Hill Country Christian School

Family-Student Handbook

Steward discovery and growth in students to shape their future.

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Dear HCCS Families,

Welcome to Hill Country Christian School of San Marcos. We are grateful you chose HCCS. This special, spirit-filled school exists to bring honor and glory to God through the development of academically and spiritually trained young people. Founded by Hill Country Faith Ministries, our mission is to walk alongside students to steward their discovery and growth, intentionally shaping their futures.

We are unable to accomplish this without your partnership. We embrace this mission through a close partnership with families, serving as an extension of your home. You, therefore, are an integral part of our school community dedicated to serving Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives and Lord of our campus. It is our privilege to ensure that HCCS honors God in all we do. We invite you to pray daily for our students and teachers.

In addition, we ask that you take time to carefully review this handbook as a family. It will outline the policies, procedures, and protocols guiding our school year. If questions or needs arise, please know that we are here to assist you. May we work together to achieve all that God has called us to do… for His glory and purposes.

In His service,

Kristen Ray, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Chris Birkhimer

Principal

1. Foundations & Philosophy

1.1 Mission & Vision

Mission Statement: We steward discovery and growth in students to shape their future.

Vision Statement: That our graduates will have transformational encounters with the Lord that build character, leadership, and purpose in their lives.

1.2 Philosophy of Christian Education

Theological Foundation & Biblical Integration: We believe that education is fundamentally a spiritual endeavor, grounded in the conviction that faith and learning are not parallel tracks but are seamlessly woven through every aspect of life. The Word of God is the ultimate lens through which all of learning is understood—governing how our students analyze information, solve problems, evaluate ideas, and engage with the world around them. We teach objective truth, theology, and apologetics, ensuring that every curriculum used is biblically based so that scripture is inherently embedded within every subject taught.

Threefold Approach to Spiritual Formation: Aligned with rigorous institutional standards for holistic Christian discipleship, we cultivate spiritual formation through three essential components:

- **Learning the Language of Faith:** Students are equipped to master systematic and sound doctrine, while developing biblical logic, reasoning, and contextual study skills.
- **Experiencing a Living Faith:** We provide consistent environments like daily devotionals and weekly chapel, alongside annual retreats where students personally encounter God, hear His voice, and move past mere religion into a living relationship.
- **Integrating Truth Across All Domains:** Students learn to see and evaluate every area of study—including Mathematic, Science, and Social Studies—in the absolute light of God's Spirit and Truth.

Whole-Person Development & Academic Rigor: We reject the separation of spiritual strength and practical readiness, aiming instead to develop the whole person—body, soul, and spirit. Our educational culture pairs direct instruction with active Socratic discussion, advanced writing, rhetoric, and real-world project-based challenges. We are committed to shaping graduates who are:

- **Unapologetically Spiritual:** Graduates are firmly rooted in an unshakeable covenant identity and are governed by the internal voice of the Holy Spirit rather than a standard rule book.
- **Fear-Free Solutionaries:** Students operate as active problem-solvers in the real world, driven by the creator-mindset that they have distinct human value to bring to broken or saturated marketplaces.

- **Masterfully Good at Life:** Graduates are characterized as servant leaders who carry profound integrity and intentionally cultivate humility as a counterweight to their confidence.

Tri-Partnership (Home, School, & Church): True kingdom education cannot happen in isolation. We operate on a model of authentic partnership, walking closely alongside families who are already walking in faith to reinforce biblical discipleship both at home and at school. Furthermore, we stand as a co-champion with the local church, sharing a unified vision and mission to establish, equip, and launch the next generation into lasting Kingdom impact.

1.3 Statement of Faith

HCCS unapologetically holds the same Statement of Faith as HCFM. We passionately follow these foundational tenets of Christian doctrine, which serve as the baseline for all instructional design, biblical integration, and student life:

Listed below is the shared statement of faith for both HCCS and HCFM. These are beliefs, rooted in the Bible, to which our school will always adhere:

- **The Godhead:** We believe that there is only one true God who is the eternal King, Creator, and Redeemer of all that is. He is perfectly holy, just, loving, and truthful. He has revealed Himself to be eternally self-existent—one being in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- **Holy Scripture:** We believe that the Bible is the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God.
- **Human Fall and Creation:** We believe that humankind was created in the image of God to know and enjoy Him, yet we willfully rejected the Lordship and glory of God for which we were intended. Because of this, sickness, death, and judgment entered the world, and now creation experiences the effects and consequences of sin.
- **The Lord Jesus Christ:** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is God's Anointed One, empowered by the Holy Spirit to inaugurate God's kingdom on earth. He was crucified for our sins, died, was buried, resurrected, and ascended into heaven, and is now alive today in the presence of God the Father and in His people. He is fully "true God" and fully "true man."
- **Salvation by Grace:** We believe that we are saved by God's grace, through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Anyone can be restored to fellowship with God through repenting, believing, and receiving Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The Holy Spirit convicts, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and adopts us as we enter the kingdom of God as His sons and daughters.
- **Empowerment of the Holy Spirit:** We believe in the ongoing, sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life and minister supernaturally. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to the mandates of Acts 1:4-8

and 2:4, is actively poured out on believers that they might have God's power to be His witnesses.

- **Redemptive Deliverance:** We believe in the victorious, redemptive work of Christ on the cross, which provides absolute freedom from the power of the enemy—encompassing sin, lies, sickness, and torment.
- **The Church and Great Commission:** We believe that the Church consists of all who put their faith in Jesus Christ. He gave His Church the ordinances of water baptism and communion. The Church exists to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ and further advance His kingdom by undoing the works of the enemy, preaching and living the good news of God's love, and discipling the nations—baptizing and teaching them to love and obey God.
- **Divine Government and Blessed Hope:** We believe in the ever-increasing government of God and in the Blessed Hope, which is the glorious, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and reign with His overcoming bride—the Church.
- **Eternal Resurrections:** We believe that heaven and hell are real places. There will be a resurrection of the lost and the saved: the one to everlasting death and the other to everlasting life.

2. Institutional Governance & Legal Status

2.1 Governance & Organizational Structure

HCCS operates under the authority of the HCCS Board of Directors and is now its own 501(c)3. The school is a ministry of Hill Country Faith Ministries and remains permanently connected to the mission and vision of HCFM. The Directors are nominated by the Board President or Superintendent and approved by the existing Directors. The Board shall be no less than three members and no more than 40% of the positions may be held by HCFM leadership.

The HCCS Board of Directors is led by the Board President, permanently one of the senior pastors of HCFM, currently Pastor Tim Darnell. The Board meets at least quarterly and serves to adopt the vision, mission and strategic goals of the school for longevity, stability and continual advancement of the program. Primary responsibilities include hiring and evaluation of the Superintendent, oversight of financial management, adopting policy, and leading development efforts to ensure the school has the necessary resources.

The Superintendent works directly with the Principal and the rest of the administrative team to ensure efficient and effective operations and execution of strategic goals. The Principal leads the day-to-day operations as a primary responsibility, ensuring that students are first in all decisions and that the culture radiates a spirit-filled, transformational, and growth-oriented atmosphere. The administrative team works as a collaborative and flexible support to the staff, students, and parents.

2.2 Racial Nondiscrimination Policy

Hill Country Christian School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate on that basis in its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs. This does not limit HCCS's right, as a religious institution, to make admissions decisions based on alignment with its Statement of Faith and religious mission.

2.3 Confidentiality of Student Records (FERPA Alignment)

HCCS strictly maintains the confidentiality and security of all student education records and voluntarily aligns its practices with the foundational privacy protections outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Transcripts, diagnostic testing results, behavioral files, and academic progress data are securely stored and may only be accessed by the student's legal guardians, campus administrators, and faculty members with a verified, legitimate educational interest.

The school will not release personally identifiable information or academic records to external individuals or institutions without the express, written consent of a parent or legal guardian. As a matter of school policy, modeled on FERPA principles, HCCS will disclose records without consent only in the following circumstances:

- To officials of another school system or higher education institution where the student seeks or intends to enroll, provided the transfer of records is legally requested.
- To authorized representatives of state and federal educational authorities for verified audit, compliance, or institutional evaluation purposes.
- To appropriate parties in connection with a student's application for or receipt of verified financial assistance.
- To accrediting organizations (such as NAPS or ICAA) carrying out their recognized institutional review functions.
- To comply with a lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order, provided the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the guardians in advance, unless legally restricted.
- To appropriate officials, medical personnel, or law enforcement agencies in the event of an emergency where disclosure is strictly necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

The following practices are in place for HCCS student records:

- Currently Enrolled Students: HCCS will keep all currently enrolled student records (application, achievement tests, grades, transcripts, grade reports from previous schools, etc.) in a cumulative file.
- HCCS graduate records: HCCS will keep on permanent file a transcript for all students who graduated from HCCS.

- Previously enrolled (non-graduate) records: HCCS will keep on permanent file a transcript and/or report cards for all students who attended HCCS but did not graduate from the institution.
- Student files may only be accessed by school administrators, the student's teachers, or the student's parents. Transcripts and report cards may be requested and accessed by all students.
- Requests for student records
    - Parent requests to view records will be handled by the administration.
    - Requests for copies of records must be made through the academic advisor or executive administrative assistant.
    - All record requests (i.e. requests to transfer records to another institution, a request for official transcripts, etc.) must be made in writing and will be processed generally within three business days of the request.
- Student Records in Event of School Closure
    - As a condition of enrollment, in the event of a permanent school closure, all records and files for students currently or previously enrolled at HCCS will be transferred to Hill Country Faith Ministries.

3. Admissions, Re-Enrollment, & Financial Policies

3.1 Parent Partnership

By enrolling a student at Hill Country Christian School, parents partner with the school in the academic and spiritual formation of their children and agree to fulfill the financial obligations of enrollment.

We commit that we will honor parents as experts about their own children, who are essential to empowering each student and understanding their unique strengths and areas for growth. Parents, like our students, are expected to collaborate with grace with our teachers and administrators, who are the leaders of our students' learning. At HCCS, all students, parents, and school staff members must be treated with respect, especially during times of disagreement. We believe that a positive, constructive partnership with parents or guardians is essential to fulfilling the school's mission.

Therefore, HCCS reserves the right to discontinue enrollment or not re-enroll a student if the school reasonably concludes that the actions of any parent or guardian have compromised a positive, constructive relationship, or otherwise interfered with the school's mission, vision, statement of faith, educational philosophy, program, or operations.

PLEASE NOTE: A critical part of partnership is PARENT SUPERVISION at AFTER SCHOOL events. **It is MANDATORY that a parent or guardian escort/accompany their children to ANY and EVERY after-school event,** including orientation nights, sporting events, and even daily student pick-up.

3.2 General Admissions Considerations

Prospective parents must want their children to be educated in accordance with the school's principles and purpose, and they must fully support the aims of the school's Christian program of instruction. Parents must agree with HCCS's statement of faith, standards of the school as outlined in the Student Handbook, and that they will endeavor to support the faith-based perspective of the school.

HCCS reserves the right to refuse admission to any student. The school will accept a student only if it believes it can provide a suitable educational program. Accordingly:

- The school may decide that it lacks the resources to meet the needs of children with particular needs.
- HCCS *does not accept new students entering the 12th grade. In* rare circumstances, the Superintendent may consider enrollment of a student with strong alignment and demonstration of mature spirit-filled character, exceptional work ethic, and excellent academic standing.
- If there is a history of academic or disciplinary problems, students may be disqualified from attendance at HCCS or may be accepted at the Principal's discretion. Conditions of the probationary period will be made in writing and kept in the student's file.

3.3 Priority Admissions Consideration

The following order is used as a guiding principle when accepting students for the available spaces in the school:

- Children currently enrolled in Pre-K.
- Children who have siblings currently attending the school, children of staff members, children of HCFM, and children of alumni.
- Other students deemed an appropriate fit with the vision and mission of HCCS.

Within each of the categories above, students will not necessarily be accepted in the order in which the application forms were returned to the school. In addition, being a member of any of the categories listed above does not guarantee admission to HCCS. Parents of children currently enrolled who wish to register an additional child for pre-kindergarten or kindergarten the following school year must inform the school in writing by March 1st to confirm their child's seat in the upcoming class. After March 1st, a seat in the class will be subject to availability.

3.4 Admissions Process

The admissions process follows the following steps:

1. Parents first submit a completed application for admission that shall include the application, all letters of recommendation, transcripts, any custody documents, and all signed agreements.
2. A nonrefundable application fee will be required at the time of application.
3. Diagnostic testing is required of all kindergarten through 12th-grade prospective students to determine proper grade and program placement. PreK has a developmental screening for informational purposes only.
4. All students and parents will be interviewed by a member of the school leadership (Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principal, or designee) to determine if the student is eligible to be admitted to the school.
5. Once a student has been tentatively accepted by the school, the parents must submit their registration fees (nonrefundable) to confirm enrollment.

