.

Inappropriate Language

Derogatory, lewd, or coarse joking that is not directed at someone.

Inappropriate Physical Contact/ Public Display of Affection

Public displays of affection include, but are not limited to, kissing, cuddling, and touching each other's private areas in public.

Inappropriate Use of Technology

Inappropriate use of technology refers to behaviors where a student utilizes computer resources or devices (regardless of if the device is school issued or a personal device) in a manner that is not conducive to a safe and respectful learning environment. This includes engaging in activities such as sending sexual images or texts, accessing content of a sexual or violent nature, or engaging in any form of online behavior that is harassing, intimidating, or otherwise inappropriate.

Intimidating

Intimidation is the use of threats, gestures, or actions intended to instill fear or coerce others into submission. It involves behaviors that seek to exert power or control over individuals or groups, often resulting in feelings of insecurity or apprehension.

Intoxicating substance

Any substance which, when used in sufficient quantities, ordinarily or commonly disturbs a person's mental or physical capacities, including but not limited to alcoholic beverages, drugs, controlled substances as defined by state law, certain prescription medications when not used in accordance with physician's orders, glue, paint or other substances.

ISS

In School Suspension

Larceny/Theft

Taking materials that belong to students/employees/school. While both terms share the same definition. Theft may be considered the minor of the two, and classified as inappropriate behavior. Larceny should be considered the more serious offense, often with the stolen materials being of a higher monetary value.

Laser pointer
If used to inflict harm, will be considered a weapon.

Loitering
To stand idly by without legitimate reason or business.

Lunch Detention
Detention served during the student's lunch time that is in a designated location away from peers.

Lynching
Group activity involving physical violence.

Misconduct
Behavior not conforming to school rules/regulations.

Non-forcible sex offense
Unlawful, non-forcible sexual intercourse or sexual act; or unlawful sexual exposure.

Obscene/ Profane
Offensive or degrading

OSS
Out of school suspension

Other Offenses
Problem behavior not specifically listed or defined in the student code of conduct and at the discretion of the administration.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work, ideas, or intellectual property as one's own, without giving proper credit or acknowledgment. This includes but is not limited to copying from published sources, the internet, failure to cite sources, other students' work, the reuse of the student's own work from previous years without permission, and AI-generated content without appropriate citations.

Pornography
Printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings

Profanity
Derogatory, lewd, offensive, insulting or coarse joking that is directed at someone.

Refusal to Obey/ Defiance
Refusal to comply with established rules; disobedience or defiance of reasonable requests made by school personnel, chaperones/volunteers, or law enforcement officers. Refusal to accept consequences such as after school detention or failing to report to in school suspension.

Restitution
In the case of serious acts of vandalism, students shall pay for damage done to buildings, equipment or other property of the school, employees, or other students before returning to school.

Sexual Harassment
Unwanted or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that includes touching, groping, patting, snapping a bra or pulling down someone's pants, as well as sexual or derogatory comments, sexually suggestive gestures or sounds, spreading rumors, offensive text messages or emails, or postings to social media. Students should report all incidents of sexual harassment to administration immediately.

Threat
Indicating through written, verbal, or gestures that the person intends to assault or commit any act which would cause a reasonable person to be put in fear of danger or harm.

Tobacco/ Paraphernalia
Use/Possession of tobacco products, including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, rolling papers, lighters, matches, e-cigarettes, vapes etc.

Unauthorized Use of School Equipment

Low-intensity misuse of property; tampering with equipment/impairing its usefulness. Tampering with device settings; using employees copy equipment; using vending machines not allowed for student use.

Unauthorized Area – In an Off-Limits Area

Any area in which a student does not have permission or authorization to be. This includes but is not limited to if a student is in a location without a written pass, is after school hours or after a student has early dismissal.

Unprepared for the Learning Environment

Students are expected to bring their school-provided Chromebooks and chargers to school each day. If students do not bring their Chromebook and/or charger they may be written up by the teacher.

