**Student Handbook**

**KINDERGARTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Age/Ability Requirements**

For the benefit of all students and staff at HOPE Academy, the following age guidelines have been put into place: Children entering kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1 for K5 class and potty-trained.

**Fee Payments**

Application fees and Enrollment fees are non-refundable. These fees include student curriculum, pencil boxes with appropriate items and Teacher’s materials. Monthly tuition is due on the first, fifth or seventh of each month (selection available in FACTS) beginning in August. You are responsible for ten (10) tuition payments. NO REFUNDS or exceptions will be made because of absenteeism, vacations or sickness. Please contact the office if financial problems arise. Graduation fees are due by March 1st. The K5 graduation package includes a cap/gown/tassel and 5 invitations.

**Dress Code**

Students are allowed to dress in comfortable, neat and well-groomed clothing. Parents should provide a backpack or bag with an extra set of clothes in the event of an accident or spill.

**Snacks**

Parents should provide a snack for their child each day. Please make sure that the snacks that you send for your child are not full of sugar. If such snacks are sent, they may be sent back home with your child and an alternative snack provided. Suggested snacks include crackers, nuts, Cheez-its, fruit and graham crackers. Please do not bring snacks such as pop tarts, snack cakes, candy, cookies, etc.

**Behavior**

Kindergarten classes operate on a 3-tiered behavior system. Students are given a verbal warning after the first offense of inappropriate behavior. Once the verbal warning has been issued, the student will be given a “strike” for the 2nd and 3rd offense. If any further instances of inappropriate behavior occur, the student will not be allowed to receive any optional privileges afforded to the class. Parents will be notified by the teacher, and the student may or may not be sent to an administrator.

**School Hours**

The school day runs from 8:30 – 2:30. We ask that students be dropped off by 8:25 so that they have a chance to unpack and use the restroom prior to the start of class. If you have any questions for the teacher, please keep them brief or schedule a time outside of school hours so that the teacher can focus her attention on the class.

**Toys**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys or other non-school items except on designated “Show and Tell” days.

**GRADES 1-12 STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK**

**ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

**Billing and Payment Procedures**

Fee and Tuition Payments – Payments for all fees and tuition are expected in a timely manner.

* Application Fees - Application payments must be submitted at the time the application is filed and are non-refundable.
* Tuition – Tuition payments are due on the 1st, 5th, or 7th of each month (preferences set by the parent in FACTS). Payments that are not received by the due date each month will be assessed a $30 fee from FACTS for each additional invoice attempt. These $30 fees cannot be refunded as they are billed by FACTS, not HOPE Academy.
* Past Due Accounts – Any tuition account which has not been paid by the 20th of the month will result in loss of attendance privileges until the account is paid in full. Any payment arrangement that is not kept may prevent any further arrangements for the remainder of the year. Any Incidental account that has not been paid by the due date, may result in loss of privileges for those services as well as late fees imposed by HOPE Academy. Such incidentals include but are not limited to: enrollment fees, lunch fees, early care/aftercare fees, testing fees and graduation fees.
* Students who are withdrawn or graduate and have unpaid balances (tuition and incidental fees) will NOT receive grades or other records until all balances have been paid in full. This includes records that are requested from other academic institutions.

**Calendar**

HOPE Academy follows the schedule for Henry County Schools with a few exceptions. We may for special events, religious holidays, teacher workdays, etc. Please see our school’s master calendar and emails of monthly calendars for up-to-date information.

**Communication**

HOPE Academy utilizes **email** as our primary source of communication. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly and to keep your information current with the school office.

**Custody**

Parents shall provide to the school a certified copy of any court order(s) regarding the custody of the child. Student enrollment forms, as well as other official documents of the school, must be signed by the natural parent or legal guardian with whom the child resides. Educational decisions concerning the child are reserved for the enrolling parent, although both parents can be involved in the process. If there is a disagreement between the two parties, the enrolling parent’s decision shall be the governing decision.

Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-780, it is a crime for any person to make or attempt to make a change of custody of a minor child by removing the child from school without permission of the person who enrolled the child in school, even if the person attempting to remove the child has a court order granting that person custody. Court orders that specifically authorize or direct the release of custody by the school will be followed. The school will not interject itself in custody or visitation disputes between parents.

The school will give to noncustodial parents, upon request, all information required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the laws of Georgia unless there is a valid court order directing the school not to divulge such information. If such an order exists, a certified copy must be presented to the administration.

**Emergency Contact Information**

It is critical for the school to be able to contact parents at any time students are at school. The school must have the parents’ current address and cellular, business, and home (if applicable) telephone numbers. Emergency contact persons and their telephone numbers are needed in case a parent cannot be reached. This information is required at the time of enrollment and whenever a change occurs with the parents’ address, telephone, or emergency contact information.

**Grade Placement**

If acceptable documentation for determining grade placement is not presented at the time students are enrolled, students will be temporarily assigned to a grade until determination as to final grade placement can be made.

**Social Security Number**

At the time of enrollment in HOPE Academy, parents are asked to provide their child’s Social Security number. The enrollment of students will not be denied for declining to provide the student’s Social Security number or for declining to apply for such a number.

**Transfer Students**

Prior to admission, the school must receive a certified copy of the student’s academic transcript and disciplinary record from the school previously attended. A student may be admitted provisionally if the name and address of the school last attended and authorization to release all academic and disciplinary records to the school is provided.

Transcripts from non-accredited schools or home school programs will be considered on an individual basis. Additional information and testing may be required in order to make a determination of how much credit may be accepted from the student’s previous school. School credits for work completed under an individual tutor may not be accepted. Transfer credits will be validated by the student’s guidance counselor.

The parent must disclose at the time the transfer is sought whether the student is currently serving a suspension or expulsion from school; whether the student withdrew from the last district attended in lieu of being ordered to serve a period of suspension, expulsion, or assignment to an alternative education program; and, whether the student has ever been adjudicated guilty of a felony. Any student who is currently serving and/or sentenced to a suspension or expulsion in another school system must complete and/or wait until they clear that suspension/expulsion period before any consideration will be given to their enrollment in HOPE Academy.

**Withdrawal from School**

At the time of withdrawal, students must return all textbooks, library books, and other school-owned items. Any such items not returned, and any other school-related expenses for which the student is responsible (such as lunch charges), must be paid for at the time of withdrawal. The school may withhold grade reports, diplomas, and/or certificates of progress until restitution is made for lost or damaged textbooks and/or media materials.

In situations where a custodial parent enrolls a child in school, that same parent must be the person who withdraws the child from school. However, the custodial parent who enrolled the child in school may give certified written permission to the school to allow a noncustodial parent to complete withdrawal procedures. A minor who is not emancipated may not drop out of school without the written permission of his/her parent/guardian. Prior to accepting such permission, the school shall schedule a conference with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the educational options available to the student and the consequences of not earning a high school diploma.

Students who are withdrawn or graduate and have unpaid balances (tuition, fees, lunches, etc.) will NOT receive grades or other records until all balances have been paid in full. This includes records that are requested from other academic institutions.

**ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

**School Attendance**

Attending school regularly is very important if students want to succeed in school. Georgia law requires that all children between the ages of 6 and 16 attend school unless they have a lawful reason to be absent. State policy defines the school year as 180 attendance days.

Students who have more than ten (10) days of unexcused absences during the school year will be considered truant. The legal penalties for truancy include referral of students to Juvenile Court and referral of parents to State Court. Any Georgia resident who has control or charge of a child who is convicted of violating mandatory school attendance requirements will be subject to a fine of not less than $25.00 and not more than $100.00, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties per absence. In addition, failure to satisfy the state’s attendance requirements can affect the opportunity for students to obtain or keep a driver’s permit/license.

**Arrival and Dismissal Times**

The general beginning time is 8:30 a.m. and the general ending time is 2:30 p.m. HOPE Academy is not responsible for the supervision and safety of students prior to the beginning of the school day or after the end of the school day. HOPE Academy does not expect its staff to exercise charge over students who are left at the school campus before the beginning of the school day or who are not picked up after school in a timely manner. The only exceptions will be if you have made arrangements for your student to participate in our fee based early care and aftercare program. Any student left past the dismissal time will be sent to aftercare and the fee will be billed to your FACTS account.