3.5 Grade Placement

Age requirements for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are as follows:

- Pre-kindergarten: age 4 by September 1st of the entering school year
- Kindergarten: age 5 by September 1st of the entering school year

Proper grade placement will be determined by the diagnostic test, information from the previous school, and conversation with the student and parents.

The principal, with input from the receiving teacher or academic advisor, is responsible for placing the student at a suitable grade level.

If deemed in the best interest of the student, HCCS reserves the right to place a student to repeat a grade level.

HCCS may conditionally accept a student into a grade with the requirement that the student undertake summer tutoring or remediation. Any conditions of acceptance will be made in writing. All such requirements must be completed for attendance. If not completed, acceptance to a lower grade may be possible depending on space availability and the likelihood of success in that grade.

3.6 Transfer of High School Credits

Transfer credits may be accepted from public and private schools as well as from homeschool.

An official transcript must be provided to HCCS for credits and grades to transfer to HCCS. To be considered official, HCCS must receive the transcript directly from the previous school.

Transfer credits are awarded on a case-by-case basis according to the following parameters:

- Transfer credits are granted for high school-level (or above) classes only.
- Academic credit will be accepted if the final grades are a 70 or better.

- HCCS reserves the right to deny credit for any previous school course. HCCS may also require transferring students to repeat a course previously taken at another institution.
- Grades earned through other schools appear on HCCS's transcript with a numerical grade and are also calculated in a student's cumulative GPA. The exception will be the determination of valedictorian and salutatorian. In such a case, only the grades earned at HCCS will be considered, and the student must have attended HCCS for their junior and senior year to be considered for valedictorian and salutatorian.

3.7 Annual Re-Enrollment Policy

Parents as Partners in Education

At HCCS, we honor parents as our vital partners and the ultimate authority in their children's education. We deeply value the opportunity to provide your child with a seamless continuity of care, community, and education within our school environment. To support this ongoing journey, we provide our families with a dedicated window each year to positively confirm their re-enrollment choices for the upcoming school year.

Re-Enrollment Eligibility

Priority re-enrollment is available to all current students who are in **good standing** both academically and behaviorally.

- Students are considered in good standing if they are not currently on an academic or social/behavioral probationary plan or undergoing active disciplinary action.

Important Dates and Deadlines

To help you plan, please keep the following timeline in mind for the annual re-enrollment process:

- **December 1: Re-Enrollment Window Opens.** The priority re-enrollment period begins for all current eligible families.
- **January 15: Priority Review.** School administration will begin reviewing submissions. A representative from our team will personally reach out to any families who have not yet responded (either affirmatively or negatively) to help clarify enrollment intentions.
- **February 1: Final Re-Enrollment Deadline.** This is the final day to secure your student's seat.

Please Note: If re-enrollment is not finalized by **February 1**, existing seats cannot be guaranteed and will be released and offered to incoming applicants on our waiting list.

Re-Enrollment Fees and Early Incentives

A standard re-enrollment fee is assessed annually for every student to secure their placement and fund administrative preparation for the upcoming school year.

- **Early-Bird Incentive:** To thank our families for helping us plan early, the re-enrollment fee will be **waived by 50%** for all families who complete their re-enrollment process **prior to February 1**.
- Full fees will apply to any re-enrollments processed on or after February 1.

3.8 Probation, Conditional Re-Enrollment, & Requested Withdraw

Re-enrollment at HCCS is *not* automatic. Qualified returning students will be given priority in enrollment. Those students who fail to demonstrate academic progress, or who persist in negative, uncooperative, or non-productive attitudes or behavior, may be denied re-enrollment. These decisions are made only after full discussion of the school leadership with the student's teacher and giving parental notification. The following process will be followed:

1. After the end of the first semester, teachers evaluate and inform the administration of any student whose behavior, attitude, or academics are such that they would have serious reservations about recommending that student for re-enrollment. The administration will use this information to help determine if probation is warranted. The administration will then meet with the student and their parents to inform them that the student will be placed on probation for the remainder of the semester to determine if they will be eligible to come back the next school year.
2. During probation, some privileges may be denied, additional testing may be required, and the student will be observed carefully to note whether or not he/she is positively exhibiting effort to improve their attitude and actions.
3. Regular evaluations will be made during the probation period to determine if the student is showing signs of spiritual growth, academic diligence, and a desire to excel in self-control and proper attitude.
4. HCCS reserves the right to dismiss the student during the probation period if it is determined the student's behavior is too disruptive for an effective learning environment.
5. At the end of the probation period one of three decisions could be made:
    a. Student improvement was such that they will be able to come back the following year without reservation.
    b. Student improvement was such that they will be allowed to come back the following year on a conditional basis. A written record of the conditions will be placed in the student's file. After the first six weeks they will be evaluated to determine eligibility to remain.
    c. Student did not improve sufficiently and will not be allowed back the next school year.

The school may decline to re-enroll a student based upon conduct that the school deems to be detrimental to the classroom and/or other students. The school reserves the right to request

withdrawal of any student who does not meet its academic requirements or fails to conform to its rules and regulations.

3.9 Registration Fees (Annual)

HCCS makes annual contractual arrangements with its employees and purchases materials each year based on enrollment figures, therefore, the following policies are in place regarding registration fees:

- An annual registration fee will be charged per student and paid at the time of enrollment or re- enrollment to ensure seating in a class for the coming year.
- A continuous enrollment model will be used with registration automatically renewed on February 1st each year. A family should inform the school in writing by March 1st if they are opting out of enrollment and, therefore, withdrawing from the next academic year.
- Registration fees must be paid in full no later than April 1st to ensure placement in the coming school year. For new families enrolling after April 1st, registration fees must be paid in full within 15 days of acceptance.
- Failure to pay the registration fee by the due date will vacate the student's enrollment for the next school year. After April 1st, to reinstate the student's enrollment, a re-enrollment fee for each student will be required to be paid in addition to the registration fees and all past due amounts. Re-enrollment is not guaranteed and will be subject to space availability for the student's grade.
- No registration fees will be refunded or credited in any manner should the student withdraw from the school after registration has been paid. *After August 1st, if a student withdraws after registering, they will be charged a late withdrawal fee and will not receive school records until the amount has been paid.*
- Note of clarification: In addition to registration fees, new families will be charged an application fee due at the time of application. These are two separate fees. Registration fees are paid yearly. Application fees are paid only at the time of application for enrollment.

3.10 Tuition

Tuition and fees provide the primary source of operations revenue for HCCS.

- **Tuition Fee** – Annual fee charged to families for a student to attend HCCS for a complete school year.
- **Registration Fee** – Annual fee charged per student, paid at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment to ensure seating in a class for the coming year. (SEE "Registration Fees" section)

General Policies:

- By February 1 of each calendar year, HCCS will adopt the tuition and registration amounts for the coming school year.
- The adopted tuition and registration fees will be announced to the current families and promulgated in appropriate documents (e.g., applications) each year.
- Tuition may be paid in one installment (August 1st), or 10 equal monthly payments beginning in August.
- All prepaid tuition is non-refundable. Any “unused funds” will be calculated and acknowledged with a gift receipt to the donor.

Annual Tuition & Fees

- Annual Tuition Fees include a curriculum fee per student, which comprises the cost of text and curriculum materials (e.g., workbooks, etc.)
- Additional fees included in the tuition will help cover classroom learning manipulatives, supplies, teacher classroom funds, classroom enhancements, and administrative costs.
- TUITION DISCOUNTS
    - 10% Discount per additional child.
    - $250 Discount for paying in one full installment by August 1st.
- A 1% tuition insurance premium will be assessed for each 10-month installment plan and requires a form of payment on file.
- Financial Aid is provided to those who qualify. A family must first apply to the school and be accepted to be considered for aid. Upon acceptance, a financial aid application can be accessed through the school website and is administered through FACTS. The application deadline is April 1st.

3.11 Overdue Bill Policy

General Policy

- Tuition and fees paid in monthly installments are due on the 1st of the month and can be processed through the parent portal available on the school website. After the 15th of the month, the account will be considered overdue.
- The oldest bills will be paid first.
- All tuition for the current year must be paid in full by May 1st of that year, or re-registration for the coming year will be denied until all past-due amounts and registration fees have been paid.
- If a student is disenrolled for the coming year due to nonpayment of tuition, to be reinstated, a re-enrollment fee will be assessed. Re-enrollment is not guaranteed and will be subject to space availability for the student’s grade.

Fee Collection Policy

- In the event tuition and fees are not paid within the first fifteen days of the month due:
    - The account will be charged a $25.00 per month late fee on all outstanding balances after the 15th of the month.
    - If fees are still not paid, or written arrangements are not made, within 45 days of the date due, the principal or his delegate will personally contact the student's parents or responsible party. The essential elements or agreements made at that time will be signed, recorded, and filed.
    - Should payment of fees still not be received after 45 days of the due date, a pending expulsion notice may be sent to the student's parents or party responsible.
    - If, after all the efforts noted above have been exercised and a period of 60 days has elapsed from the due date, without payment or written arrangements, the school administration may expel the student for non-payment of fees and/or send the matter to the collection agency.

4. Academic Program & Progress Monitoring

4.1 Student Progress and Academic Reporting

Report cards are issued to all students every six weeks.

Elementary and Middle School (Pre-K–8) parents will be invited to attend a parent-teacher conference during the first six weeks of the school year. Progress reports are provided every three weeks to keep families informed of their student's academic performance and growth.

High School (Grades 9–12) parents and students will be invited to attend a high school orientation within the first six weeks of the school year. Throughout the year, parents may monitor their student's academic progress through the Parent Portal on the school's website, which is updated weekly with current grades and assignments.

4.2 Grading Periods

Hill Country Christian School is on a six-week grading system with six separate grading periods divided into two semesters per year. HCCS grading is computed based on a percentile score with 100 as the maximum score. ***Report cards will be sent home and/or emailed the Thursday following the end of each grading period.*** They include the current six-week grades as well as semester totals. All high school report cards are emailed to the parents.

During the first grading period, parent/teacher conferences will be held for elementary and middle school. For high school parents, there will be a beginning-of-the-year orientation session, including information from all high school teachers. Both parents are encouraged to attend these conferences and the high school orientation, if possible.

Your child's teacher should be your primary contact with the school regarding your child's grades. Please discuss concerns with him/her first. If further consultation is needed, a conference with the assistant principal/principal may be requested.

4.3 PACE Work (2nd-8th Grades)

Guidelines:

1. A student should finish a minimum of two PACEs per six weeks in the core academic subjects of mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science, and Word Building.
2. During the school year, students must complete all PACEs for their grade level.
3. Students should demonstrate mastery of the material by scoring the following on their final tests:

Grade Level	Minimum Passing Grade
2nd-4th Grade	90% or greater
5th-6th Grade	85% or greater
7th-8th Grade	80% or greater

4. Occasionally, a lower grade may be accepted at the teacher's discretion if the circumstances warrant. Acceptance of a lower grade is to be considered the exception, not the rule.
5. In the event of a failing grade, the student shall repeat the PACE until a passing grade is obtained.
6. If a student has not completed at least two PACEs at mastery level in a subject during a 6-week period, the teacher records an "I" for incomplete in that subject until the student has either taken or retaken the PACE test. As soon as possible, the grade of "I" should be replaced with the actual grade for that six-week grading period.

4.4 Lecture Classes

Guidelines:

1. Students must take and complete, with a passing grade, a minimum of five academic classes per semester.
2. Any grade below 70 is failing. No failing grade in a course shall earn high school credit.
3. Under very limited circumstances and at the discretion of the administration, a failed semester grade may be given credit if the yearly grade earned in the course is 70 or above. A written record explaining this decision will be placed in the student's file.

4. If a student has not completed all grades during a six-week period due to illness or other excused absence, the teacher records an “I” for incomplete in that subject until the student has fulfilled their incomplete grades. The student should have no more than one week to complete missed assignments or tests. As soon as possible, the grade of “I” should be replaced with the actual grade for that six-week grading period.

Grading Scale		
90 – 100	=	A (4 pts.)
80 – 89	=	B (3 pts.)
70 – 79	=	C (2 pts.)
0 – 69	=	No credit

4.5 Scripture Memorization

- Scripture memorization is a monthly requirement for all second through twelfth-grade students. It is as much a requisite as any academic grade.
- Scripture is shared with the teacher. If a child is in need of remediation and does not meet the monthly goal, the child will meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal until they successfully complete the expectation. If the child needs further remediation, the school will contact the parent to partner in achieving the goal.