Victimizing

Harming/Taking advantage of another person

Persistently Dangerous Schools Report
(Definitions of Offenses from the 2016-2017 South Carolina Department of Education PowerSchool Incident Management Manual)

Aggravated Assault

Aggravated Assault is an unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This category includes attempted murder. A weapon can be a commonly known weapon, such as a gun or knife, or any other item, which, although not usually thought of as a weapon, becomes one when used in a manner that could cause severe bodily injury (e.g., baseball bat, metal chain, large stick). A "severe laceration" is one that should receive medical attention. A "loss of consciousness" must be the direct result of force inflicted on the victim by the offender.

Homicide

Homicide is the killing of one human being by another. Does not include vehicular manslaughter or attempted murder as a homicide. Non-negligent manslaughter is defined as the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. Negligent manslaughter is defined as the killing of another person through negligence. This offense does not include vehicular manslaughter. Justifiable homicide - The killing of a perpetrator of a serious criminal offense by a peace officer in the line of duty or the killing, during the commission of a serious criminal offense, of the perpetrator by a private individual.

Drug Distribution (Drug Usage & Drug Possession)

Drug Distribution - Except as authorized by state law, it is unlawful for any person (1) to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase; or to aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase; or to possess with intent to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase a controlled substance and (2) to create, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase; or to aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to create, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase; or to possess with intent to distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase a counterfeit substance.

Drug Paraphernalia

Paraphernalia" as "any instrument, device, article, or contraband used, designed for use, or intended for use in ingesting, smoking, administering, manufacturing, or preparing a controlled substance and does not include cigarette papers and tobacco pipes but includes, but is not limited to: (a) metal, wooden, acrylic, glass, stone, plastic, or ceramic marijuana or hashish pipes with or without screens, permanent screens, hashish heads, or punctured metal bowls; (b) water pipes designed for use or intended to use with marijuana, hashish, hashish oil, or cocaine: (c) carburetion tubes and devices; (d) smoking and carburetion masks; (e) roach clips; (f) separation gins designed for use or intended for use in cleaning marijuana; (g) cocaine spoons and vials; (h) chamber pipes; (i) carburetor pipes; (j) electric pipes; (k) air-driven pipes; (l) chilams; (m) bongs; (n) ice pipes or chillers.

Kidnapping/ Abduction

Kidnapping/abduction is the unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his or her will or of a minor without the consent of his or her custodial parent(s) or legal guardian. This category includes hostage taking.

Robbery

Robbery is defined as taking or attempting to take anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm. Because some type of assault is an element of the crime of robbery, an assault should not be reported as a separate crime if it is performed in furtherance of the robbery. If an injury occurring during a robbery results in death, the crime should be listed as a homicide.

Sex Offenses, Forcible

A Forcible Sex offense is any sexual act directed against another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will, or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent. This definition includes forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object (to use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will, or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his or her youth or because of his or her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity), and/or forcible fondling (child molesting).

Sexting

Creating, possessing, or sharing nude, partially nude, or other sexually explicit or suggestive images, videos, or visual representations using non-digital means (e.g., printed materials) or electronic communication, including but not limited to texting, emailing, or posting on social media platforms. These acts are prohibited whether or not the subjects of the images, videos, or visual representations consent to their being created, possessed, or shared.

Weapons Offenses

The violation of laws prohibiting any person, except law enforcement officers or personnel authorized by school officials, to carry on his or her person, while on any elementary or secondary school property, a knife with a blade over two inches long, a blackjack, a metal pipe or pole, firearms, or any other type of weapon, device, or object that may be used to inflict bodily injury or death. This category also includes carrying a concealed dirk, slingshot, metal knuckles, razor, or other deadly weapon usually used for personal injury.

BULLYING POLICY

Definition of Bullying

Bullying as defined by the National Centre Against Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical, and/or social behavior that intends to cause physical, social, and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more people who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium, and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements, or fights.

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and they're not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

Reporting Bullying
Students, bystanders, parents/guardians, teachers, employees, and others should report bullying behavior without delay to a school counselor or school administrator.