**Absences /Tardies / Early Check-Outs**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes on time and each day. On the FIRST DAY students return to school from an absence, parents should provide the school with a written note explaining the reason for the absence. The note should include the date(s) of the absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and the signature of the parent or of the doctor who treated the student. Students who check in late or check out early must report to the school office and present a written note from their parent explaining their absence. If students are frequently absent, and tardy, the administration may ask the parent to provide more information, such as medical documentation, about the absences and tardies. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Tardy means the failure by a student to be in the assigned classroom or instructional space at the assigned time without a valid excuse, or to have arrived at school after the beginning of the school day.

Absence means the non-attendance by a student in an approved regularly scheduled class or activity, regardless of the reason for such non-attendance. An exception is when a student participates in an approved activity (such as, but not limited to – a field trip or an academic competition), he/she may be excused from school, counted present, and shall be responsible for any work missed during the time he/she is away from school.

**Please Note** – 5 unexcused tardy days will result in 1 unexcused absence.

**Excused Absences**

All absences must be documented in written form. Medical absences of more than two school days must be accompanied by a letter from a healthcare professional. Failure to provide documentation may result in the absence being listed as unexcused and work missed cannot be made up for credit.

Absences will be treated as excused if they occur for the following reasons:

1. Student illness that would endanger the student’s health or the health of others.

2. A serious illness or death in the student’s immediate family which would reasonably necessitate absence from school, in the determination of the school’s director or his/her designee.

3. A scheduled medical, dental or eye examination.

4. Special and recognized religious holidays observed by the student’s faith.

5. An order of a governmental agency, such as a court order or a pre-induction physical exam for military service.

6. An inability to attend school due to weather or other conditions making school attendance impossible or unreasonably hazardous.

7. Attendance of a trip or event having significant educational value, provided the director is notified of the absence in advance and he/she determines the trip or event has significant educational value.

8. Unusual or urgent circumstances requiring the student’s parents to be outside of Henry County overnight, and where the parents determine that it would be in the student’s best interest to accompany them. If prior notice cannot be given, a written explanation is to be provided no later than the first day the student returns to school after the absence.

9. Take Your Child to Work Day. Students who participate in this event will be excused but will be counted absent.

10. To visit with a parent serving in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard. If such parent has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student shall be granted excused absences, up to five (5) school days per school year, for the purpose of visiting with his/her parent.

*A student who serves as a Page of the General Assembly during the school year shall be counted present at school in the same manner as an educational field trip*

**Making Up Missed Assignments or Tests**

It is the student’s and parent’s responsibility, not the teacher’s, to make arrangements for make-up work. Students should ask their teacher for any missed assignments on the first day they return to school. The number of days allowed to complete make-up work will be determined by the administration or his/her designee but will not exceed the number of days absent. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in a grade of zero (0) being given for graded assignments missed during an excused absence.

Students may not be allowed to make up graded assignments missed during an unexcused absence. Absences due to suspension from school are considered unexcused. Students assigned to In School Suspension who choose to serve their suspension at home will not be given the opportunity to make up work missed during the period of suspension. In situations where students are suspended from school during the period of semester exams, principals will make arrangements to allow students to complete their exams.

**Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, please follow the closing information for Henry County Schools. Official information on closings can be found on WSB-TV (Channel 2) and on WSB-AM radio (750AM).

**GRADE REPORTING**

**Corrections**

Test corrections will be used as study skills. It is left up to the teacher’s discretion to offer bonus points for corrections but will not be habitual or expected.

**Semester System**

Most middle school courses are yearlong in length. High school courses are scheduled on the semester system and students receive credit on a half-year basis. High school courses that are successfully completed translate into unit credits that apply toward graduation requirements.