4.6 Pre-K–12 Academic Curriculum Overview

Pre-K provides a nurturing environment where students grow academically, socially, and spiritually through teacher-directed instruction, learning centers, and hands-on experiences connected to weekly themes.

Kindergarten through 6th Grade uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum as its primary instructional program. ACE emphasizes mastery learning, skill development, and individualized instruction designed to meet each student's level of comprehension. In addition to the ACE curriculum, students participate in supplemental lessons and enrichment activities that broaden and strengthen their learning experiences.

Seventh and Eighth Grades continue with the ACE curriculum while transitioning students into lecture-based classrooms. Lecture instruction includes subjects such as Earth Science, Mathematics, and Creative Writing, while other core academic disciplines are learned through ACE. This design helps students develop greater independence and prepare for high school coursework.

High School (Grades 9–12) features a lecture-based instructional model complemented by projects, collaborative learning, and hands-on experiences that reinforce academic concepts and encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and college and career readiness.

At every grade level, instruction is grounded in a biblical worldview, integrating Christian principles throughout the curriculum and the educational experience.

4.7 Curriculum Selection & Review Policy

At HCCS, we take the selection of educational materials seriously. Our goal is to provide academic excellence that aligns perfectly with our Statement of Faith and reinforces biblical truths.

Our Curriculum Framework:

- Core Curriculum: This includes foundational subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Literature/Word Building. We primarily utilize Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) for K-8, and ACE, Bob Jones University Press (BJU Press), and ABEKA for secondary lecture classes. Pre-K utilizes a variety of developmental, play-based materials.
- Electives & Supplementary Materials: Novels, workbooks, media, or hands-on activities are used at the teacher's discretion to enrich our core courses.

Our Vetting Process:

Before any material enters the classroom, it is reviewed by the instructional leadership team with final approval by the Superintendent. We seek to ensure every resource:

- Upholds biblical truths and aligns with the HCCS Statement of Faith.
- Directly supports the academic objectives of the course.
- Meets institutional standards for quality and financial stewardship.

Questions or Concerns?

We deeply value our partnership with parents. If you have a question or concern with the use of any textbook or instructional material, we address it through the following steps:

- Step 1: Administrative Review
  Bring your concern directly to the **Principal or Assistant Principal**. He or she will formally review the material, evaluate its placement in our curriculum, and recommend a course of action.
- Step 2: School Board Referral
  If this initial review does not result in a satisfactory solution, the matter may be referred to the **Superintendent** for final review and resolution.

4.8 Lack of Academic Progress

- Pre-Kindergarten - 8th Grade:

    - Teachers will document each student's academic progress. If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the teacher will call a conference with the parent(s) to assess the situation.
    - If deemed necessary, a conference of the parent(s), student, Principal, and teacher will be called, and a written contract will be prepared outlining expectations and the conditions needed for the student to continue at HCCS. The contract will be placed in the student's file.
    - Follow-up meetings will occur as needed to determine forward progress and the viability of the student's continued attendance at HCCS.
- 9th Grade - 12th Grade:
    - If the student fails to pass a required academic class for the semester, the student will be evaluated by the academic advisor and the Assistant Principal to determine the next course of action.
    - The three most common outcomes are that the student:
        - should repeat the class (schedule permitting)
        - remediate class in summer school
        - should find another school where the chance of success is greater.

4.9 High School Academic Probation

Academic probation is intended to be a warning to the parents and students that there is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. High school students are required to maintain at least a 70% in each class. The following guidelines will be used if a student fails to live up to this standard:

- A student will be considered on academic probation if they fail two or more classes in a six-week grading period. The parents will be notified, and the student, with his/her parents, will be asked to schedule a conference with the teachers in each failing class. The teacher will make recommendations on how the student can improve his/her grade.
- If the student is still failing two or more classes by the end of the next six-week period, the student is placed on academic probation. A conference with the academic advisor, the parents, and the student will be held. Students who are on academic probation are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.
- If, by the end of the third six-week period, a student is still failing two or more classes, the student and parents will need to meet with the Principal, Assistant Principal, and academic advisor to determine whether the school will permit the student to return the following semester. The decision to permit a student to return is based on the student's chance of success at HCCS, the student's classroom behavior, and the student's influence on other students. If it is believed that the student has very little chance of future success or that the

student's behavior is detrimental to the school or to classroom instruction, the student will not be permitted to enroll for the following semester.

4.10 Extracurricular Academic Eligibility Policy

High School Athletics

- For academic standards needed to participate in high school athletics, HCCS will follow the rules outlined by the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), which will be outlined below.
- The Athletic Director will be responsible for maintaining the academic eligibility requirements of all athletes.
- Eligibility qualifications for competition. A student athlete:
    - Has not reached 19 years of age prior to September 1 of the current school year; and
    - Initially enrolled in the ninth grade not more than four years ago, nor in the tenth grade not more than three years ago. **NOTE**: If a player competes for or against a varsity team before enrolling in the ninth grade, the player's four years of eligibility begins on the date of competition for or against the varsity team. It is a violation to allow students not yet in high school to participate with or against high school students.
    - Is a full-time, day student at the member school
    - Is allowed to compete or participate in contests only if the student is in good and regular standing, which includes but is not limited to:
        - Enrollment in at least four accredited academic courses
        - Failing no more than one course during the grading period.
- Hill Country Christian School is on a six-week grading system. Therefore, the school has six separate grading periods. Report cards are released on the Thursday following the end of each grading period.
- In determining whether or not the student is passing, his or her work from the beginning of the current six-week grading period must be considered.
- The minimum ineligibility period after a failed grading period will be two weeks. The ineligible period begins on the Friday after the release of report cards.
- Student's grade will be reassessed two weeks after the report cards are issued by email. The student's grade during that two-week period will be averaged with their semester grade. If the student is no longer failing more than one class, the student may resume playing in the games on Friday of that week with approval from both athletic and academic departments. If the student is still failing more than one class at the two-week reassessment mark (2nd Thursday following release of

report cards), they will remain ineligible until such time during the current six-week period that they are no longer failing more than one class.

- This reassessment will take place only beginning on the Thursday following the end of the initial two-week ineligibility period. Subsequent reassessments will only take place on Thursdays if failing more than one class after the two-week ineligibility period.
- During any period of academic ineligibility, students will attend PE and practice.
- Attendance at games is at the parents' discretion, but the ineligible student cannot be transported in school vehicles, cannot wear their team uniform, and will not sit on the bench.

Junior High School Athletics

- The athletic director will be responsible for maintaining the academic eligibility requirements of all athletes.
- To be eligible for competition, a student must be enrolled as a full-time day student at HCCS. If a student has more than one failed or incomplete grade on their six-week report card, the student will be unable to play under the following conditions:
    - Hill Country Christian School is on a six-week grading system with six separate grading periods. The beginning and end dates of the current six-week grading period will be used to determine whether a student is passing. Tests missed due to an excused absence on the last day of a six-week period may be made up on the following Monday for grade reporting purposes.
    - The requirements to be considered passing in a class for a six-week grading period are as follows:
        - In a PACE class, the completion of at least two PACEs in the 5 core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Word Building) with the following grades: 85% or greater for 5th-6th grade and 80% or greater for 7th-8th grades. **Note**: The two PACEs cannot include a repeated PACE or a PACE needed to finish an incomplete grade from a previous grading period.
        - In a middle school lecture course, completion of all graded assignments and an 80% or better.
- Length of ineligibility:
    - 5th-6th grades: Will be ineligible to play until they are passing and/or complete in the failed/incomplete subjects.
    - 7th-8th grades: The minimum ineligibility period will be two weeks. Report cards are released on the Thursday following the end of each grading

period. The ineligible period begins on the Friday after the release of report cards.

    - The student's grades will be reassessed two weeks after the report cards are issued (2nd Thursday following release of report cards) The student's grades during that two-week period will be averaged with their semester grade.
    - If the student is no longer failing any class, the student may resume playing in the games/tournaments on Friday of that week, with final approval from both athletic and academic departments.
    - If the student is still failing any class at the two-week reassessment mark, they will remain ineligible until they are no longer failing any class. Subsequent reassessments will take place at one-week intervals following the end of the initial two-week ineligibility period. Subsequent reassessments will only take place on Thursdays.

- If there are extenuating circumstances behind a student's incomplete work (e.g., extended illness, family emergency), the teacher and administration will take that into account on a case-by-case basis.
- Teacher and administration discretion: If it is the assessment of a teacher or administrator, that a student's behavior or attendance is lacking to the point that they cannot recommend a student have the privilege of playing sports at HCCS, the student will be ineligible to participate in contests. Play may only resume after a meeting with the parents, teacher, administrator, student, and athletic director, and requirements for resuming play are in place.
- During any period of academic ineligibility, students will attend PE and practice. Attendance at games is at the parents' discretion, but the ineligible student cannot be transported in school vehicles, cannot wear their team uniform, and will not sit on the bench.

Other Academic Eligibility Requirements (e.g., 4H / Stock Show)

- If an outside organization requests HCCS to certify academic eligibility for one of its students, a student will be considered academically eligible if they meet the following requirements:
    - Must be passing in each core subject during the six weeks prior to the event with no outstanding incomplete grades.
    - Passing for the purpose of determining academic eligibility for a stock show or similar event will require the grades to be 70% or greater.

4.11 Grade Promotion Requirements

Pre-Kindergarten

- All Pre-K students will take the ACE *ABCs with ACE and Christi* as a pretest to determine whether they are ready to advance to kindergarten.
- If a Pre-K student either does not pass the kindergarten admissions test or, in the opinion of their Pre-K teacher, is not mature enough to advance to kindergarten, the student may remain in Pre-K for another year.
- All students who do not pass the kindergarten pretest the first time will be required to retake the test the following year before admittance. If, after the second year of Pre-K, the student retests and is still not ready to advance to kindergarten, the student will not be eligible for re-enrollment.

Kindergarten and First Grade

- A student must pass the required number of PACEs by the end of the school year in order to advance to the next grade level.
- The administration will also take into consideration the teacher's evaluation of the student's maturity, behavior, and conceptual understanding of the academic material to determine if the student should advance to the next grade level, repeat the grade, or find another institution that might better fit their needs.

Second through Eighth Grade

- A student must complete all the PACEs for his/her grade level by the end of the school year in order to advance to the next grade level.
- Irrespective of grade level, a student should complete 12 PACEs in the core subjects (English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Word Building) in order to advance to the next grade. In limited circumstances, this requirement could be waived if, at the discretion of the teacher, the student has demonstrated the proper academic rigor and character to advance to the next level (i.e., the student has completed grade level but has not completed their 12th PACE that year).

High School

- Students in high school must continually demonstrate that they are making progress toward graduation. If, in the determination of the academic advisor and Assistant Principal, the student is making unsatisfactory progress, either through failed grades or insufficient credits, HCCS reserves the right to deny the student's advancement to the next grade level (see also High School Graduation Requirements).
- If a high school student fails more than 5 semester classes for the year, the student cannot advance to the next grade level.
- Any exception to the above policy is to be used sparingly and only after careful consideration of the student's character, effort, and chance of continued academic success. A written record explaining this decision will be placed in the student's file.

- Below are the typical course requirements and load for a high school student at HCCS by grade level.

	Freshman Year	Sophomore Year	Junior Year	Senior Year
English	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math	Algebra I or Geometry	Geometry or Algebra II	Algebra II or Pre-Calculus	Pre-Calculus
Science	Biology or Physical Science	Physical Science or Chemistry	Chemistry or Physics	Physics or Biology II
Social Studies	World Geography	World History	U.S. History	Government/Economics
Required Electives	Creative Writing I/Writing I/ Citizenship	Writing II/Creative Writing II/ Citizenship	Leadership	Sociology
Foreign Language	Spanish I	Spanish II		
Speech/Fine Arts			Speech/Rhetoric	Fine Arts
Athletics/PE	*PE credit opportunity:*	*PE credit opportunity:*	*PE credit opportunity:*	*PE credit opportunity:*
Electives	*Elective credit opportunity:*	*Elective credit opportunity:*	*Elective credit opportunity:*	*Elective credit opportunity:*

4.12 Dropping Classes (High School)

Required academic classes may not be dropped. A request to drop an elective class must be made **before** the end of the first grading period with no penalty. Classes dropped after the first grading period will be assigned a WF (withdraw failing) or WP (withdraw passing) that will go on the student's transcript. Approval to drop a class will only occur after communication with the parents, student, and academic counselor.

4.13 Grade Remediation Policy

Second through Eighth Grade:

- If a student has failed to complete the requisite number of PACEs with a passing grade by the end of the school year, the student will be required to finish the remaining PACEs over the summer.
- Exceptions to the above:
    - In 2nd – 7th grade, if a student is short in completing 2 or fewer PACEs, they will be encouraged to finish those PACEs over the summer, but it will not be required. The student may finish the 2 PACEs in the next grade with the understanding that those PACES must be completed **in addition** to the required PACEs for their next grade level.