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for promoting the health and welfare of the school's students by maintaining a safe, positive learning environment for students and a teaching environment for employees that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The HCA School Board prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying of a student by another student or students, employee(s) or third parties that interfere with or disrupt a student's ability to learn and the school's responsibility to educate its students in a safe and orderly environment whether in a classroom, on school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, at a school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not it is held on school premises, or at another program or function where the school is responsible for the student.

For purposes of this policy, harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication or a written, verbal, physical or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of either of the following.

- harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage.
- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a manner as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

- insulting or demeaning a student or group of students in such a manner as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school

Any student who feels he/she has been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying is encouraged to file a complaint with the Behavior Team or school counselor. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and confidentially. All school employees are required to report alleged student and employee violations of this policy to the Leadership Team or his/her designee. Employees who feel they have been subjected to harassment, intimidation or bullying are encouraged to file a complaint or formal grievance to their administrator/direct report and Human Resources. Reports by students or employees may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action must not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The school prohibits retaliation or reprisal in any form against a student or employee who has filed a complaint or report of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The school also prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and any student or employee member knowingly violating this prohibition will be subject to disciplinary action as described in this policy.

The board expects students and employees to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. Students and employees have a responsibility to know and respect the policies, rules and regulations of the school and HCA Board. Any student or employee who is found to have engaged in the prohibited actions as outlined in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion in the case of a student. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The school will take all other appropriate measures reasonably calculated to correct or rectify the situation. (Employees engaged in harassment, intimidation or bullying may be disciplined or recommended for termination, as provided elsewhere in school policy, for unprofessional or unlawful conduct.)

Students, parents/legal guardians, teachers and employees should be aware that the school may take disciplinary actions for conduct initiated and/or created off-campus involving the inappropriate use of the Internet or web-based resources if such conduct poses a threat or substantially interferes with or disrupts the environment, work and/or discipline of the schools, including discipline for student harassment and bullying.

The Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided to students, employee, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and members of the community including its applicability to all areas of the school environment as outlined in this policy.

The Leadership Team will also ensure that an age-appropriate process is established for discussing the school policy with students, as with other aspects of the code of conduct currently utilized during the beginning of each school year.

The Leadership Team will ensure that information regarding this policy is incorporated into the school's training program and that volunteers with frequent contact with students are likewise informed of the policy.

TRESPASSING
(Unlawful Presence on District Property)

The Leadership Team is empowered to take appropriate action against anyone who trespasses on school grounds. It is unlawful for students who are suspended or recommended for expulsion or expelled to be on district property. Such action will nclude the right to call in the police authorities and swear out warrants. The authority for such action is Section 16-17-420 of the South Carolina Code of Laws as follows:

DISTURBING SCHOOL

It shall be unlawful:

For any person willfully or unnecessarily:

1. To interfere with or to disturb in any way or in any place the students or teachers of any school or college in this state.
2. To loiter about such school or college premises or
3. To act in an obnoxious manner thereon; or

For any person to:

1. Enter upon such school or college premises or
2. Loiter around the premises, except on business, without the permission of the Leadership Team or president in charge.

For the purpose of this section, "person who is not a student" means a person who is not enrolled in, or who is suspended or expelled from, the school or college that the person interferes with, disrupts, or disturbs at the time the interference, disruption, or disturbance occurs.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

“In loco parentis" denotes the temporary assumption of parental responsibilities by a school administrator upon a student's arrival at the school premises. This concept allows the administrator to address alleged student misconduct, including conducting investigations, interviewing the student without parental presence, and administering suitable disciplinary actions if the misconduct is confirmed. Horse Creek Academy will make every attempt to contact the parent/guardian when an offense occurs.

SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

59-63-1110. Consent to search person or his effects.

Any person entering the premises of any school in this State shall be deemed to have consented to a reasonable search of his person and effects.

59-63-1120. Searches by school administrators or officials with or without probable cause.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, school administrators and officials may conduct reasonable searches on school property of lockers, desks, vehicles, and personal belongings such as purses, bookbags, wallets, and satchels with or without probable cause.