**Grading Procedures and Report Cards**

Students are evaluated on a nine (9) week and eighteen (18) week basis with the semester grade being a cumulative grade that represents eighteen (18) weeks of work. Parents will receive a grade report at the end of nine (9) weeks, and a report card at the end of the semester (eighteen weeks) along with a mid-term report. Grades reported at the nine-week period represent the student’s progress at that time in the semester. The semester grade is the final grade and represents how a student performed over the eighteen-week period.

Grade reports will show numerical grades for each subject in which the student is enrolled. These reports summarize the student’s progress at that point in the eighteen-week semester. Informal progress reports may be sent at times other than the system wide grade report if a school chooses to do so. The letter equivalents for numerical grades are as follows:

90 - 100 = A 80 - 89 = B 74 - 79 = C 70 - 73 = D Below 70 = F

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Believing that discipline is necessary for the welfare of the students as well as the entire school, each teacher is given the liberty of making and enforcing classroom regulations in the manner he/she feels is in accordance with Christian principles and discipline as set forth in Scripture. HOPE Academy expects full cooperation from both student and parent in the education of the student. When the school feels that the student/parent cooperation is lacking, the student may be requested to transfer. Also, if the behavior of the student indicates an uncooperative spirit, he/she may be requested to transfer. The book Dare to Discipline (which can be purchased at most bookstores or online) by James Dobson is highly recommended as help to parents.**

**Expectations**

Each student is expected to:

1. Behave in a responsible manner at school, and at all school-related functions on or off campus.

2. Demonstrate courtesy and respect for others.

3. Attend all classes, regularly and on time.

4. Prepare for each class, take appropriate materials to class and complete assignments.

5. Obey all school rules and cooperate with the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

6. Communicate with your parent/guardian about your school progress.

The behavior code governs students’ conduct on school grounds; off school grounds at a school activity; off school grounds at a non-school activity, but where the misconduct leads to a disruption of school or any other violation of the Student Code of Conduct and en route to and from schools, or any school-sponsored activity.

Parents and students should carefully review ALL information contained in the Code of Conduct. Students are subject to disciplinary action for engaging in or attempting to commit any of the prohibited behaviors listed in the Code of Conduct.

**Bullying**

HOPE Academy believes that all students learn better in a safe school environment. Behavior that infringes on the safety of students, staff or volunteers will not be tolerated. Bullying, as the term is defined in Georgia law, is strictly prohibited. The Student Code of Conduct for all schools within the school system expressly prohibits bullying.

Bullying is defined as follows: An act which occurs on school property, on school vehicles, or at school-related functions or activities, or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system, that is:

(1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so.

(2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

(3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that:

(a) causes another person substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm.

(b) has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education.

(c) Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment.

(d) has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

**Prohibited Behaviors**

1. Behavior detrimental to learning, including but not limited to unexcused tardy days to school or class, and disruptions of the learning environment.

2. Being disrespectful to students, school personnel, or other persons.

3. Being in an unauthorized area.

4. Being insubordinate to school personnel or school volunteers.

5. Deliberately giving false or misleading information, including but not limited to forgery and altering records.

6. Displaying or using a cell phone, pager, or other electronic communication device during the school day without the consent of the director or his/her designee. Cell phones must be turned off during the entire school day.

7. Exhibiting gang affiliation, as evidenced by a common identifying sign, symbol, tattoo, graffiti, attire, or other distinguishing characteristic.

8. Fighting

9. Gambling.

10. Inappropriate physical contact between students.

11. Inciting or advising others to engage in prohibited behavior.

12. Leaving school, skipping school, or skipping class without permission.

13. Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any tobacco product or smoking paraphernalia.

14. Possessing, using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, or exchanging any material, substance, food item, or personal belonging that is inappropriate for school, including over the counter medication, without the consent of the director or his/her designee.

15. Using profane, vulgar, obscene, insulting, or threatening language, gestures, graphics, or materials, whether spoken, written, gestured, or communicated in person or via any electronic device.

16. Violating any other school rule, including but not limited to failing to report to detention and/or violating rules of the In-School Suspension program.

17. Participation in written, verbal, or physical act(s) that meet(s) the definition of bullying as listed above.

18. Damaging school property or the personal property of another student/staff member.

19. Using, selling, buying, giving away, bartering, exchanging, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance whether at school or any school-related activity.