    - If a student has not finished 3 or more of their required PACEs, they will need to complete the PACEs over the summer. However, if a student is more than 10 PACEs behind grade level, they will need to repeat that grade.

- In 8th grade, the above exceptions do not apply. Eighth graders must complete all required PACEs or they cannot advance to 9th grade. Therefore, 8th graders who have not met the grade promotion requirements will need to complete all required PACEs in the summer.
- PACEs completed over the summer may be worked under parent supervision, but all tests must be proctored by a designated HCCS teacher or school approved tutor. The proctor will be responsible for recording the summer school grades. Grades will be updated on the student's past report card to reflect changes to failed or incomplete grades.
- If a student fails to complete the necessary summer school PACEs, the student will be disenrolled for the coming school year.
- Parents will be charged for all PACEs, score keys, the proctor's time, and associated administrative costs. All summer school bills must be paid in full before the start of the new school year.

High School:

- If a student has failed (69% or lower) a semester course required for graduation and is unable to repeat the course during the regular school year, the student will need to make up that grade in summer school.
- Failed grades in required or other electives do not have to be repeated, but a student must have the necessary number of credit hours in order to graduate (i.e., 26 credits).
- HCCS will communicate with the student and parents the nature of the remediation of a high school student's failed grade, including the additional costs. All summer school bills must be paid in full before the start of the new school year.
- Remediated grades will appear in addition to all failed grades on a student's transcript. A student will not be allowed to return to HCCS until the school has received the remediated grade(s).

4.14 Honor Roll & Principal's List Requirements

Honor Roll: Cumulative GPA of 95% or higher. The following conditions apply:

- Elementary and Junior High:
    - For the six-week honor roll: The required number of PACEs (2 per subject) must be completed with a passing grade. Incomplete grades in any subject will not be accepted for the honor roll.

    - For semester honor roll: Six or more PACEs in each subject are completed with the above prescribed GPA by the end of the first semester, or 12 PACEs have been completed in each subject by the end of the second semester. Any incomplete semester grades in any subject will not be accepted for the honor roll.

- High School (semester only):
    - An incomplete semester grade in any subject will not be accepted for the honor roll.

Principal's List: Cumulative GPA of 95% or higher for the semester grade. The following conditions apply:

- All monthly scriptures for the semester must be said on time (i.e., no late scriptures)
- Elementary and Junior High: Finished the required number of PACEs every six weeks (i.e., no incomplete grades for any six-week grading period).
- High School: Must have a 92% minimum in all classes and no incomplete semester grades.

4.15 High School Graduation Requirements

Guidelines:

- This policy applies to all students entering 9th grade or above.
- Credit definition: Students earn .5 credit for each semester course that meets three or four days a week and .25 credit for each course that meets two days or fewer each week.
- Grade Point Average (GPA) is computed based on a percentile score with 100 as the maximum score.
- All grades, whether passed or failed, are included in the GPA computation (approved high school level classes completed in 8th grade will also be included).
- HCCS does not weigh its transcripts.

Academic Degree Requirements:

To graduate from HCCS, a student must earn a minimum of 26 credits. Under very limited circumstances, and with the approval of the administration, a student may graduate with a foundation degree of 22 credits. Below are HCCS diploma options and graduation requirements:

Recommended: College Prep.		Optional: Occupation/Ministry		Foundation	
Course	Cr.	Course	Cr.	Course	Cr.

	English	4	English	4	English	4
	Math	4	Math	3	Math	3
	Science	4	Science	3	Science	3
	Social Studies	4	Social Studies	4	Social Studies	3
	Required Electives	4	Required Electives	4	Required Electives	4
	Foreign Language	2	Foreign Language	2	Foreign Language	2
	Speech/Fine Art	2	Speech/Fine Art	2	Speech/Fine Art	2
	Electives	1	Electives	3	Electives	0
	PE	1	PE	1	PE	1
	TOTAL Credits required	**26**	**TOTAL Credits required**	**26**	**TOTAL Credits required**	**22**

Physical Education (PE) Requirement:

- PE credit is pass/fail and is obtained through participation in school-sponsored athletics or an off-campus PE activity.
- Off-campus PE activities (i.e., non-school sponsored) must be documented by a parent or coach who supervises the activity.
    - 70 or more hours per semester = .5 credit
    - Students must complete the required PE credit over 2 school semesters. Hours completed over the summer will not count, nor can a student earn more than .5 credit per semester.
- A student may earn no more than 2 credits in PE/Athletics for their entire high school career.

Community Service Requirement:

- A minimum of 165 total hours of community service is required for high school students in order to graduate from HCCS. The following are the minimums per year for attendance:
    - Freshmen—25 hours
    - Sophomores—30 hours
    - Juniors—50 hours
    - Seniors—60 hours
- No more than 50% of hours may be done “on-site” at HCCS or at the student’s home church.
- Information and requirements regarding community service will be emailed to all high school parents at the beginning of each summer.

- High school students transferring in from other schools are not required to make up community service hours. They will only be responsible for the years they attend HCCS (e.g., if a student attends HCCS their Junior and Senior year only, they will be responsible for a minimum of 110 hours of service to graduate and not the hours required for Freshman or Sophomore years).

Additional HS Graduation Policies:

- All seniors must complete their monthly scripture memory by the last day of school in order to graduate from HCCS.
- The two-year foreign language requirement must be in the same language.
- Students who take Algebra 2 and/or Chemistry in 10th grade are required to progress to Pre-Calculus and Advanced Science in 11th grade.
- Work-Study/Internship may be used as an elective credit (pass/fail) in the student's senior year with prior administrative approval.
- Students transferring to HCCS from another school or home school may receive credit for work completed previously when HCCS receives sufficient documentation of their prior work. The academic advisor is authorized to accept this work toward HCCS graduation requirements, provided the work is of a similar nature (i.e., similar course and/or similar type of study). See also admissions policies for additional information on transfer credits.
- Only HCCS-approved regalia, such as HCCS NHS and Valedictorian/Salutatorian sashes, may be worn at the graduation ceremony. No other regalia is permitted.
- Any student who wishes to participate in the graduation ceremony will be allowed to do so only after completing all the requirements necessary according to his/her diploma plan. All work, including Scripture memory and community service hours, must be completed by 4:00 p.m. on the last day of the school year. Anyone who does not meet this deadline will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony. Those who complete their work in summer school will receive a diploma as soon as all requirements are met.

  Note: All bills must be paid in full by the last day of school in order for a student to walk during graduation.

4.16 Chapel Band

The Chapel Band program offers a unique opportunity for students to enhance their musical talents, provide worship for their fellow students, and earn high school credit. **Meeting twice weekly**, including chapel performances, the program requires students to audition with the chapel band teacher. Academic performance is also a consideration, as students must be able to maintain their grades in their other classes to participate. Chapel **Band members will earn ½ credit per year and can earn no more than 2 credits** in their entire high school career.

Auditions are scheduled biannually, before each semester, to facilitate a smooth integration of new members. During the spring semester, approved students will begin limited practice with the band on a probationary basis.

The Chapel Band is primarily designed for 10th-12 grade students. Freshmen can participate in the Chapel Band under the following conditions:

- All freshmen (including Chapel Band members) must take part in the first few weeks of their writing class, which is designed as a freshman success seminar.
- To ensure that freshmen students can afford to miss their writing class without it affecting their academic performance, they will need to submit a writing sample. The English teacher will provide the writing prompt with a grading rubric and will determine if they are approved to participate in the chapel band class.

Sound Technician Requirements For each student who is interested in participating in the Chapel Band as a sound technician, the administration will do a holistic review. The review will include their GPA, community service, attendance, past discipline issues, and attitude (i.e., are they self-motivated and able to work independently without direct supervision). A maximum of three students will be allowed to participate in the class as a sound technician. The coursework will be primarily online with practical experience during performance.

4.17 High School Dual Credit Policy

Dual credit at HCCS allows an eligible high school student who successfully completes a college course(s) to use those classes as credit toward completing their high school program. The “dual credit” earned is college credit and high school credit for one course.

Conditions for Dual Credit:

- Must be a high school student in good standing (i.e. be on track for graduation, passing all courses, have a GPA of 80 or higher).
- Must have prior approval from the high school academic advisor before starting the course.
- Dual credit courses cannot replace HCCS required courses. Students will earn elective credit towards graduation.
- Must be in grade 11 or 12 (though this requirement can be waived for students who demonstrate outstanding academic performance and capability).
- May not be enrolled in more than two courses for dual credit per semester without prior approval from the academic advisor.

Standards for Dual Credit Institutions:

- Currently, HCCS has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Austin Community College (ACC), which enables HCCS students to take part in their dual credit program.

- If a student would like to go through another institution for dual credit, they must receive prior administrative approval before enrolling in or participating in a course. Institutional approval will have to meet the following standards:
    - The institution offering dual credit courses must be a private or public four-year or two-year degree-granting institution.
    - The course being offered must be a college-level academic course or a college-level technical education course.
    - HCCS reserves the right to refuse to accept dual credit from any institution.

Policies for Grades / Credits for Dual Credit:

- High school credits are awarded upon completion of the postsecondary course and after an official College transcript has been submitted to HCCS.
- One three-credit postsecondary course will equal ½-credit high school course (e.g., 1 semester college course = ½ credit at HCCS).
- Credit will not be given for an audited or pass/fail college-level course.
- The HCCS corresponding grading scale for college level courses will be as follows:
    - A = 100
    - B = 90
    - C = 80
    - Below C = No credit

4.18 Student Accommodation Policy

Philosophy

HCCS desires to develop each student's potential as they are all uniquely gifted. Although HCCS is not equipped to provide individualized educational programs for students with significant physical or cognitive disabilities, we are dedicated to doing everything we can to accommodate learning challenges. Our hope is to ensure that each student's needs are met, and expectations are clear to our parents, students, and teachers.

HCCS may provide these accommodations as a matter of its own policy and Christian mission. HCCS is not a public school, and it is not subject to the IDEA, Section 504, or ADA Title III obligations that apply to public schools.

Additionally, as a participant in TEFA, HCCS is obligated to inform participating parents that, as a private school, HCCS is not subject to IDEA/state special education duties in the same manner as a public school.

While HCCS students must meet the school's educational standards for learning in each of their classes, we value working with families so students can grow and succeed despite challenges

in their lives. Some students with a wide variety of learning differences excel in our small educational setting. Others might find that another school with more resources may be more appropriate for their student's needs.

General Policies

- The disability must be documented and must include a written diagnosis from a medical doctor, state agency, or licensed clinical psychologist.
- Students and parents will be asked to collaborate in the creation of an HCCS Student Accommodation Plan (SAP). An SAP is required before a teacher can give accommodation to a student. The SAP may include both accommodations within the school setting and also required support from home (e.g., individual therapy, private tutoring in the home setting, additional testing, and other family supplied assistance).
- Students who have been diagnosed as having a disability will be required to meet the same academic standards as all the other students in their grade level.
- Students who have been diagnosed as having a disability will be given as much individual instruction and encouragement as their classmates.
- The school will not hire additional personnel to work specifically with the student and will not be responsible for providing services for the student beyond reasonable accommodation.
- HCCS highly values coaching students to become leaders and self-advocates. This means parents are encouraged to equip their older students to communicate directly with a teacher by email or in person if there is a concern or need. Parents may contact teachers at any time, but the solution to a concern shared by a parent should always include the student as an active participant.
- Accommodation for short-term disabilities (e.g., broken bones, concussion, etc.) may be requested, but the expected duration of the need for accommodations must be indicated. At the end of that period, accommodations will cease unless a request for an extension, with medically documented support, is supplied.
- In some cases, students with a documented disability may request a modified high school course load. The student would be permitted to graduate under the Foundational Degree plan, which reduces the credits needed for graduation to 22. All requirements for that degree plan would need to be met for a student to graduate from HCCS.
- SAPs will be reviewed annually to determine whether additional accommodations are needed, no longer needed, or no longer required.
- If, in the determination of the HCCS administration, a student is not benefiting from our curriculum or instruction, the school reserves the right to ask the student to

pursue a different place of education where the student's chance of success is greater.