59-63-1130. Searches by principals or their designees.
Notwithstanding any other provision of law, school principals or their designees may conduct reasonable searches of the person and property of visitors on school premises.

Reasonable Cause
Reasonable cause is a legal term that refers to a situation where there is a reasonable ground to suspect that a person has committed or is committing a crime or that a place contains specific items connected with a crime.

DRUG DOG SEARCH PROCEDURE

There may be periodic unannounced searches of vehicles on campus/or parked in school parking lot, book bags, classrooms, and lockers by trained drug dogs. Parents will be notified in a timely manner following the search if warranted.

BATHROOM STALL EXPECTATIONS

Only one student is allowed in a bathroom stall at a time. This includes whether the stall door is open or closed. For students who use the single room bathroom, only one student is allowed in the room at a time. This includes during and after school hours. Students are subjected to consequences if this policy is not followed.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES/INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose
To establish the HCA School Board's vision and the basic structure for the use of technology resources in instruction.

Technology is a vital part of education. In an effort to promote learning and expand educational resources for students, the district provides a variety of technology resources for students and employees.

The school's goal in providing these resources is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, communication and innovation.

The school's educational network supports research and education in and among academic institutions by providing access to unique resources and collaborative work. All use of the Internet and network must support education and research and be consistent with the school's educational objectives. Use of other networks or computing resources must comply with the rules governing those networks. Transmission of any material in violation of any federal or state laws or regulations is prohibited.

This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret. Access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by the school imposes certain responsibilities and obligations on users and is subject to district policies and local, state, and federal laws.

Technology access Because technology is a vital part of the educational process and the school's curriculum, students and employees will be given access to the Internet. By providing this access, the school intends to promote academic excellence in schools by allowing access to resources unavailable through traditional means.

The school provides this instructional resource as an educational tool for employees and students, and its use will be governed by this policy of acceptable Internet use. The failure to follow this policy or responsibilities may result in losing privileges or other disciplinary measures. Access to computers and people worldwide also comes with the availability of material that may not be of educational value in the school setting. The school has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial or inappropriate materials; however, on a global network, controlling access to all materials is impossible, and an industrious user may discover controversial information. Users (and parents/legal guardians of students who are users) must understand that neither the school nor any school employee controls the content available on outside systems. The school firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the district.

The smooth operation of the Internet network relies on the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided so that students and employees are aware of their responsibilities when using the Internet. All employees and students must abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette, including the following:

- Vandalism is prohibited. Vandalism includes any malicious attempt to harm or destroy other's data. Vandalism also includes uploading or creating computer viruses, deleting or altering other user files or applications, removing protection from restricted areas.
- Never access or attempt to access inappropriate or restricted information not directly related to educational purposes. Restricted information includes obscene, libelous, indecent, vulgar, profane, or lewd materials; advertisements or services not permitted to minors by law; insulting, fighting, and harassing words; and other materials that may cause a substantial disruption of the academic environment.
- Do not be abusive in group messages or chat rooms. Profanity, vulgarity or other inappropriate language is prohibited. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Do not disrupt, harass or annoy other users.

- Documents, electronic mail, chat room messages, and any other form of direct communication may not include a student's Social Security number or any other personally identifiable information that may lead to the identity of oneself or others. For example, do not reveal others' personal home addresses or phone numbers.
- No student pictures (video or still) or audio clips will be published without permission from the student's parent/legal guardian. No original student work will be published without permission from the student's parent/legal guardian.
- Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system have access to all electronic mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal or inappropriate activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property. Always cite all quotes, references and sources. Users may not reproduce copyrighted material without permission.
- All subject matter on school web pages will relate to curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities or to the district. Neither students nor employee may publish personal home pages as part of the school web sites or home pages for other individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with the district. All pages on the school's server(s) are property of the school.
- Use of the Internet is for educational and educational support activities only.
- Users may not use the system for financial or commercial gain.
- All work should be proofread to avoid spelling and grammatical errors.
- Always follow the instructions of the supervising employee.
- No user of the system may use the system to make an unauthorized disclosure or use of, or otherwise disseminate, personal identification information regarding minors and/or students.
- No user of the system may send messages or information with someone else's name on it or misrepresent the source of information entered or sent.
- No user of the system may send messages or information that is inconsistent with the school's conduct code or assist others to violate that code.
- No user of the system may distribute addresses, home phone numbers or other personal information which could then be used to make inappropriate calls or contacts.
- No user of the system may engage in "spamming," "doxing," or "spoofing" (sending an annoying or unnecessary message to large numbers of people).