**Progressive Disciplinary Actions:**

These actions represent the most common progression of discipline for the above listed offenses; however, disciplinary action is at the full discretion of the administration and/or their designee.

1st Violation: Verbal Warning

2nd Violation: Pink Slip or other written notice

3rd Violation: In-School Suspension for two (2) school days.

4th Violation: In-School Suspension for three (3) school days.

5th Violation: Out-of-School Suspension for three (3) school days.

6th Violation: Out-of-School Suspension for five (5) school days.

7th Violation: The student will be suspended (In-School or Out-of-School) with the matter being submitted to the director with the possibility of long-term suspension or expulsion from school.

Some of the disciplinary actions that may be used for student violations of the Code of Conduct include the following:

* Warning/Reprimand: Students will be warned that they may be punished if the misbehavior continues.
* Detention: Detention may be used to address tardiness, behavior detrimental to learning, and physical contact between students that is deemed inappropriate. For each day assigned to detention, students will be required to spend a period of time, not to exceed one supervised hour, completing assigned class work. No other activity will be allowed during detention.
* In-School Suspension: This program is designed to isolate students who violate certain school rules from their regularly assigned classrooms and school activities, while allowing students the opportunity to progress with classroom assignments. While assigned to In-School Suspension, students may not participate in or attend any extracurricular activity, including athletic participation and other school events. If students violate any rule of the In-School Suspension program, students will be suspended from the program and from school for the remaining number of days that students were assigned to In-School Suspension.
* Short-Term Suspension: Students subject to a short-term suspension will be suspended from school for not more than five (5) days. This includes suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, athletic participation, and other school events.
* Expulsion: Students subject to an expulsion will be suspended from school beyond the end of the current semester. This includes suspension from all regular school activities, extracurricular activities, and other school events.

School Administrators Are Authorized To Take Disciplinary Action For Misconduct That Occurs:

1. On school grounds.

2. Off the school grounds at a school activity, function or event.

**Personal Belongings**

The school has provided the necessary items that are needed for each class in the class and schoolwide supply list. Any other personal belongings need to be left at home or only brought to school under the approval of the teacher and administration. If such items are brought to school, they may be taken up and kept in the school office until parents come to claim them. Also, students are subject to disciplinary action for bringing inappropriate items to school without the consent of the school administration. The School is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal belongings.

**Student Searches**

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student desks, student lockers or student automobiles at any time.

**Tobacco**

Students shall not possess, transmit or use tobacco or tobacco-related products in any form, including, without limitation, lighters, rolling papers, and matches.

**Vandalism or Damage to School Property**

Students who deface or destroy school property will be charged with the full cost of the damage and will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

**Weapons**

It is unlawful for any person to carry, possess, or have under his/her control any weapon, explosive compound, firearm, or any toy or object that resembles a weapon while on school property, at a school function, on or off campus.

**SCHOOL CONFERENCES AND PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS**

Please feel free to consult with the school office regarding any problems or questions that concern your student. It is the desire of the administration and the faculty to be of service to both the parent and the student, and each teacher welcomes a visit from any parent.

We do urge, however, that such conferences be made by definite appointments with the teacher at the convenient after – school time. You may contact the school office and they will leave an appropriate message for your student’s teacher.

Parents are asked to stop by the office if they need to leave something for the student or teacher or if they must pick up the student. Please do not go directly to the classroom, as this interrupts teaching.

**PARTY POLICY**

Should you choose to celebrate your child’s birthday at school, we ask that you abide by the following policies:

1. For elementary students, ALL parties must be held during the lunch time for your child’s class. Any refreshments/goodies should be provided for all students who will be present so that none are excluded. Please check with your child’s teacher for an accurate count prior to the day of your party. For middle/high school students, please communicate directly with your child’s teacher to discuss the best time to hold this celebration.
2. Under no circumstances are balloons or other decorations that could be a choking hazard to be used.
3. It is the responsibility of the parent to set up and clean up all snacks, decorations and other materials. Failure to do so will result in a $50.00 fee being added to your child’s account.