Reasonable Accommodation

- Reasonable accommodation at HCCS will be given in collaboration with recommendations from the student's psychological or medical evaluation or report. Generally, a student must be able to learn and function well within a standard classroom setting.
- The SAP will stipulate the agreed-upon accommodations and must be signed by the parents and the school principal.
- The following list includes some examples of the types of accommodations that may be permitted:
    - Extended time in testing up to time and a half**
    - Opportunity to test in a quiet test location.
    - Permission to record teacher lectures.
    - The use of adaptive equipment (e.g., magnification devices, listening aids, etc.)
    - Preferential seating
    - Distance learning (short-term basis only)
    - Access to teacher PowerPoint presentations and outlines
    - Changes to score key access.
    - Adjusted PACE load. The student would still be responsible for the completion of the grade level.
    - A teacher or monitor reads aloud test questions for students under limited conditions.
- The following list includes some examples of the types of accommodations that will not be provided:
    - A modified curriculum (apart from adaptive technology, e.g., audio books if available)
    - Individualized instruction as all education happens within a total classroom setting.
    - Medical or developmental services (e.g., speech therapy, dyslexia therapy, etc.)

4.19 High School Class Ranking

Hill Country Christian School does not rank its students. Our average graduating class size is approximately 15 students. Using class ranking, therefore, to determine entrance qualifications for colleges or universities may incorrectly place a hardship on a good student.

State of Texas Top 10% Designation: In accordance with Texas state law granting automatic admission to state universities for students graduating in the top 10% of their high school class, the school will formally calculate and designate eligibility based on cumulative numeric GPA:

- In graduation cohorts of 10 to 19 students, the student achieving the highest cumulative GPA (Valedictorian) will be officially certified to the state as the top 10% representative.
- In graduation cohorts of 20 or more students, the student achieving the second-highest cumulative GPA (Salutatorian) will also be factored into the top 10% metric as class size parameters dictate.

4.20 Criteria for Valedictorian & Salutatorian

Students must attend HCCS for the last two full years of high school (4 regular semesters). When averaging the GPA for the top two students, only the grades received from HCCS will be considered.

Students must complete: ***Recommended Degree Plan***

Students must have a minimum GPA of 92 or above to be considered for valedictorian or salutatorian.

College courses on High School transcripts will have an additional 5 points calculated for the purpose of choosing Valedictorian/Salutatorian.

College High School

A	100
B	90
C	80

If the criteria for valedictorian are not met, then we will award the “highest GPA” of the class.

The valedictorian will speak at graduation. The speech will be written by the valedictorian and approved by the Principal.

5. Attendance & Campus Operations

5.1 General Attendance Policy

All members of the Hill Country Christian School community are responsible for a clear commitment to integrity in all that we do. A basic component of a student’s commitment to

learning in school is attendance. Students enrolled at HCCS are expected to attend all prescribed classes.

Nevertheless, illness, family outings, carpool problems, and other circumstances occasionally lead to absence from school.

A record of attendance for each student will be kept. The total number of days absent will be recorded on the student's report card. Detailed guidelines addressing absences from school are shared below.

5.2 Absences

Regular attendance is required by Hill Country Christian School and is essential to successful classwork. Absences should be limited to an absolute minimum. Doctor, dental, and other appointments are to be scheduled before or after school or on Fridays when possible. **Students who have unexcused absences will not be able to make-up missed assignments or testing.**

Parents should notify the school office of the absence by 8:50 a.m. by phone or email.

Students PK-12th who are absent must have an excuse from a parent in one of the following forms:

- A written note from the parent/doctor
- Student accompanied by a parent to the office
- Email to the office from the parent
- Phone call to the office from the parent

An admit slip from the office is necessary to return to class after an absence. If a student is aware of an upcoming absence, he/she is to let his/her teacher(s) know well in advance to arrange the completion of his/her academic work.

If a student is removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons, the student may be considered absent (unexcused) for that class period and for any following class period(s) until he/she is permitted to return to class.

5.3 Excessive Absences

Students should have no more than 10 absences a school year. The school administration will inform the parents at the conclusion of the six-week grading period if their student has 7 or more absences. This system ensures that parents are kept up to date on their child's attendance record, allowing them to address any potential issues promptly.

The PACE curriculum is designed to accommodate the varying learning speeds and styles of our students, providing them with the flexibility to progress through the material at a pace that suits their individual needs. However, it is crucial that this flexibility is not misused. For all

students, Pre-K through 12th, regular attendance is essential for the consistent academic growth of each student.

If absences become excessive, a conference with the parent(s), student, Principal, and teacher, if needed, will be called to address the concerns and formulate a plan to support the student's learning.

A written contract may be prepared outlining expectations for attendance. Follow-up meetings will occur as needed to determine improvement and the possibility of the student's continued attendance at HCCS.

Exceeding 10 absences in 5th-12th grade will impact the student's eligibility to participate in school sports and other extracurricular activities such as the National Honor Society, Junior National Honor Society, Student Council, House Lead, or end-of-year awards.

The school reserves the right to expel a student with excessive absences. If there are extenuating circumstances behind a student's absences (e.g., extended illness, family emergency), the administration will take that into account on a case-by-case basis.

5.4 Excessive Tardies

Students who are not in their appropriate classroom and seat before the bell rings are tardy. Tardiness is disruptive and cuts down on classroom instructional time.

All students arriving after 8:50 a.m. will automatically be marked absent in that class. Parents and students need to be aware that chronically late arrivals on a school day will be addressed as a disciplinary issue.

Students PK-12th who are tardy in the morning must have one of the following from the parent:

- Written excuse notes for the tardy/doctor note
- Accompanied by a parent to the office
- Email to the school office from the parent
- Phone call to the school office from the parent

At that time, the student will receive a tardy slip, which they will need to present to their teacher upon arrival to class.

If tardies remain chronic and persistent even after parents are notified, the school will begin charging parents $10 per infraction beyond 8 tardies per semester.

5.5 Extracurricular Participation (relative to absence)

A student must be in school by 11:30 a.m. to be eligible for extracurricular participation that day. Students not attending the first-class period the day after an interscholastic event may be denied participation in the next game. This policy is subject to change to comply with TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools) guidelines.

5.9 Emergency Drills

In accordance with state regulations and safety precautions, the school conducts drills for emergency situations such as fire, shelter in place, tornado, secure, and lockdown on a regular basis during the school year. Those in school buildings when the emergency alarm sounds, including visitors and parents, must follow the emergency response plan as instructed during drills in the Emergency Guide available in each classroom.

Please keep in mind that, in an actual emergency, we ask that you not call or come to the school until notified.

5.6 Care of the Buildings and Grounds

The Lord has provided the buildings we have. Part of our Christian witness is to be good stewards in our use and care of these facilities. Sacrificial gifts on the part of the Lord's people have provided all the equipment we have. Realizing this, it is very important for all of us to use what God has given us in a way pleasing to Him.

Asbestos Notification: By law, HCCS is required to notify parents that the school has been inspected and ***is asbestos-free.*** If you would like to see our asbestos management manual, you can view it upon request in the office.

5.7 Locker Usage Policy

HCCS will provide lockers to high school students. If students choose to put a lock on their designated locker, it must be a combination lock, and the combination must be given to their head of house for recordkeeping. The school will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items stored in the locker. The locker should be kept clean and free from any items prohibited by the school. At the end of the school year, and for school breaks, the locker should be cleaned out.

5.8 Lunch

Students are to bring their own lunches and any paper plates or utensils needed. Students will only eat their lunches in the designated areas, and food is to be eaten only at lunchtime and breaks. If ordering lunch for your student, have it delivered before their designated lunch hour. The Office is not responsible for delivering food. Trading of lunches is discouraged.

5.9 Physical Education Participation

A student must have a note from a parent to be excused from Physical Education activities for 1-2 days. To be excused from P.E. activities for an extended length of time (3 or more days), a student must have a statement from a medical doctor specifying the need for such an excuse, the medically imposed restrictions, and the approximate length of the recuperative period. P.E. is a required class, and attendance is mandatory; it may not be missed for makeup work.

5.10 Closed Campus

We have a closed campus. Students are to stay in the building or on the school property throughout the school day, unless accompanied by a teacher or parent. Parents may request in writing (or by phone in emergencies) that their student leave campus for extenuating circumstances. Seniors, with a signed permission form, may leave campus for lunch. All students leaving must first sign out in the school office.

Church Facility Designation: Although the school shares the church facility's environment, the main church building is designated as "off-campus" during regular school hours.

- Students are prohibited from entering the church building independently during the day, including breaks between classes.
- Students are strictly barred from entering the church facility to purchase coffee or visit unapproved communal spaces.
- Exceptions: Access to the church building is permitted exclusively for authorized school-wide functions, including weekly Chapel services, official chapel musical practices, or under the direct, continuous supervision of a faculty member.

5.11 Student Vehicles

Students who exhibit careless driving will not be allowed to bring their cars onto the school property. Cars are off limits to students during school hours; this includes lunch hour unless a written note is received from the parent or permission is granted by the administration. Vehicles should not be parked along the front sidewalk.

5.12 Student Drop-Off & Pick-up

Campus Operational Hours, Supervision, and Fees

Policy Overview: To guarantee proper oversight and student safety, families must adhere strictly to the published drop-off and pick-up schedules. School personnel are not authorized to provide student supervision outside of these designated windows.

Morning Arrival: Campus doors open to receive students at 7:40 a.m. School instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. ***No student may be dropped off prior to 7:40 a.m.***, as there is no administrative or faculty supervision available before this time. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must check in at the front office and will be marked tardy.

PreK - 1st Grade: Our school day ends at 3:30 p.m. for the PreK-1st grade. At that time, those students will be escorted to the front of the building. They will remain out front until 3:45 p.m. Students who have not been picked up will be taken to the office. If you are in the building after 3:45, your child(ren) should be with you. Older siblings in athletics cannot be responsible for younger siblings. If you pick your child up after 3:45, you will be invoiced on your next statement. The fees are as follows:

- 3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. No charge

- 3:45 - 4:00 p.m. $10.00 per child
- After 4:00 p.m. $1.00 per minute per child

Grades 2 - 12: Our school day ends at 3:45 p.m. for 2nd-12th grades. At that time, students in grades 2nd through 6th will be escorted to the front of the building. They will remain out front until 4:00 p.m. Students who have not been picked up will be taken to the gym or the cafeteria if there is an athletic practice in the gym. If you are in the building after 4:00, your child(ren) should be with you. If you pick your child up after 4:00 p.m., you will be invoiced on your next statement. The fees are as follows:

- 3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. No charge
- 4:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. $10.00 per child
- After 4:15 p.m. $1.00 per minute per child

Allocation of Late Fees: All funds collected from late pick-up fees are allocated directly to a Teacher Appreciation Fund to recognize and support the faculty members who extend their workdays to supervise remaining students.

Drop-off & Pick-up Traffic Flow: Please follow ALL traffic signs and staff directions during drop-off and pick-up time. Each parent's complete compliance is needed for student safety in and near the parking lots.

Approved Pick-up List: If anyone other than one of your child's legal guardians is going to pick up your child, it ***must*** be pre-approved by the Office. This is vital to ensuring student safety.

5.13 Lost or Damaged Instructional Materials

Textbooks and all instructional materials are the property of Hill Country Christian School and are issued to students on loan. They should be treated with respect, cared for properly, and returned in good condition at the end of the year. All texts and loaned materials should be returned by June 1st of the current school year to avoid incurring a fee. The school schedules the purchase of texts and replacement materials for June, so materials returned after this date cannot be credited to the student's account. This policy ensures that the school can prepare adequately for the upcoming academic year and maintain a current inventory of educational materials.

The replacement cost for PACEs which have been lost, failed, or damaged, is $4.00 each. This amount will be added to the student's school bill. If students do not return textbooks or instructional materials loaned to them or return a damaged book, they will be charged a replacement fee to replace the lost or damaged materials.

5.14 Private Tutoring / Lesson Policy

Students are encouraged to approach academics with diligence, both in class and at home. Despite their best efforts, however, students do struggle from time-to-time. Tutors can provide a

valuable service in aiding student success at HCCS. There are three categories of private tutors: private independent tutors, faculty tutors, and volunteer tutors.

Private tutors may *not* tutor on campus or work with HCCS students during the school day without express written permission from the Principal. Parents hire all private tutors at their sole discretion. Tutors set their own rates and manage payment directly with parents.

Approved private tutors may tutor on campus during the school day or after school, only if space is available. Space must be arranged through the school office. Tutors using the school space must adhere to any stipulations required by the administration.

High school students may not be pulled from a class for tutoring. Tutoring may only be scheduled before or after school or during a high school student's study hall. HCCS may provide names of private tutors, but does not endorse specific tutors or monitor their qualifications.

Private lessons (e.g., in music, athletics, art) are not considered tutoring. However, to conduct private lessons on campus, written approval must still be granted from the administration, and space must still be arranged through the facilities manager. Rates and payments are managed solely by those individuals or organizations providing the lessons. If the administration has any concern regarding the ethics or conduct of these lessons, adjustments may be required, or permission may be revoked.