- No user of the system may purchase something that requires a credit card number and obliges a student or school to provide payment to another party without the consent of the HCA Executive Director.
- No user of the system may access or attempt to access and/or alter information in restricted areas of any network.
- No user of the system may download or load any software or applications without permission from the building network administrator or system administrator.
- No user of the system may violate the confidentiality rights of other users on any network.
- Failing to report abuses or other conditions that may interfere with the appropriate and efficient use of school resources will result in disciplinary actions.

Technology protection measures

In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 USC § 254(h), the school uses technological devices designed to filter and block the use of any of the district's computers with Internet access to retrieve or transmit any visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography or "harmful to minors" as defined in the CIPA. Adult users of a district computer with Internet access may request that the "technology protection measures" be temporarily disabled for valid educational research purposes or other lawful purposes not otherwise inconsistent with this acceptable use policy.

Internet safety policy

Prior to accessing the Internet, students and employees must receive instruction on the appropriate use of the Internet. In addition, parents/legal guardians will be required annually to sign a permission form before students will be allowed access to the Internet. Students also must sign a form annually acknowledging that that they have read and understand this policy, that they will comply with the guidelines set forth herein and that they understand the consequences for violating these guidelines. This is included in the signature for the Student Handbook. Employees must sign a similar acknowledgement form that is included in their signature for the Employee Handbook.

Email, phone and Internet usage

The school will monitor email, phone and Internet activity and may disclose the content and/or details when, in the school's sole discretion, there is a business need to do so. Employees and any students granted email accounts should not expect that email messages, even those marked as personal or accessed by a personal ID, are private or confidential.

Email, phone and Internet usage should be used only for business/educational purposes. The district reserves the right to monitor personal use to the same extent that it monitors business use. Use by employees of the school's communication system constitutes consent to monitoring. Continued use of the system is conditioned on acceptance of and strict adherence to the school's policies. Failure to adhere to policy requirements may result in discipline or dismissal. Employees should exercise the same restraint and caution in drafting and transmitting email messages as when writing a formal memorandum on district or school letterhead. Users should assume that messages will be saved and reviewed by someone other than the original addressee.

Legal references:

Federal law:

47 USC Section 245(h) - Children's Internet Protection Act. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, Section 512

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

Section 10-1-205 - Computers in public libraries; regulation of Internet access.

Section 16-3-850 - Encountering child pornography while processing film or working on a computer.

Section 16-15-305 - Disseminating, procuring or promoting obscenity unlawful; definitions; penalties; obscene material designated contraband.

Section 59-19-90 - General powers and duties of school trustees.

Court cases:

Purdham v. Fairfax Co. Sch. Bd., 637 F.3d 421, 427 (4th Cir. 2011)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Integrity is one of Horse Creek Academy's core values and it has a significant role in academic pursuits. An academic community must be able to rely on the honesty and integrity of all its members. Using or copying another's words, ideas, thoughts, or arguments without giving credit is intellectually dishonest. Students who plagiarize will receive a 0 on the assignment or a behavioral consequence.

Plagiarism/AI (ChatGPT)
Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work, ideas, or intellectual property as one's own, without giving proper credit or acknowledgment. This includes but is not limited to copying from published sources, the internet, failure to cite sources, other students' work, the reuse of the student's own work from previous years without permission, and AI-generated content without appropriate citations.

We strive to educate students about the importance of academic integrity, proper research techniques, and citation methods. We encourage students to seek help from teachers, librarians, and academic advisors to develop their skills and produce original work.