Faculty tutors may not tutor students whom they directly teach in any subject for pay. They may only tutor students who are not in their class for pay and do so outside the school day.

5.15 Extracurricular Activities & Athletics

All parents sign a liability release as part of the admissions application, releasing HCCS from liability for school events on and off campus and authorizing emergency medical treatment. An extracurricular activity is a school-sanctioned activity for student enrichment beyond the academic program, voluntary in nature. Extracurriculars never take priority over the academic program, must conform to HCCS's philosophy (except where TAPPS programs mean HCCS doesn't hold unilateral authority), and membership requirements/consequences must be stated in writing. HCCS may remove a student from an activity, or discontinue an activity entirely, at administration's discretion.

Each student athlete needs parental permission and all TAPPS/school-required forms (including a physical) before participating. Coaches and sponsors are hired with the Principal's approval — the Athletic Director recommends candidates, and all coaches and volunteer coaching staff undergo a background check. Athletes must meet all TAPPS eligibility rules and the academic/conduct standards in the Student Handbook, HCCS's Statement of Faith, and biblical standards at practices and games.

TAPPS Athletic & Academic Eligibility Requirements

As a member school of the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), HCCS is required to enforce TAPPS's minimum eligibility standards for any student participating in

TAPPS-sanctioned athletics or extracurricular activities. HCCS may adopt stricter standards than TAPPS requires, but may never be more lenient.

Age & Years of Eligibility
A student may not participate if they turn 19 before September 1 of the current school year, or if more than four years have passed since they first enrolled in ninth grade. There is no appeal or exception to this rule, including for extenuating circumstances.

Full-Time Enrollment
A student must be a full-time day student at HCCS, enrolled in at least four academic classes (core academic subjects, religion, or fine arts — study hall, teacher's aide periods, PE, and athletics periods do not count) taken on the HCCS campus. Homeschooled students and students enrolled at another school may not participate in HCCS's TAPPS-sanctioned activities. A student who has already graduated from high school is not eligible.

Academic Progress — "No Pass, No Play"
A student who is failing more than one course at the end of a grading period is ineligible to participate for a minimum of two weeks. Ineligibility begins no later than one week after grades are announced and continues in weekly increments until the student is failing no more than one course.

Physical Exam & Required Forms
Before a student may try out or practice, HCCS must have on file: a current Medical History and Physical Examination form (renewed annually), a signed Participation Permit from a parent/guardian, and a signed TAPPS Rules Acknowledgment Form.

Students Not Living with Parents
A student who does not reside with a parent must have an approved TAPPS application, guardianship form, and (if applicable) room-and-board agreement or court decree on file before they are eligible.

5.16 School-Sponsored Events

A school-sponsored event is one organized by HCCS staff in an official capacity, approved by the Principal, published on the HCCS yearly calendar, and/or receiving HCCS financial support. Events must be consistent with HCCS's goals and biblical standards, require at least one staff member present, and follow the same conduct standards used at school. Only school-sponsored events may appear on the monthly calendar, and all written parent communication about an event requires prior administrative approval.

School Event Transportation: Written permission must be received from parents for students to ride in vehicles going to and from all school events. For all sporting events, field trips, and other extracurricular events, each student must wear a seat belt and return to the school in the same vehicle in which he/she originally rode. Students who choose to unbuckle their seatbelts, misbehave, or treat a driver with disrespect may lose future privileges. Parents desiring to pick up their child at an event are responsible for informing the child’s driver that he/she will not be returning to the school.

5.17 Field Trip Policy

Classroom teachers complete a field trip authorization form at least one week before the trip, covering destination, date, and time away from school; parents receive timely information via a permission form. A ratio of one adult per ten students is maintained. If space allows, a student's siblings may attend if a parent also attends and takes sole responsibility for the non-HCCS child. Teacher cell phones must travel on every field trip so the office can maintain communication in case of delay, emergency, or accident. School vans may be reserved for field trips.

All overnight field trips, retreats, or mission trips require Principal approval and an authorization form, with chaperones set by the Principal. Attendance is never required, and an alternative educational program is available for students not participating. Field trip costs are generally paid by the student's parents (occasionally supplemented by fundraising or the annual budget). Once a permission form is submitted, payment is non-refundable regardless of attendance.

6. Code of Conduct, Dress Code, & Student Discipline

6.1 Expectations of Student Behavior

HCCS students, parents/guardians, and staff members are expected to “let their conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ.” In a school, setting this includes being safe, taking ownership of their actions, having a willing attitude, and respecting everyone. Each child is expected to follow the school norms and classroom expectations.

6.2 Philosophy of Discipline

At HCCS, we are dedicated to providing behavioral support that balances accountability with restoration. We believe that discipline and discipleship go hand-in-hand. Discipline fosters social, emotional, and behavioral growth, which is essential to the development of every child. We believe that the process of growth that comes from honest feedback about inappropriate or hurtful words or actions is an opportunity to learn empathy, understand what it means to love your neighbor, be able to honestly state our mistakes, and then work to restore or make amends. The Bible includes many principles and examples of how the Lord uses discipline to grow us and shape us as his children.

In every situation, we seek to use each incident of negative behavior or failure to follow school expectations as a chance to learn and deepen our understanding, as well as practice more appropriate behaviors. As in all things, our teachers, staff, and administrators partner with parents to ensure these are learning experiences that help each child grow into a positive, caring, and responsible member of our school community.

At times, a student may need a behavior intervention plan. Our team works closely with parents to make sure that the entire school and home team are working together to help the child grow. As in all situations, we expect strong collaboration and support in partnership with parents. Together, we can help each child develop strong character and skills for success. Each

experience is an important step in the journey to following Jesus and becoming like Him as we grow in Christ.

6.3 Bullying and Aggressive Behavior

HCCS maintains the importance of all members of the community respecting each other's rights, individuality and differences. Our school is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The administration encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community.

Bullying is defined as any behavior that is continual, pervasive and deliberate single act or repeated behavior towards the victim.

Aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or any individual on school property and/or at a school sponsored event is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse. The administration will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions that cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy includes activities on school property and school-sponsored events on or off campus.

Aggressive behavior is inappropriate conduct that is repeated or is serious to the extent that it negatively impacts a student's educational, physical, emotional, or spiritual well-being. This type of behavior is a form of intimidation and harassment, although it may not be based on the legally protected classes, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, stalking, cyberbullying, intimidation, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, threatening, and hazing.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, images, or website postings which have the effect of bullying as defined above.

Reporting Procedure

1. Any student who believes he/she has been or is the victim of bullying/aggressive behavior or has witnessed behavior they believe to be bullying should immediately report the situation in accordance with the grievance chain of command. Anonymous reports in writing can be left in the Principal's or Assistant Principal's mailbox.
    a. Complaints against a student should be made to a teacher.
    b. Complaints against a teacher or staff member should be made to the Assistant Principal or Principal.
    c. Complaints against a coach should be made to the Athletic Director.

d. Complaints against the Principal or Assistant Principal should be made to the Superintendent.

e. Complaints against the Superintendent should be made to the President of the School Board.

2. All complaints about aggressive behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. When an investigation determines that an instance of bullying/aggressive behavior has occurred, prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary actions will include a variety of consequences and may result in expulsion.

3. Parents or guardians of any student involved in an incident of bullying/aggressive behavior shall be notified of the results of the investigation to the extent permitted by state and federal law.

4. The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation.

6.4 Disciplinary Infractions

1. Academic Misconduct

Students will not cheat, plagiarize, alter, falsify, share, copy, or submit the work of other students. Credit must be given to any source that is used within student work. Proper citations must be given to print materials and any technology source. For additional detail, please review the section of this handbook on Academic Integrity.

2. Disruption to School

Students shall not demonstrate behaviors that disrupt the normal process and function of the school day. Furthermore, students shall not instigate or antagonize other students to engage in behavior that disrupts the normal process and function of the school day. These behaviors include but are not limited to noise, tantrums, interruptions of others learning, disrespect of others personal space, etc.

3. Disrespectful Behavior

Students shall not act or respond to staff members or peers through verbal or written actions in an insulting manner that demeans, harasses, or intimidates staff and/or students.

4. Dress Code

Students shall wear the appropriate dress code as identified in the Dress Code. Students are expected to dress in a manner that promotes the school values/mission/vision as well as respect for and safety of themselves and others, and doesn't create a distraction in the learning environment. For additional detail, please review the section of this handbook on Dress Code.

5. Insubordination

A student shall not refuse to comply with any reasonable request of any school personnel. Insubordination is defined as a refusal to follow a reasonable request of school personnel.

6. Leaving the School Premises

Students are expected to remain on campus the entire school day. Students are not permitted to leave campus during the school day without parental consent.

7. Obscene Language, Profanity, and Gestures

Students shall not speak, write, or use technology to obtain or to generate profane, vulgar, demeaning, or inappropriate language.

8. Truancy, Class Cuts, Tardiness

Students shall report to all portions of their regularly scheduled classes and mandatory activities while on campus. Students are not to be absent without parental or school authorization.

9. Acceptable Use of Technology

Students shall not use technology tools for unethical or non-educational uses. Students shall not engage in unauthorized video recording or photography using an electronic device while on campus.

10. Bullying/Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes physical, verbal, and psychological abuse.

The administration will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions that cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation. This policy includes activities on school property and school-sponsored events on or off campus.

Aggressive behavior is inappropriate conduct that is repeated or is serious to the extent that it negatively impacts a student's educational, physical, emotional, or spiritual well-being. **Bullying** is defined as any behavior that is continual, pervasive, and includes a repeated pattern of behavior towards the victim. **Cyber bullying** includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures, images, or website postings which have the effect of bullying as defined above.

11. Damage or Theft to Property

Students shall not steal, cause or attempt to cause damage to school property, property of students, teachers, or school personnel. This includes technology-generated data.

12. Harassment

Students shall not engage in behaviors that violate protected classes, such as sex, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability. These behaviors include, but are not limited to stalking, cyber bullying, intimidation, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, threatening, and hazing.

13. Fighting or Assault

Students shall not engage in behavior that attempts to threaten or cause physical harm to another student or staff member. These actions include, but are not limited to, fighting, shoving, hitting, etc. Students shall not instigate others into a fight with themselves or with another student.

14. Possession or Use of a Firearm or A Deadly Weapon

A firearm is defined as any weapon from which a projectile is fired. This includes, but is not limited to, starter guns, pellet guns, airsoft guns, rifles, pistols, etc. A deadly weapon is any object that is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. This includes, but is not limited to, razor blades, knives, ninja throwing stars, etc.

15. Possession or Use of Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Students shall not buy, possess, sell, use, or be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco at any time. This includes e-cigarettes, vapor pens, etc.

6.5 Discipline Process

- First Violation: A student may receive a verbal warning, parent phone call, or teacher-issued consequence depending on the nature of the infraction.
- Second Violation: A student may receive a verbal warning, parent phone call, teacher-issued consequence, or referral to the Assistant Principal for further action.
- Third Violation: A student will be referred to the Principal for disciplinary action, which may involve a phone conference, parent meeting, lunch detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or emergency removal.

A student may be removed from school when his/her behavior is serious and compromises the safety of staff and students. Chronic or serious infractions, including some first infractions, may result in immediate removal from school. Repeated behavior concerns will result in a meeting with the Superintendent, Principal, and faculty, and can result in withdrawal.

6.6 Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Policy

All students at HCCS are expected to be drug, tobacco, and alcohol free in accordance with state and federal laws. Any student possessing or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco at HCCS, an athletic event, or extracurricular activity will face disciplinary action. Possession of drug paraphernalia is also strictly prohibited.

Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, which may include suspension, community service, probation, and/or dismissal from HCCS at the discretion of the administration.

6.7 Suspension and Dismissal

HCCS reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a student if the school administration believes that action is in the best interest of the student and/or the school. Suspension or dismissal from

admission to HCCS may be the result of disciplinary action, lack of parent partnership, past due financial accounts, or other extenuating circumstances as determined by the school administration.

Suspension will only occur on school days (i.e., Monday-Thursday).

- During the suspension, the student will not be allowed on campus or be able to participate in any school-sponsored activity (practices, games (home or away), school events, class parties, field trips, pep rally, etc.).
- If the suspension occurs during school days, spanning from a Thursday to a Monday, the student will be unable to participate in any school-sponsored weekend event (i.e., prom, tournaments, games, etc.)
- During a suspension, students will still be responsible for all work. They will be required to continue their PACE work at home, and the student will be unable to return to school unless they are complete in their goals. If they are taking lecture classes, all due dates will remain in effect without alteration. Assignments should be emailed/texted or dropped off to the teacher on the date they are due, or a zero on the assignment will be recorded. Any tests or quizzes missed will be administered the day the student returns.

Expulsion always means the student cannot be on campus during school hours or participate in any school-sponsored activities.

- Should an expelled student desire to be readmitted to HCCS in another school term, they will be required to reapply to the school. The Superintendent will decide based on the student's attitude and circumstances at the time of reapplication.

6.8 Steps for Appeal

HCCS staff and administrators will make every effort to work with students and parents throughout the disciplinary procedure and will seek to use each instance of discipline as an opportunity for student growth and discipleship. However, in the event that a difference of opinion occurs, the following steps should be followed:

1. Discuss the disciplinary concern or consequence on the phone or in person with the teacher who administered the consequence.
2. If a parent or student believes the disciplinary consequence imposed is incorrect under the school policies outlined in this handbook, the student or parent may appeal to the Principal.
3. The Principal will determine whether further student or parent meetings are required and will issue a disciplinary decision orally or in written form.
4. If the resolution at this level is not satisfactory, the parent may request a review by the Superintendent. After review of all information, the Superintendent will share a review of the concerns and decision/conclusion. The decision of the Superintendent is final and cannot be appealed.

6.9 Sexual Harassment

HCCS is committed to maintaining an academic environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect and which is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment, including sexual harassment. HCCS is prepared to take action to prevent and correct any violations of this policy. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination or expulsion.

It is natural for children to express curiosity about gender differences. We recognize that and recognize the need to provide a space for a Godly, healthy conversation regarding gender.

A school employee, student, or volunteer shall be individually immune from liability in a civil action for damages arising from reporting an incident in accordance with policy if that person reports an incident of harassment, intimidation, or bullying promptly in good faith and in compliance with the procedures specified in this policy.

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the work or educational setting, under any of the following conditions:

- The conduct has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact upon the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, the conduct by the individual is used as the basis for any decision affecting the individual regarding benefits and services, honors, programs, or activities available at or through this school.

6.10 Boy / Girl Relationships

We believe God's plan is for boys and girls to have activities and fellowship together, to learn about each other, to always hold the other in the highest respect, and to function as sisters and brothers toward each other, as members of the larger family of God.

Therefore, we expect our students to be open to instruction, to conduct themselves in a manner pleasing to God, and not to not offend anyone. This means "Hands Off" (no hand holding, no embracing, no kissing etc.) on campus or off campus during school-related activities. All conversations between boys and girls must be Christ-honoring, holding one another in respect.

Scriptural references:

- "Treat younger men like brothers, younger women like sisters" (I Tim 5:1-2)
- "Keep thyself pure" (I Tim 5:22)
- "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim 2:22)
- "That each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God: (I Thes. 4:4-5)
- "Abstain from all appearances of evil" (I Thess. 5:22)

- “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh” (Rom. 13:14).

Married Students

We will not enroll, retain in school, or allow graduation participation to married or pregnant students, unwed mothers, or fathers.

6.11 Academic Integrity

Hill Country Christian School upholds academic integrity and honesty as essential to both spiritual growth and learning. Students are expected to complete their own work unless a teacher explicitly permits collaboration. Any attempt to misrepresent a student's knowledge—such as plagiarism, cheating, or unauthorized access to exam materials—will not be tolerated. Students or parents purchasing score keys, testing materials, or diagnostic materials without prior permission from the administration is not permitted. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Cheating may include copying from another’s exam, “cheat sheets,” asking another who has taken an exam already (that they haven’t) what is on the exam, copying someone else’s work, or any misconduct that misrepresents a student’s knowledge and abilities. When a teacher suspects cheating, he or she is free to exercise discernment and wisdom regarding the flagrancy or intent. A student found using any electronic device during a test will be given an automatic zero and referred to the Principal. All infractions of cheating are reported to the Principal, are recorded in the student’s file, and are cumulative for the student’s entire high school career. The consequences for cheating may include zeros on assignments, extra assignments, suspensions, or even expulsion for repeated or egregious offenses.

Plagiarism is to steal or use (the ideas or writings of another) as one’s own (Webster’s 841).

Types of Plagiarism:

Sources Not Cited (plagiarism.org)

- Turning in another person’s work, verbatim, as one’s own
- Copying significant portions of one text (more than 7%), without any alterations
- Using one or several sources, paraphrasing or varying the sentences slightly, but retaining most of the original uncited material (more than 7%)

Sources Cited-But Still Plagiarized (plagiarism.org)

- Forgotten footnotes
- Sources cited incorrectly
- Missing quotation marks from the sourced material
- Too much quoted material (more than 20%), no original work
- Paraphrasing a published opinion/analysis, claiming it as one’s own

Disciplinary Guidelines:

For any infractions from the Sources Cited-But Still Plagiarized category, the teacher has the discretion to decide if the plagiarism was intentional or inadvertent. The grace to correct/re-do the assignment will be the teacher's choice. A student may be given one extra day to correct the problem, but will lose ten (10) points on his/her grade.

All infractions from the Sources Not Cited category are reported to the Principal, are recorded in the student's file, and are cumulative for the student's entire high school career. The consequences may include zeros on assignments, extra assignments, needing to redo the assignment, a reduction in the highest possible grade for the assignment, suspensions, or even expulsion for repeated or egregious offenses.

Policy Concerning Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Our goal is to educate our students around the use of technology, specifically AI, as a tool to augment, support, and enhance the work students create, but not for the sole creation of the work. Since, at its core, plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as your own, the use of AI to produce any academic work is prohibited and will be considered plagiarism. The only exception will be if an assignment explicitly concerns experimenting with AI. All school assignments must be the student's original work with the use of their own ideas, proper research, citation, and acknowledgment of all external sources. Thus, it may not be assisted, written, and/or added to by any AI in any way. The consequences of representing any AI-generated work as their own will be the same as a Sources Not Cited infraction. All infractions are reported to the Principal, are recorded in the student's file, and are cumulative for the student's entire high school career. The consequences may include zeros on assignments, extra assignments, needing to redo the assignment, a reduction in the highest possible grade for the assignment, suspensions, or even expulsion for repeated or egregious offenses.

6.12 Computer Use Policy

Students must use school computers responsibly and for educational purposes only. Unauthorized access, inappropriate content, and misuse of computers are prohibited. Activity will be monitored, and violations will result in disciplinary action. A replacement fee will be charged for any damaged or lost computers.

6.13 Digital Device Policy (e.g., Cell Phones, AI glasses)

- Grades PK-8 may bring cellphones to school, however, the phone must be TURNED OFF at all times and turned into their teacher.
- Grades 9-12 may bring cellphones to school. However, the phone must be TURNED OFF at all times and in the student's backpack. Students may ONLY use a cell phone with teacher permission.
- All other electronics (including AI glasses, "smart" and Apple Watches) may not be used in school without express permission from the office.

- Any electronics that are used without teacher permission will be confiscated. Confiscated electronics will cost $10.00 to retrieve on the first offense. The second offense will be $20 plus a parent meeting. The third offense will require a meeting with parents to determine appropriate consequences.
- Parents may contact the school office if they need to reach their student. The office phone is also available to students who have a sensible reason to call their parents.

6.14 Gym and Playground Rules

The following guidelines are always in effect for safety and the practice of Christian attitudes while at play. The following rules are subject to change during PE only.

- Playground equipment for PK-5th grade only.
- Consider Jesus to be participating in each activity.
- No Bare Feet.
- Throwing rocks, sand, or dirt is not permitted.
- Do not kick any balls including volleyballs or basketballs in the gym.
- Do not hang on any part of the basketball backboard or volleyball net.
- Use only basketballs, volleyballs, or soft “nerf type” balls in the gym.
- No skates, skateboards, or roller blades.
- All play in the gym is to be conducted on the floor, not on the stairs, bleachers, or balconies. Do not climb trees.
- Off-limits areas: switch room, kitchen (cooking area behind the counter), PACE room, parking lot, locker rooms, except during P.E.

6.15 Dress Code

We believe that physical appearance and self-image are closely related; they are causally linked. Since one of our aims is to build a positive self-image in each student, we have established the following standardized dress code.

HCCS Uniform Suppliers

- Creeds & Crests in San Marcos supplies cardigans, jackets, field trip shirts, and PE shirts and shorts. Their address and contact information are 202 University Dr. #105, 512-754-7222.
- Victory Cleaner in San Marcos supplies carts and jackets. Their address and contact information are 418 South LBJ Drive, San Marcos, Texas 78666, (512) 396-4606.

- Khaki bottoms can be found at French Toast (school code QS5NPRZ) and stores such as Walmart, Target, Dickies, and JCPenney. The color should be a true khaki, not stone, tan, brown, etc.

Boys PK - 4th

Boys PK – 4th must wear:

- HCCS polo shirt with school emblem, tucked in
- Khaki pants, cargo pants, or shorts of appropriate length. The color should be a true khaki, not stone, tan, brown, etc.
- Black or brown leather belt (not required for PK or Kinder)
- Athletic shoes or closed leather shoes must be worn at all times (no roller shoes allowed). We reserve the right to determine if shoes are inappropriate.
- Black, white, or gray socks (crew length or shorter) must be worn with shoes

Gym Class: (1st-3rd grades must wear)

- Closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Gym Class: (4th through 8th grades must wear)

- Gray HCCS athletic tee shirt
- Royal blue HCCS athletic shorts (not rolled at the waist)
- Closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Cold weather attire:

- White, black, blue, or grey long-sleeved shirts worn under HCCS polo shirt, tucked in
- HCCS approved jackets (navy)
- Gray sweatshirt with school logo (polo shirt must be worn underneath with collar
- showing)

Appearance:

- Hair above collar, above eyebrows, above bottom of ear; no shaved designs or radically sculptured fad haircuts. No clips, bobby pins, or ties, etc. in hair. Administration reserves the right to let a student know if their hair is too high above their head.
- No unnaturally colored hair
- No visible tattoos (real, play, or drawn)
- No piercings or nail polish

- No jewelry or clothing depicting anti-Christian or controversial symbolism will be allowed. (Examples: yin and yang symbol, ankh, beer caps, swastika, etc.)

Note: One of the following is required for field trips:

- HCCS Polo Shirt
- Royal Blue HCCS field trip tee shirt

Girls PK - 4th

Girls PK – 4th must wear:

- HCCS polo shirt with school emblem, tucked in
- Khaki pants, capris, shorts, skorts, skirts, all of modest length. The color should be a true khaki, not stone, tan, brown, etc.
- Black or brown leather belt (not required for PK or Kinder)
- Closed athletic shoes or Mary Jane-type dress shoes must be worn at all times (no roller shoes or boots allowed). We reserve the right to determine if shoes are inappropriate.
- Black, white, or gray socks (crew length or shorter) or white, black, grey, or navy tights or leggings.

Gym Class: (1st -3rd grades must wear)

- Closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Gym Class: (4th through 8th grades must wear)

- Gray HCCS athletic tee shirt
- Royal blue HCCS athletic shorts (not rolled at the waist)
- Closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Cold weather attire:

- White, black, blue, or grey long-sleeved shirts worn under HCCS polo shirt, tucked in
- HCCS approved jackets (navy)
- Gray sweatshirt with school logo (polo shirt must be worn underneath with collar
- showing)

Appearance:

- Hair kept neat, no shaved designs or radically sculptured fad haircuts
- No unnaturally colored hair

- Only one earring in each earlobe. No gauges.
- No visible tattoos (real, play, or drawn)
- No make-up
- No jewelry or clothing depicting anti-Christian or controversial symbolism will be allowed.
- (Examples: yin and yang symbol, ankh, beer caps, swastika, etc.)

Note: One of the following is required for field trips:

- HCCS Polo Shirt
- Royal Blue HCCS field trip tee shirt

Boys 5th - 12th

Boys 5th – 12th must wear:

- HCCS polo shirt with school emblem, tucked in
- Khaki pants, cargo pants, or shorts (shorts featuring an 8-inch or 9-inch inseam generally meet compliance standards, whereas a 7-inch or shorter inseam does not.) The color should be a true khaki, not stone, tan, brown, etc.
- Black or brown leather belt
- Closed athletic shoes, leather dress shoes, or boots (boots may not be worn with shorts) must be worn at all times. No sandals, open-toed athletic shoes, Crocs, or roller shoes. We reserve the right to determine if shoes are inappropriate.
- Appropriate socks must be worn with shoes.