Prohibited Use of AI: Unless explicitly instructed by the classroom teacher, the use of AI tools, including but not limited to AI-generated essays, automated writing software, and machine learning algorithms, is strictly prohibited in all academic tasks, including assignments, projects, presentations, and exams. Students must rely on their own knowledge, research, and creativity to complete their academic work.

Authorized Use of AI: In some cases, classroom teachers may allow or encourage the use of AI tools for specific educational purposes. In such instances, students will be explicitly informed and provided with guidelines on how to appropriately utilize AI resources. Any use of AI tools must be transparently disclosed, and proper citations must be given for AI-generated content.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

The safety of students during transportation for school-related events such as field trips and athletics events, is of utmost importance to us. Students riding on a bus or traveling in another person's car for any school-related event play a crucial role in ensuring safe transportation. It is imperative that they conduct themselves in a manner that does not compromise their safety or that of their peers. The driver's primary responsibility is the safe operation of the vehicle, and it is essential that students cooperate fully with the driver's instructions.

Outlined below are the requirements that must be adhered to for the safe transportation of students:

- Following all safety procedures.
- Respecting and cooperating with the bus driver or the driver of the vehicle at all times.
- Boarding and exiting the bus or vehicle in an orderly manner.
- Seating will be filled from the rear of the bus unless seats are assigned by the driver. Saving seats for friends is not permitted.
- Remaining seated until reaching the destination.
- Conversing in a quiet tone without shouting.
- No eating or drinking on the bus or in the vehicle.
- Avoiding whistling or loud singing.
- Refraining from throwing objects in or out of the bus or vehicle.
- No hitting or playing with other students.
- Keeping head, arms, and legs inside the bus windows or the vehicle.
- No pushing or shoving while boarding or disembarking.
- No marking, cutting, or defacing the interior or exterior of the bus or vehicle.
- Minimizing unnecessary conversation with the bus driver or the driver of the vehicle while in motion.
- No smoking on the bus or in the vehicle.
- Avoiding swearing or using vulgar language.
- Objects such as band instruments, backpacks, school projects, etc., must fit on the student's lap and not exceed the height of the bus seat or interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.

Students may face disciplinary actions, including suspension or recommendation for expulsion, for any conduct that jeopardizes the safety, order, or best interests of the school community, even if not explicitly listed in the transportation policy. The severity and nature of the offense will be considered, and disciplinary actions will be administered at the discretion of the administration.

Furthermore, students who demonstrate uncooperative behavior or fail to adhere to instructions from school employees or bus drivers may face additional consequences in accordance with school policies. It is essential for students to understand that their actions have consequences, and maintaining a safe and respectful environment is paramount.

All final disciplinary decisions are subject to the discretion of the administration, who will consider the circumstances of each situation before determining appropriate consequences. We appreciate your cooperation in reinforcing these expectations with your child to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

STUDENT DRIVER EXPECTATIONS

- Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter or privilege, not of right.
- The speed limit on campus is 10 miles per hour.
- Students must park in their designated parking space within the white lines.
- Seatbelts must be always worn by all drivers and passengers while driving on school property.
- Pedestrians should be always given the right of way on school grounds.
- Riding in the bed of trucks is prohibited.
- Music/Noise from vehicles should not be excessively loud.
- Students failing to follow the parking rules and regulations may be subject to fines/losing their driving privileges.
- If a student driver is involved in more than one vehicular accident on campus, their parking and driving privileges on school property will be revoked.
- HCA retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exteriors of students' automobiles on school property.
- HCA may inspect the interiors of students' automobiles whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside the automobiles.

- The school is not responsible for vandalism or theft involving the permitted vehicle.
- Students may not loiter in the parking lot at any time.
- If the student fails to follow school policy and procedure related to use of vehicles, the student's parking pass may be revoked without refund.
- Students may not return to their vehicle during the school day.
- Students driving their younger siblings are required to get their sibling(s) to school on time. If this becomes a pervasive problem, a parent conference will be held and driving privileges may be revoked.
- Students are to park and enter the school as soon as they arrive on the premises.
- Students are to leave campus as soon as they are dismissed.