Gym Class: (5th - 8th)

- Gray HCCS athletic tee shirt
- Royal blue HCCS athletic shorts (not rolled at the waist), closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Cold weather attire:

- White, black, blue, or grey long-sleeved shirts worn under HCCS polo shirt, tucked in
- HCCS approved jackets (navy)
- HCCS letter jacket (high school only)
- Gray sweatshirt with school logo (polo shirt must be worn underneath with collar
- showing)

Appearance:

- Hair above collar, above eyebrows, above the bottom of the ear; no shaved designs or radically sculptured fad haircuts. No clips, bobby pins, or ties, etc. in hair. The administration reserves the right to let a student know if their hair is too high above their head.
- No unnaturally colored hair
- No earrings or other visible pierced jewelry, cuffs, or gauges
- No visible tattoos (real, play, or drawn)
- No facial hair
- No jewelry or clothing depicting anti-Christian or controversial symbolism will be allowed. (Examples: yin and yang symbol, ankh, beer caps, swastika, etc.)
- No nail polish

Girls 5th - 12th

Girls 5th – 12th must wear:

- HCCS polo shirt with school emblem, tucked in
- Khaki pants, capris, shorts (NO skirts or skorts) The color should be a true khaki, not stone, tan, brown, etc.
- Shorts should have a minimum inseam of 9”
- If, for denominational reasons, your daughter needs to wear a skirt, she may wear an ankle-length khaki skirt.
- Black or brown leather belt
- Closed athletic shoes, leather dress shoes, boots (boots may not be worn with shorts), or dress sandals with an ankle strap. All other footwear is not allowed. We reserve the right to determine if shoes are inappropriate.
- Appropriate socks must be worn with shoes or white, black, grey, or navy tights or leggings.

Gym Class: (5th - 8th)

- Gray HCCS athletic tee shirt
- Royal blue HCCS athletic shorts (not rolled at the waist)
- Closed athletic shoes, laced or Velcro (no slip-ons)

Cold weather attire:

- White, black, blue, or grey long-sleeved shirts worn under HCCS polo shirt, tucked in
- HCCS approved jackets (navy)
- HCCS letter jacket (high school only)
- Gray sweatshirt with school logo (polo shirt must be worn underneath with collar
- showing)

Appearance:

- Hair kept neat, no shaved designs or radically sculptured fad haircuts
- No unnaturally colored hair
- Pierced jewelry in the earlobes only – no other visible pierced jewelry, cuffs, or gauges
- No visible tattoos (real, play, or drawn)
- No make-up for 5th grade
- No jewelry or clothing depicting anti-Christian or controversial symbolism will be allowed. (Examples: yin and yang symbol, ankh, beer caps, swastika, etc.)

Attire for Spirit and House Days: Jeans (with no rips) or khaki pants/shorts only. Approved HCCS t-shirts (examples: athletics or Rams shirts, house shirts, field trip shirts, fundraiser shirts). Only school-related hoodies and jackets are allowed. Non-school hoodies and jackets are not allowed for spirit and House shirt days. House shirts must be worn on house days.

7. Health, Safety, & Child Protection

7.1 Child Protection & Mandatory Reporting

HCCS recognizes its moral and legal obligation to provide a safe haven for students. All faculty, staff, and regular volunteers undergo rigorous background checks. Furthermore, all HCCS staff members are mandated reporters under state law. In strict accordance with state law, all faculty members, administrative staff, and school volunteers are designated as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. If any staff member has reasonable cause to suspect that a student has suffered physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or severe neglect, they are legally and spiritually required to report the matter immediately and directly to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and/ or law enforcement. There is a 24-hour professional deadline for such a report to be made. The duty to report is individual and non-delegable; reporting to an administrator does not stratify any individual reporting requirements.

All staff and volunteers should strive to always have two adults present in all situations with an individual student. If a staff member must spend time alone with a student, every effort should be made to remain visible to others — an open door or windowed room, for example.

7.2 Statutory Health, Immunization & Clinical Protocols

The primary responsibility for a student's medical care rests with the parent or legal guardian and their qualified healthcare professionals. To maintain a safe and medically compliant campus environment, all families must submit a completed Emergency Medical Authorization form prior to the first day of the academic calendar.

In accordance with state health regulations, all students must be fully up to date on all mandatory immunizations within **14 calendar days** of school entry. Any student who fails to provide verified clinical documentation of the required vaccine tiers—or a legally executed exemption statement based on strong religious or moral convictions in accordance with the Texas Department of State Health Services—will be excluded from campus attendance until compliant documentation is securely on file with the clinic coordinator.

7.3 Medication Administration & Custody Protocols

To guarantee student wellness and protect the student body from medication misuse, the school enforces a strict chain of custody for all pharmaceutical substances brought onto campus property:

- **Office Custody:** All medications, including prescription and over-the-counter formulas (such as cough suppressants, antihistamines, or pain relievers), must be delivered directly to the school office by a parent or guardian upon arrival. Students are strictly prohibited from keeping any medication on their person, in their backpacks, or inside their personal lockers.
- **Prescription Protocol:** School personnel will only assist in administering prescription medication if a licensed physician and a parent have both signed the formal Medical Dispensing Form. Prescription medications must be delivered in their original pharmaceutical packaging, displaying a legible pharmacy label that details the student's name, precise dosage instructions, and the doctor's name.
- **Over-the-Counter Protocol:** Non-prescription medications require a completed and signed parental authorization form detailing exact dosing parameters. Staff will not administer non-prescription medication beyond standard package instructions without an explicit physician's directive.
- **Authorized Emergency Exceptions:** Students suffering from severe chronic conditions (such as asthma or anaphylactic allergies) may be granted permission to carry an inhaler or an epinephrine auto-injector on their person. This exception requires an active Medical Dispensing Form on file in the clinic, signed by both the prescribing physician and a parent, explicitly certifying that the student has the maturity to self-administer the device safely.

7.4 Student Health Exclusions & Isolation Guidelines

Parents must not send a sick student to school. If a student exhibits signs of a potentially communicable illness while on campus, they will be immediately moved to the clinic for medical isolation to safeguard the health of the student body and faculty.

A student will be removed from class and discharged to their parents immediately if they present any of the following clinical symptoms:

- A verified temperature of **100°F** or higher.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- A severe, uncontrollable cough or rapid, labored breathing.
- An unexplained new rash or an untreated, infected skin patch.
- Evidence of parasitic infection, including live lice or scabies.

Guardians or designated emergency contacts must pick up the isolated student immediately upon receiving notification from the school office. A student excluded for a fever or highly contagious symptom must remain at home and may not return to the classroom until they are completely symptom-free for a minimum of **24 hours** without the assistance of fever-reducing or symptom-masking medications.

7.5 Background Checks - Staff and volunteers

Hill Country Christian School recognizes its profound moral, spiritual, and legal obligation to provide an unassailable sanctuary for the children entrusted to its care. The school maintains an absolute zero-tolerance policy toward any form of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or endangerment.

Every employee, volunteer, and extracurricular coach must complete a background check process prior to interacting with students.

7.6 Inclement Weather Policy

The safety of our students and families is our top priority. When severe weather threatens, the Superintendent will determine whether to cancel school or implement a delayed start.

How We Notify You

When a weather decision is made, we will communicate it immediately through the following channels:

- **Official School Alerts:** A schoolwide email will be sent, and updates will be posted to our website and parent Facebook page.
- **Direct Outreach:** Classroom teachers (and High School House teachers) will also reach out to their individual classes to ensure everyone is informed.

Delayed Start Schedule (10:00 a.m.)

In the event of a delayed start, school will begin across all grade levels at **10:00 a.m**. Schedules will adjust as follows:

- **Elementary:** The school day begins at 10:00 a.m. Any specialized classes normally scheduled during the first two hours (such as P.E.) will be skipped for that day.
- **Junior High:** Lecture classes normally held between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. are cancelled. All remaining classes will run on their normal schedule starting at 10:00 AM.
- **High School:** Students will report directly to House time at 10:00 AM, and 3rd period will begin at its regular time.

Making Up Missed Days & Distance Learning

Our school calendar designates the **Monday after Easter** as our primary weather makeup day. If we do not need to use this day for inclement weather, it will remain a school holiday. If we experience extended closures beyond this day, the administration may implement schoolwide **Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI)** to keep students on track.

What to Expect During NTI:

- **Learning Delivery:** Teachers will email assignments or host virtual classes using methods like Zoom or Canvas. Teachers will be fully available during school hours to answer parent and student questions.
- **High School Material:** High school students may be given extra time to complete pre-assigned work, to be turned in on the day school resumes.
- **Grace for Weather Difficulties:** We understand that winter weather can cause power or internet outages. Students **will not be academically penalized** for reasonable, weather-related tech issues on NTI days, though they will be expected to safely make up the assignments later.

7.7 “See something? Say something”

In accordance with the Whistleblower protections outlined in the School’s bylaws, any individual who reasonably suspects a violation of safety, health, or ethical compliance within the corporation is protected against retaliation. Suspected operational or safety deviations can be processed through:

- The Assistant Principal
- The Principal
- The Superintendent
- The Board President or any member of the Board of Directors (upon failure of satisfaction at the executive level)

8. Grievance Chains & Christian Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) based on Matthew 18

8.1 Matthew 18 Operational Protocol

During the course of the year, occasional misunderstandings or problems arise between students, parents, teachers, staff, coaches, and/or administration. This is often the result of a lack of communication between those involved. Practically stated, when a concern occurs, both parties should meet prayerfully, humbly, and honestly and seek the Lord's guidance rather than turning to gossip, assumption, or social media. If handled in this manner, almost all problems will be solved on a one-on-one level. This is the application of Matthew 18:15-17.

Therefore, if a dispute or grievance between two parties connected in a direct way to Hill Country Christian School occurs, the following guidelines will be used:

Complaints about teachers/staff

- All questions, problems, or complaints should first be taken directly to the teacher or staff member concerned before anyone else is involved. If the student is mature enough, they are encouraged to bring their concern to a teacher themself. The concern should always be addressed with a respectful demeanor.
- If the situation is not cleared up at this level through direct contact, it should then be taken to the administration. An appointment may be made through the school office, and appointments will include all parties involved (i.e., student, parent, teacher/staff).
- If a parent has a grievance or dispute about the general operation of the school (apart from the operation of the classroom), they should bring their concerns to the principal.
- If a matter is not resolved at the previous levels, a parent can send a request to the Superintendent for a meeting.

Complaints about Students:

- Within school hours or at a school event, a parent with a matter of complaint about a student or students should not address the student(s) directly, but the complaint should be directed to a member of staff, such as the appropriate class teacher or coach, for management, communication, and resolution.

8.2 Mandatory Christian Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Covenant

In keeping with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, all disputes, any and all claims or disputes arising from this Handbook, other than a claim for injunctive relief, arising between the Principal, Superintendent, teacher, staff member, director, officer, employee, volunteer, agent, or other member of HCCS, or any other party, shall first be submitted to Christian mediation in Hays County, Texas, and if

not resolved by mediation, then by binding arbitration in Hays County, Texas, under the procedures and supervision of a faith-based mediation and arbitration group. In the event that such a group cannot be located or agreed upon, arbitration under this Section 8.2 shall be conducted according to the rules of the American Arbitration Association. Judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in the District Court for the County of Hays, Texas. The parties shall bear their own costs related to any mediation or arbitration proceeding.

Parent/Guardian Handbook Acknowledgment & Agreement

A Christian school operates as a partnership between home and school, and that partnership depends on shared understanding and shared commitment. This handbook describes the academic, financial, and conduct policies that guide daily life at Hill Country Christian School, and agreement with these policies is an essential component of that partnership — not a formality. Enrollment and continued attendance at HCCS are conditioned on the parent or guardian's reading, understanding, and agreement to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook.

Because policies, fees, and requirements may be updated from year to year, this acknowledgment must be signed annually, at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment, for each family. A new signature is required each school year, regardless of whether policies have changed.

By signing below, I/we acknowledge and agree to the following:

I/we have received and read the Hill Country Christian School Family-Student Handbook, understand its contents, and accept responsibility for asking the school office about anything I/we do not understand.

I/we have read HCCS's Statement of Faith and understand that it forms the doctrinal foundation of the school's educational program and community life.

I/we agree to support and comply with the academic, attendance, financial, conduct, and disciplinary policies described in this handbook, and understand that failure to do so may affect my/our child's continued enrollment.

I/we understand that this handbook does not constitute a contract guaranteeing enrollment for any specific period, and that HCCS reserves the right to interpret, change, suspend, amend, or cancel any policy in this handbook at its discretion.

I/we have read and agree to the Mandatory Christian Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Covenant described in Section 8.2, including its waiver of civil litigation in favor of faith-based mediation and binding Christian arbitration.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature (if applicable) Date

Printed Name

Student Name Grade

For students in high school: students are also encouraged to sign below, acknowledging their own understanding of and agreement to the Code of Conduct and academic integrity policies described in this handbook.

Student Signature Date